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Master Program in Mediterranean Studies

**Eastern Mediterranean triangles, causes and prospects of
Israel, Greece, Cyprus and Egypt, Greece, Cyprus
cooperation**

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Eastern Mediterranean triangles, causes and prospects of Israel, Greece, Cyprus and Egypt, Greece, Cyprus cooperation

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Abstract

There are examined the reasons and the prospects of the formation of the trilateral cooperation. First there is analysed the Israel, Greece and Cyprus alliance and secondly the Egypt, Greece and Cyprus alliance. The primary motivations for both partnerships to be formed are the Turkish factor which is perceived as a security threat due to the deterioration of the relations with their neighbouring countries and motivations conducted by the energy profits. Those partnerships have a less formal form than a traditional alliance and they have the term quasi-alliance. The term quasi-alliance implies that each country have the freedom to politically manoeuvre according to their interests.

ΥΠΕΥΘΥΝΗ ΔΗΛΩΣΗ

Με την παρούσα δήλωση:

1. Δηλώνω ρητά και ανεπιφύλακτα ότι η διπλωματική εργασία που σας καταθέτω αποτελεί προϊόν δικής μου πνευματικής προσπάθειας, δεν παραβιάζει τα δικαιώματα τρίτων μερών και ακολουθεί τα διεθνώς αναγνωρισμένα πρότυπα επιστημονικής συγγραφής, τηρώντας πιστά την ακαδημαϊκή δεοντολογία.
2. Οι απόψεις που εκφράζονται αποτελούν αποκλειστικά ευθύνη του/ης συγγραφέα/ως και ο/η επιβλέπων/ουσα, οι εξεταστές, το Τμήμα και το Πανεπιστήμιο Πελοποννήσου δεν υιοθετούν κατ' ανάγκη τις εκφραζόμενες απόψεις ούτε φέρουν οποιαδήποτε ευθύνη για τυχόν λάθη και παραλείψεις.

Ο/Η δηλών/ούσα

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(Υπογραφή)

Table of contents

Abstract

Table of Charts

Introduction 1

Chapter 1: Research Methodology

1.1 Research approach 2

1.2 Literature review 2

Chapter 2: Alliances

2.1 The definition of the term alliance 4

2.2 The transformation of the concept of ‘friendship’ throughout history 4

2.3 Factors that favour the creation of alliances 5

 2.3.1 External security 5

 2.3.2. Internal Security 7

2.4 Other reasons that favour the formation of alliances 7

CHAPTER 3: Causes and prospects of Israel, Greece and Cyprus cooperation

3.1 Introduction 10

3.2 The main features of the trilateral co-operation 11

 3.2.1 Trilateral Summit in Thessaloniki 12

3.3 Israel-Turkish relations 13

3.4 The reasons of the co-operation for each country 14

3.5 Economic reasons	18
3.6 Prospects	19

Chapter 4: Causes and prospects of Egypt, Greece and Cyprus cooperation

4.1 Introduction	22
4.2 The tripartite co-operation	23
4.2.1 Summits	23
4.3 The reasons for the formation of the tripartite alliance	24
4.3.1. Egypt's energy outlook	24
4.3.2 The Egyptian gas discoveries	25
4.3.3 Egypt's expectations	26
4.4 Egypt-Turkey relations	28
4.5 Prospects	30
4.5.1 Natural gas exports	30
4.5.2 The Cyprus issue	32
Conclusion	33

Table of Charts

3.1 The gas discoveries in the offshore of Cyprus	15
4.1 The map of gas pipelines in the Eastern Mediterranean	27
4.2 Turkish view of the EEZ boundaries	32

Introduction

The objective of the current thesis is the evaluation of the tripartite co-operations of Israel, Greece and Cyprus and Egypt, Greece and Cyprus. The first part consists of the theoretical part where the explanation of the term alliance is provided. In addition the term alliance is defined under the political system perspective and the reasons for a state to form an alliance.

The study is separated in two parts. In the first one there is the explanation and evaluation of the main reasons of the formation of the Israel, Greece and Cyprus alliance according to the diplomatic and economic issues. There are given references of the gas explorations in the EEZ boundaries of Israel and Cyprus and economic benefits from energy cooperation. To continue there is an evaluation of the role of Turkey which is perceived as a security threat. On the second part, the study focuses on the Egypt, Greece and Cyprus co-operation with many references on the role of Egypt, the energy problem that is facing and the gas explorations. It is also evaluating the role of Turkey as security threat as well as the gas explorations in the formation of the tripartite alliance.

Another objective of the thesis is to examine the prospects of those alliances in relation to the Turkish factor as a possible ally in order to benefit from energy-related interests.

As a conclusion there is given the personal opinion based on studies of whether the tripartite co-operations are formal alliances or quasi-alliances. Also, it is explained the nature of those alliances that are considered to be quasi-alliances which implies that all states can politically maneuver as per their own interests.

Chapter 1

Research Methodology

1.1 Research approach

‘The term *methodology* refers to the way in which we approach problems and seek answers.’ (Steven J. Taylor, 2016) More specifically in social sciences where this thesis belongs, there is the question of how the research is conducted. The *qualitative research method* is a method where in the research there are using descriptive data and more specifically peoples written or spoken words in an observer way. (Steven J. Taylor, 2016)“Different methodological approaches make different assumptions about their subject area(s).”(Arbnor I. Bjerke B., 1997). This means that if somebody conducts research with a different theoretical background, then he will be led to different results and explanations about the matter he is examining.

The research method that is applied in the dissertation is the qualitative research. More specifically, there are utilized journal articles, reports, other dissertations, books, websites and especially news websites. The research method had been mostly done through the internet.

1.2 Literature review

When a researcher is writing his dissertation, it is important that he will provide a literature review of the resources that have been used. Moreover the literature review is used in order that he can prove where he starts building his argument rather than proving in a way that he is re-inventing the wheel (Alan Bryman, 2011). There are many kinds of ways that each researcher can find and integrate data for the project such as the internet, books, and scientific journals in addition to data from newspapers or research published by international or national organizations including data obtained from other individual researchers.

Moreover, there are different types of literature reviews and more specifically six of them (Bruce, 1994) that depict each time a different relationship between the post graduate student

and how he interprets his sources and utilizes them to extract knowledge. More specifically Bruce considers that there are six ways of gaining and understanding knowledge. These include the list, where there is a list of actual sources, the search where the researcher has to validate the information found. The survey, where the concerned party has to examine the relation between the past and the present and grab the information needed through the comparison. The researcher could act as the vehicle for gaining further understanding on the topic as the ongoing findings may have a positive impact on expanding his knowledge. Bruce also includes in his types of literature review the role of facilitator where the researcher makes the understanding of the topic easier. Finally, Bruce highlights the report, which is a discussion on research already undertaken in the chosen topic.

Furthermore, there is a separation concerning the types of data that a researcher can use with different criteria. Firstly, there are the primary data that come from a paper or a report or even published by a government that is unique and genuine in its origin, meaning that it was published for the first time (Sheila Cameron, 2009). In addition to the primary data there are secondary data, that have already utilized those first elements, and they were written to be read by a larger proportion of the population and the writers have already found the best bibliography and the most accurate theories. Finally, there are the tertiary sources, a fine selection of databases or catalogues, like graphs and indexes that are given by publishers or booksellers and can be found also online.

Chapter 2

Alliances

2.1 The definition of the term alliance

According to the definitions given from the Oxford dictionary the term alliance is ‘A union or association formed for mutual benefit, especially between countries or organizations.’ ‘A relationship based on similarity of interests, nature, or qualities.’ In addition, the Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions (ATOP) project defines the term alliance as ‘written agreements signed by official representatives of at least two independent states, that include promises to aid a partner in the event of military conflict, to remain neutral in the event of conflict, to refrain from military conflict with one another, or to consult/cooperate in the event of international crises that create a potential for military conflict.’ In other words, the alliances are written formal treaties. According to Glenn Snyder’s there is a distinction between formal alliances and tacit alignments and that is when a state decide to co-operate with another because they share common interests, they are defined as aligned. But when the co-operation is being written, then they can be called formally as aligned. (Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions, 1815-1944, 2002)

2.2 The transformation of the concept of ‘friendship’ throughout history

The concept of the alliance has begun primary with the concept of ‘friendship’ in the 16th and early 17th century. In other words, in the Middle Age there was the concept of *amicitia* which was referred to the princes that shared religious and political similarities which were imposed by the Pope in the Christian Europe. However, the word *amicitia* was not referred to a friendship but rather to a status of neutrality amongst the states. The 16th century is the era of important changes in all aspects, among them is the rising of the friendship treaties of the states in Europe and the decline of the *Respublica Christianna*. Furthermore, some of the most important factors of the epoch were the abandonment of the Papal authority as well as the Canon law. Those incidents were crucial as they lead to the creation of external sovereignty for each European state. In addition, in the middle Ages area the political

friendship was a concept to describe the subjugation of the states towards the sovereign state. However, according to Jonathan Dewalds in the 16th and 17th century the concept of friendships has elements of the medieval and modern area which signifies the emerging status of sovereignty both within the state as well as in the external, as it is depicted by the formation of friendship between equal and unequal parties. It is important to note that friendship was used as an instrument of maintaining the political order. The concept of friendship was linked to the international relations from the moralist writers of the epoch. According to Erasmus point of view the friendship had a submissive element. Even the friendship by marriage, which was used as a tool by princes, to further promote stability in the region had that defect of sincerity lack. To continue, Thomas More made a connection in the terms friend and enemy in order to prove that a today's friend can be a tomorrow enemy. Consequently, the depiction of Thomas More can easily characterize the actual modern politics. In addition, Thomas Starkey represented friendship as the most important factor in order to achieve security and prosperity among the states. In the modern area the division of the states is characterized with internal and external sovereignty. (Roshchin)

2.3 Factors that favour the creation of alliances

The reason why nations worldwide form alliances is a question that many scholars try to explain and determine. One of the most predominant arguments is that of the national security. More specifically, when a nation perceives another nation as a threat to its national security they tend to create alliances to combat the threat. The source of the threat can either be external or internal, and this is a fact that also determines the reason of the formation of the alliances separating the reasons for forming such alliances based on external and internal security.

2.3.1 External security

The theories of the alliances based on the external security represent the realist and neorealist political thought. This means, that the structure of the international system of power determine the main reason of the creation of the alliances. More specifically, the neorealist and realist system is considered to be anarchic which means that in an international level there isn't a formal authority and every nation is equal. Furthermore, each nation should seek

for its own safety and survival. Yet this anarchic system is the main purpose that the nations feel the insecurity and they form alliances. According to Martin Wight, the function of an alliance is to 'reinforce the security of the allies or to promote their interests in the external world'.

According to Stephen Walt the main reason of the creation of an alliance is the concept of the 'external threat' to his 'balance of threat theory'. More specifically, nations create alliances in order to balance the threat and not to balance power. A state can be perceived as a possible threat because of material capabilities, meaning population, economic, industrial and military resources as well as other factors such as geographic proximity, offensive capabilities and perceived intentions. (Piccoli, 1999) Furthermore, it is crucial to determine the difference between balancing and bandwagoning when it comes the time for the states to choose a side on a conflict. According to Kenneth Waltz, the term bandwagoning is referred to a nation that joins the stronger alliance; meanwhile balancing is a term referring to the nation that joins with the weaker side. In that theory, Walt agrees and enriches it arguing that there are two specific reasons that the states bandwagon, defensive and offensive reasons. In other words, the states either want to dissolve the dominant power or they want to gain profit from the coalition. However, bandwagoning is dangerous because the powerful state gains allies and more resources and is becoming more powerful and thus is being a possible threat. On the other side, balancing means that a state joins a weaker nation and this prevent the rise of a powerful state that could be a worldwide threat.

To continue, Randal Sweller makes a clear distinction between the revisionist states and the status-quo states in order to understand which one is more likely to form alliances. According to Sweller, the revisionist states are the powers that provoke the creation of alliances, meanwhile the status-quo states are those who create the alliances. Furthermore, Sweller opposes the theory of Walt of bandwagoning as his theory is based on the assumption that a state choose to bandwagon not because of the threat but rather because of the profit that could potentially be gained by the coalition. In other words, Sweller calls his theory as 'balance-of-interests'. According to his theory the main cause of the formation of the alignments is for the states to share common interests, meaning political goals, and not to imbalance a power or a threat. The revisionist states that are not pleased with the system equilibrium will form alliances with other rising revisionist power in order to oust the status quo power meanwhile the status quo powers will form coalition to defend the system. In other words, the revisionist

states will gain profit from the coalition rather than security. For those reasons, Sweller argues that when the states that are pleased from the system equilibrium are stronger than those that are dissatisfied, the system will be stable. Furthermore, according to Sweller the difference between balance and bandwagon is that a state chooses to balance when it has much to lose and little to gain on the other hand, the state that bandwagon has much to gain and little to lose. Furthermore, there is the phenomenon of states that align with a stronger state because of fear. With this tactic a weaker state would not have to worry of being attacked by a stronger state. (Piccoli, 1999)

2.3.2. Internal Security

According to Deborah Larson it is important to examine the situation on the inside of a state that decides to join a coalition. A weak state has much more probabilities and reasons to join an alignment as the representatives of the state are not capable of facing a possible threat as well as in that way they could have more chances of political survival. In other words and accordingly to Larson theory, a weak state is more likely to bandwagon with a stronger state than to balance. Furthermore, it is common for leaders of a state to align with a power state that can ensure their political continuation or their political empowerment rather than for the benefit and empowerment of the whole state. This is a tactic that is often encountered in the leaders of the Third World countries. More specifically, Steven David has called his theory ‘omnibalancing’, meaning that the leaders of the Third World align with their adversaries in order to appease them but also for their own political as well physical protection. (David, 1991) Thus, it is important to examine the behaviour of the leader of the country when there is the situation of ‘omnibalancing’. In addition, the two scholars Michael Barnett and Jack Levy analyze the domestic events that lead the states to form alliances.

2.4 Other reasons that favour the formation of alliances

- **Power cycle theory**

It is important to point out that the power cycle theory forms a crucial factor in the formation of the alliances. According to Doran the insecurity of the states can lead to the formation of agreements and alignments. To continue with, Doran explains that very often a state misinterprets another state as a threat and that causes a steep reaction which is misinterpreted

as a threatening by other states. Furthermore, a state that begins to grow its power it is possible to adopt an aggressive foreign policy with the result of being perceived as a threat by other states. The latter in order to feel secure against the new rising power will form alliances in order to balance the threat. Also, the state could perceive its neighbors are restricting its international opportunity and thus has more possibilities of joining an alliance in order to increase its power as well as to gain its position in the system. The formation of the alliance is a result of seeking alliances to combat what the state interprets as a threat. On the other hand, the neighbour states will form alliances in order to be protected of the new threat.

The primary reason of the formation of an alliance is to balance the power between different spheres of influence such as different nations that might have opposite interests like for example Greece and Turkey and their conflict over the Aegean Sea and the islands ownership. Another important factor imposed by Riker is that an alliance should balance their power as well as to measure the economic benefits from the alliance. To continue with a country will enter a coalition only if the positive outcome will overweight the negative aspects. Furthermore, according to Riker it is important that the alliance doesn't exceed the 'minimum winning coalition' meaning that the alliance shouldn't become perilous to the other existing powers. However, the concept of power can be given by the equation that incorporates the factors of might-strength which includes the military capabilities in correlation with the intentions of a nation. Moreover, the element of 'geographic proximity' is considered important for providing a completed answer. Therefore it is more common to utilize the alliance in order to balance the threat than to gain power over it. (Chiu, 2003)

- **The formation of alliances and the regime type**

There is a clear connection regarding the regime type of the states that form alliances. More specifically, Siverson and Emmons demonstrated that the states with a democracy as a regime tend to ally with each other more frequently. For example, there was noticed through the observations of Simon and Gartzke of the period between 1815 till 1992 that during the Cold War there are the highest rates of the alliances that had been formed with democratic states. More specifically, the majority of the democratic dyads were observed in the Warsaw Pact or North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In addition, according to Lai and Reiter the democratic dyads are more likely to form alliances as well as to have good relations between

the regime type and the alliances. Although there is a relationship between the regime type of a state and the alliance formation, it is not remaining stable through time, space and research. The democratic states form more credible commitments because of the great costs that will have if they do not agree to cooperation as well as to create more attractive background for other democracies to ally. On the other hand, the autocratic leaders form less credible commitments because they will suffer fewer costs if they do not agree to cooperate. (Douglas M. Gibler, 2006)

CHAPTER 3

Causes and prospects of Israel, Greece and Cyprus cooperation

3.1 Introduction

Over the past few years the alliance system in the Eastern Mediterranean has changed significantly. More specifically, after the interruption of the Israel-Turkish relations in 2009 the scenery in the Eastern Mediterranean changed and new strategic developments have been formed. The most important ties that have been formed were between Israel and Greece. In particular, the two countries have signed many agreements to promote the trade prospects as well as the security cooperation. Also, the natural gas discoveries have encouraged the co-operation of Israel, Greece and Cyprus. At the beginning the trilateral co-operation was formed because of the common rivalry and opposition against Turkey. (Tziarras, Israel-Cyprus-Greece: a 'Comfortable' Quasi-Alliance, 2016) The Cyprus issue is a great thorn in the Eastern Mediterranean, according to which, Turkey has strong objections over the government of Nicosia which among other issues, Ankara doesn't recognize the island's sovereignty as well as the right of the Greek Cypriot Administration to exploit the natural gas reserves of the island. For those reasons, Turkish government reacted by conducting air and sea military drills close to the planned area. Furthermore, the Turkish Foreign Minister Representative, Ahmed Davutoglu threatened the three countries that Turkey would take some measures if they go on with the implementation of the project without her participation. In general, the trilateral co-operation is considered to be unstable as each country has contradictory goals. For instance, Israel tries to recuperate the relations with Turkey but without agreeing with Ankara's policies. Also, Greece tries to strengthen the military and economic relations with Israel but without opposing openly Turkey and lastly Turkey doesn't approve the Greek-Israel ties although she benefits of the Israel military knowledge. (Samaan, March 2016)

In sum, the main reason that the relations between Greece, Cyprus, Egypt and Israel had been strengthened, were the troubled relations with Turkey. More specifically Turkish hostile

intentions are visible constantly as per the incident with the Turkish *Barbados* vessel that also threatened the Republic of Cyprus. Naturally, the tension that has been escalated between Turkey and Greece, Cyprus, Israel and Egypt had as a result the unification among the other countries in order to reach a co-operation as well as new development prospects. (Zenonas Tziarras, 2015)

3.2 The main features of the trilateral co-operation

The main reasons that Greece, Cyprus and Israel formed an alliance were, first of all the Turkey issue, and in addition the energy factor. The quasi-alliance of Israel, Greece and Cyprus is a co-operation between the countries in terms of political, economic, energy and military factor. The co-operation was started when Greece and Israel signed a military agreement in 2011. (Tziarras, Israel-Cyprus-Greece: a 'Comfortable' Quasi-Alliance, 2016) Furthermore, an additional factor is the geographic proximity that favoured the creation of the alliance such in the case of Israel, Cyprus, and Greece that are neighbours. In general, it can be said that Turkey was the primary role for the formation of the quasi alliance as the three states have a political advantage towards the negotiations with Turkey.

It is important to point out that Greece and Cyprus had also hostile relations with Turkey from earlier years and this was a factor that favoured the creation of the alliance. First of all, Cyprus and Turkey had hostile relations since the invasion of the Turkish troops on the island in 1974. This incident had a great impact and thus it had changed the point of international thinking in terms of security. In addition the Greek-Turkish relations had been hostile throughout the years especially after the liberation of Greece from the Turks/ Ottoman Empire. Furthermore the war of 1897 and the invasion in Asia Minor and the exchange of population after the end of the war had as a result to further deepen the gap between these countries. The main reasons of dispute nowadays are the Aegean's maritime zones, airspace and the treatment of the Greek and Turkish minorities in both countries. In particular, the violations of the Turkish side towards the Greek EEZ and FIR had been increased considerably as Cyprus is preparing to start offshore drilling for the hydrocarbons. (New Turkish violations of Greek airspace, 2017)

To continue with, another important factor for the creation of the alliance was the amount of the hydrocarbons discovered in the Mediterranean area. Those can give a boost to the economy of the three countries. The abundance of energy resources provide great profits to the countries as it can decrease the possibility and thus the insecurity of a possible depletion of the energy resources and help to increase the business activity. Furthermore, Cyprus and Greece can benefit from Israel as it is considered to be more experienced and has more developed equipment for the exploitation of the energy resources.

The alliance and the goal of linking the countries with even tighter bonds had as a result several summits to be called. The last one was that of Thessaloniki.

3.2.1 Trilateral Summit in Thessaloniki

In 15th June of 2017 there was held the third trilateral summit of the Greek President Alexis Tsipras, the Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu and the Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades to discuss about their common interests and their regional partnership. It was specified the importance of the summit as there are many instabilities in the area and generally a volatile environment. Therefore, the common ground of the three countries and their partnership is firstly the regional stability as well as prosperity and last but not least maintaining peace in the region.

More specifically, in the third trilateral summit the discussions were about the energy, economy, telecommunications, underwater cultural heritage and environment as well as enhancing the relationship between their Diasporas. However, there was given great importance in the enhancing of the energy co-operation between in the Eastern Mediterranean. In other words, the three leaders pointed out the significance of the construction of the East-Med Pipeline which will link Cyprus, Israel and will transfer gas directly to the European market. Also, there have been given an emphasis for the construction of the Euro-Asia interconnector project which will connect Europe, Middle East and Asia. For the feasibility of the two projects the governments discussed that it is needed to speed the procedure by conveying the surveys and studies that are of great importance for the projects. Those projects are very important as they will benefit economically the three countries as well as Europe will be also benefit by securing the energy sector and furthering the EU policies about the energy importing. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017)

3.3 Israel-Turkish relations

A very important factor of the formation of the trilateral co-operation was Turkey and the aggressive stance they maintain. The frozen diplomatic and military relations between Israel and Turkey had as a result the swift of Israel towards Cyprus and Greece. Therefore, it is important to point out the diplomatic relations of Israel and Turkey and how they had changed.

To begin with, the two countries had enjoyed a period of good relations since the founding of the state of Israel. More specifically, Turkey was the first state that recognized the independence of the Israeli state. In the mid-1990s it was formed an Israeli-Turkish axis with the purpose of creating a new security order in the Middle East. However, the relations began to be affected since the election of the Justice and Development party in 2002 in Turkey. This led to a gradual shift in the ideological perceptions of Turkey towards a more supportive disposal to the Palestinian people. Furthermore, Turkey tried to achieve conflict resolution in the Golan Heights in spring 2008 between Israel and Syria but the project failed and the relations between the two countries began to deteriorate. (Tziarras, Israel-Cyprus-Greece: a 'Comfortable' Quasi-Alliance, 2016) The incident that was catalyst in the deterioration of the bilateral relations took place in May 2010 when Israeli soldiers killed ten Turkish activists from the Turkish ship *Mavi Marmara* who was carrying first aid to Palestinian people in Gaza. After the incident the reactions of the two countries were to withdraw ambassadors from each other's nations. Also, the defensive ties were suspended whereas the commercial activity developed considerably. Israel had many reasons to consider Turkey as a threat. However, the frozen diplomatic and military Turkish-Israeli relations led Israel towards Cyprus and Greece. More specifically, after the incident of the *Mavi Marmara* Turkey withdrew the Turkish ambassador from Tel Aviv cutting the diplomatic ties and blocked Israel from participating in the NATO Chicago Summit of 2012. (Mavi Marmara: Why did Israel stop the Gaza flotilla?, June 2016) Turkey demanded an apology from the Israeli state for the victims, but after the involvement of President Barack Obama to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the latter apologized in March 2013 to Erdogan. However, after the effort of reconciliation between the countries, their relations didn't improve because Turkey criticized Israeli actions towards Palestinians after the Israeli apology and compensation in the families of victims. After all, Turkey accepted the Israel apology but in terms of showing that they made Israel bow to Turkey. Also, the outbreak of a new hostility

between Israel and the Hamas in July 2014 with the result of killing hundreds of civilians made their relations even more hostile and the possibility of reconciliation in the near future is becoming more challenging. (Grigoriadis, Fall 2014)

3.4 The reasons of the co-operation for each country

As it has been analysed, the primary reasons of the formation of the trilateral co-operation were Turkey and the energy factor. However, it is fundamental to point out the reasons for which each country decided to coordinate with each other.

Cyprus

The Cyprus issue is complicated in all forms. To begin with the Republic of Cyprus is recognized globally as the only legit government of Cyprus and is a member of the European Union. However, Turkey is the only country that doesn't recognize the Republic of Cyprus and only recognize the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Furthermore, Turkey has an estimated 40.000 troops in the Northern part of Cyprus. However, the situation is seen more optimistic as there have been some negotiations in order to unify the island since 2015. Turkey, strongly opposes the right to Cyprus to develop the natural gas reserves because they want to share the profits. (Ratner, 2016)

Cyprus began the process for exploration of natural gas reserves in 2007 through bidding. Noble Energy won the license to begin the explorations close to the Israeli waters. Cyprus is facing many challenges due to the Turkish occupation on the northern part of the island. More specifically, Turkey is blocking any opportunities for agreements between Cyprus and IOCs for any natural gas reserves explorations and exploitation. Also, Turkey protest along with neighbour countries such as Syria and Lebanon against the agreements on EEZs. Turkey is aiming to gain profit from the operations on the island offshore drillings. (Khadduri, 2012) In 2011, Noble Energy discovered the Aphrodite Field offshore in Cyprus. The field is estimated to hold 5 to 8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas approximately. According to these discoveries Cyprus is planning to begin the exportation in 2019. However, the Republic of

Cyprus doesn't have the infrastructure for this purpose and thus it is becoming extremely difficult and costly for Cyprus to exploit the gas from the Aphrodite Field.

Chart 3.1

The gas discoveries in the offshore of Cyprus



Source: Euractiv News, Cyprus President says gas can help reunification

On the other hand, Turkey's efforts to establish its power on the island, had as a result for Cyprus to feel insecurity and that Turkey will never leave the island (tzarras,Bryant&yakintou 2012). Some of the efforts of Turkey are the publishing of the decisions of Turkey to explore for gas reserves outside their national waters towards the Cypriot maritime space. A very crucial event, one of many consecutive that changed the scenery completely occurred in October 2014 when Russia, Israel and Cyprus conducted a joint naval exercise in the Eastern Mediterranean as it was also very convenient for Cyprus to drill for gas reserves. However, Turkey invaded and interrupted the mission as the Turkish vessel named 'Barbados' violated the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Greece, Cyprus with the demand of having the opportunity to drill the Aegean Sea for hydrocarbons. This act triggered a diplomatic interference with Israel on the one hand, trying to convince Turkey to

respect Cyprus maritime boundaries as well as their natural right to explore their seas for hydrocarbons and on the other hand, Cyprus that wanted the immediate withdrawal of the Turkish vessel from their maritime zone. However, Turkish President Erdogan didn't agree to remove the 'Barbados' until they agreed in the distribution of the undersea gas reserves that would be discovered. (Mavi Marmara: Why did Israel stop the Gaza flotilla?, 2016)

Therefore, the energy-related insecurities of the RoC and the insecurity concerning Turkey, led the island to seek external support, namely Israel and Greece. This co-operation provides Cyprus with the security over the defence capabilities as its power was increased. Furthermore, the exploitation of the natural gas reserves of Cyprus was of fundamental economic importance for the island as the 2013 economic crisis threatened the country with economic collapse. (Tziarras, Israel-Cyprus-Greece: a 'Comfortable' Quasi-Alliance, 2016)

Greece

Greece has finally acknowledged the importance of the geostrategic position of the country in terms of transporting the natural gas from the eastern Mediterranean through its territory. This is a positive progress as it will benefit economically the country by the investments and the creation of new employment opportunities in Greece.

To begin with the country has suffered through the years by the economic crisis and the harsh terms of the EU's troika. The country already holds a pipeline that transfers gas from Azerbaijan to Europe. Also Israel has begun to form strong ties with Greece especially after the deterioration of the relation with the historical rival of Greece and Turkey. The improvement of the relations between Israel and Greece create new economic opportunities as Israel is aiming to transfer its own gas to Europe through Greece. Furthermore, the Tsipras government is positively inclined towards new foreign investments in the country as it will be beneficial economically. It is important to point out that both Europe and the United States try to avoid an agreement between Greece with Russia as it is tempted due to cultural and religious relatedness. (Gingoli, 2016) However Europe's intentions are to cease the dependency on Russia's natural gas, especially after the Crimea crisis. (Logothetis, 2013)

To conclude, there were multiple reasons that favoured the trilateral quasi-alliance. First of all, Greece faces a long-term political and economic crisis which has exhausted the country

and developed the need of alternative sources of profit. Therefore, the ambition of a possible discovery of hydrocarbons in the Aegean had risen. On the other hand, Turkey continuously invades the national airspace and maritime space of Greece provoking insecurity in the country to such a degree that the Greek nation searched political and economic security in an inter-state co-operation. (Tziarras, Israel-Cyprus-Greece: a 'Comfortable' Quasi-Alliance, 2016) Furthermore, Turkey not only threatens the sovereignty of Greece in the eastern Aegean but is also questioning it.

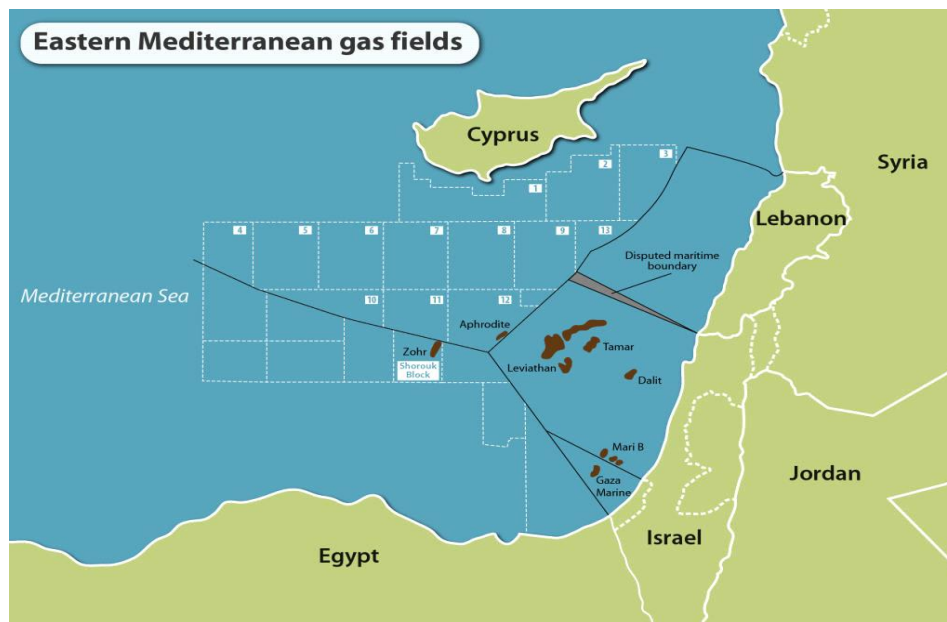
Israel

In the case of Israel, after losing Turkey from an important geopolitical political ally, the nation of Israel started searching for other important regional allies. The on-going hostile relations with the neighbour Arab states, including the Arab uprisings and the crisis with Iran and its nuclear program are a few important reasons that turned Israel to co-operate with Greece and Cyprus. Furthermore, the profit expectations and the threat of Turkey had contributed in the turn of Israel towards Greece and Cyprus. That is because, before the Turkish apology in 2013, Turkey challenged repeatedly Israel by cutting the diplomatic ties and by blocking the state to participate in the NATO Chicago Summit in 2012. (Tziarras, Israel-Cyprus-Greece: a 'Comfortable' Quasi-Alliance, 2016) However, the energy factor is a great stimulant for both countries to reach reconciliation. In 13 October of 2016, the Israeli Minister of Energy, Mr. Yuval Steinitz visited Turkey, which was very important as it was the first visit after six years, and discussed about the importance of a co-operation on the energy sector. More specifically, the Minister explained the importance of Turkey to participating in connecting Europe through pipelines which will carry gas. Furthermore, the Israeli Minister underlined their disposal in supplying energy in the Gaza Strip which is ruled by the Hamas with the contribution of Turkey. (Gingoli, 2016) A possible alliance between Israel and Turkey would help stabilize the tension in the area coming from Turkey and the Arab world as well as increase the profits. However, there is a need for a great effort from both countries in order to reach reconciliation as there is the issue of the Gaza blockage. According to President Erdogan, there is the chance of reconciliation of their relations only when there is provided in the Gaza Strip 'all kind of aid'. (Jazeera, 2014) The entire scenery is a considerable force to turn Israel to cooperate with Cyprus and Greece rather than Turkey.

3.5 Economic reasons

Chart 3.2

The gas discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean



Source: Cristol News, Politics, economics still stifles Eastern Mediterranean gas

The energy factor

The energy factor consists one of the most important factors of the trilateral co-operation. More specifically, Israel and Cyprus have discovered an excessive amount of natural gas under the sea. Israel fields are Tamar and Leviathan, with an estimated 10 trillion cubic feet and 19 tcf respectively and the Cypriot field is Aphrodite with reserves of 5.2 tcf. Although the estimated reserves are poor for the global market, for the two countries had a positive economic impact as well as security in terms of energy and the reserves can satisfy in some extent the European market. (Henderson, September 2013) However, there is yet to be discovered a large amount of natural gas in Leviathan and Aphrodite fields as well as other new fields. The good news for the economy of the two countries is that 40 percent of the natural gas reserves can be exported, as it was estimated back in 2013. Furthermore the Norwegian company Petroleum Geo-Service had conducted a study in 2012 and 2013 that indicated that Greece may have resources of oil and gas in the south of island of Crete and the Ionian Sea. (Giannakopoulos, 2016) As a result the trilateral co-operation can be also a profit

co-operation through the co-exploitation of the natural gas reserves of Leviathan, Tamar and Aphrodite through exportations in Europe. It is important for the trilateral co-operation to have strategy over the delivering of gas supplies. The most likely target market for gas exportations is Europe. In November 2012 Israel, Greece and Cyprus signed an agreement in order to build an Eastern Mediterranean corridor for the needs of transportation gas from Israel, Greece and Cyprus. There are many alternatives for the construction of energy corridors. The three main are: a) a joint Israel-Cyprus LNG at Vassilikos b) a LNG plant in onshore Israel and c) an East-Med Pipeline which would carry Cypriot and Israeli gas to Europe. (Tagliapietra, 2013) The most important project is the 'EuroAsia Interconnector' which is a power cable beneath the sea that will connect Israel, Cyprus and Greece in order to transfer cheap electrical energy. More specifically, the Interconnector will link the Leviathan resources with the Greek natural gas in Central Peloponnese or Attica. (Tsakiris, 2014) This project is considered the most appealing according to Benjamin Netanyahu and the Greek state. However, this pipeline is a challenging technical infrastructure as it will have to be located in 3,000 meters depth in the Aegean Sea. (Tsakiris, 2014) Furthermore, those plans of the trilateral co-operation as well as co-exploitation of the natural gas threaten the sovereignty of Turkey in the area as regional hub in Europe.

The discovery of gas reserves had the analysts claim that there is a potential of transformation of the regional and global energy markets. In detail, Greece will benefit its energy security. Also it will decrease Europe's dependence on Russian gas reserves as well as limiting the possibility of importing natural gas from Ukraine regarding the Ukraine-Russian conflict. Furthermore, the prices would reduce as the market will liberate. Also, Israel and Cyprus will benefit greatly from the transportation of gas to Europe using Greece as a transit state. Indeed the reserves could form alternative gas exportation to Asia and Europe and thus limiting the dependence on Russia. Furthermore, the discoveries can boost the economies of each country by providing job opportunities and increasing the domestic consume.

3.6 Prospects

The quasi alignment of Israel Greece and Cyprus has been formed because of the Turkish factor as a threat and the natural resources discovered as it has been already explained. Furthermore, the co-operation formation has further accelerated by the fact of the

deterioration of the Turkish-Israel relations and the discovery of the natural gas reserves by the RoC and Israel. According to Tziarras, if the relations between Israel and Turkey had not been deteriorated, there would have been a co-operation between Israel and Turkey as they would have both great benefits from this co-operation in terms of energy security.

More specifically, the term energy security is explained by Winzer as the ability of the states to have unlimited access to energy supplies satisfying their demands in an affordable and stable price without extreme fluctuations in the prices such as increasing the cost significantly. Furthermore, the sudden change of the prices could be a result of terrorism, oil nationalism and political instability in countries that produce oil and gas, such as the Middle East countries and Caucasus. (Constantinos Adamides, 2015) Consequently, the interaction between energy-related countries leads to a further securitization or desecuritization of the relations in terms of political and military dimension. In the Israel Greece Cyprus co-operation, the key country is Israel for the securitization of the relations between Turkey and Cyprus and Turkey and Israel because of the energy factor. However, further improvement or deterioration of the relations of each country between them, would trigger a negative approach by the third country. For those reasons it is important to examine the Israel, Greece, Cyprus co-operation based on the Israel-Turkish relations.

To begin with Greece and Cyprus are benefitted from the quasi-alliance as Israel is a strong and regional power. (Tziarras, Israel-Cyprus-Greece: a 'Comfortable' Quasi-Alliance, 2016) However, the possibility of improvement of the Israel- Turkish relations after the Israel apology to the Turkish state challenged the partnership. In a possible scenario, the reconciliation of the Israel-Turkish relations would imply that will co-operate and Greece Cyprus wouldn't be the best option. Consequently, along with Israel apology to Turkey there have been reassertions from the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that the partnership ties with Cyprus would not be affected. However, the partnership is considered a quasi-alliance because Israel doesn't commit to Greece and Cyprus, meaning that Israel would face the dilemma of choosing between Turkey and Greece, Cyprus to co-operate. This type of the partnership gives the opportunity to each country to act politically according to their interests and more specifically giving the possibility of co-operation with Turkey. Accordingly, with the resolution of the Cyprus issue there would be improvement of the Cyprus-Turkish relations and consequently Greece-Turkey relations. More specifically, there has been an effort to ease the tension between Greece and Turkey since 1999 when the

Presidents of the two countries, Kostas Simitis and Bulent Ecevit respectively began to discuss over a possible agreement and continued until recently. In the discussions being held the topics are focused on co-operations for tourism, environmental protection, investment and energy. It is important to point out that Turkey and Greece were linked with a gas pipeline named Azeri since 2007. However, because of the lack of trust between the two countries there haven't reached an agreement although the economic profits from this co-operation would be remarkable for Greece. (Athanasapoulou, 2011)

In addition, Israel may have to face the dilemma of choosing to co-operate with either Turkey or Cyprus and Greece. Although the relations between Israel and Turkey are characterized by mutual animosity, the Israeli daily *Haaretz* informed that there have been some efforts from the Turkish conglomerate, Zorlu Group to establish an undersea pipeline from Israel's port, Haifa to Turkey's southern coast. This pipeline is estimated to cost \$2 billion and to be 600km long. However, the project had been rejected by Israel because of the troubled relations of the two countries. Furthermore, Israel examines to build a pipeline in Greece or Egypt, but there are many difficulties because of the political instability in Egypt and the economic crisis in Greece. Therefore, the situation is forcing Turkey and Israel to co-operate and that could threaten the Israel Greece Cyprus co-operation. (Idiz, February 2013) Nevertheless, Israel is cautious towards Turkish policies and will continue to be as long as the Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan remains in power. It is important to note that a possible energy co-operation wouldn't ease the political tensions between the countries although it is more possible a cease of the co-operation to have as a result the improvement of the political relations. To continue, recent discussions between the leaders of Greece, Israel and Cyprus have agreed in speeding the process of building the pipeline gas from Israel to Europe until the year of 2025.

To conclude, the trilateral co-operation of Israel, Greece and Cyprus will redefine the scenery in the Mediterranean, transforming the area in an energy hub for Europe. This energy hub will help to decrease the dependence of Europe on Russian natural gas as well as will benefit economically each country. Also, the trilateral co-operation could provide stability and prosperity in the Southern Mediterranean that has suffered immensely through the latest years. (Logothetis, 2013)

Chapter 4

Causes and prospects of Egypt, Greece and Cyprus cooperation

4.1 Introduction

The diplomatic relations between Greece and Egypt started in August 1833 by the counsel Mihail Tositsas. (Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs) Generally, the two countries share a common history since ancient years due to their geographic proximity and the fact that they have shared many experiences. In detail, ancient Egypt was the predominant civilization in the Mediterranean for almost 30 centuries B.C. The accomplishments of such a great culture had a great impact in many other civilizations. (staff, 2009) Mainly, the Greeks had been influenced from this ancient civilization as they had commercial exchanges. There are many evidence of the Egyptian influence not only in the economic sector but also in the cultural such as scientifically, religious and philosophical teaching. More specifically, in the Greek art there is noticed the influence in the archaic sculptures that had been found in the ancient towns of Golgos and Idalia in Cyprus where there was standing figures with their arms straight and closely to their body. Also, the advanced science in Egypt was utilised by the Greeks as a base to cultivate further their developments. For instance, in medicine the anatomical knowledge of the Egyptians that is evident through the process of mummification helped the Greeks to write extensively about the subject. (Hanrahan, Autumn 1961) There are so many magnificent evidences of the presence of Egyptian thought in Greek culture. Nowadays the economic bonds among Egypt and Greece are very strong. In particular over 150 Greek enterprises have their base in Egypt. Furthermore, the relations are developing rapidly in many sectors such as political, economic, defence and cultural. The two countries are trying to build a fruitful co-operation based on mutual interests as well as benefits. Greece's position towards the resolution of the Middle East problem, which is a problem that deeply concerns Egypt, helps to maintain the excellent bilateral relations.

4.2 The tripartite co-operation

When the President Sisi took over the power in Egypt, Cyprus and Greece were positive and supportive towards the new government. The majority of the European countries have criticised the Morsi's overthrow. The Cypriot Foreign Minister, Kasoulides was the first to welcome the new government with a visit in Egypt in December 2013. As following, Cyprus had been benefited by Egypt in the meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation on New York in October 2014 where, Sisi 'demanded the denial of observer status from the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.' Naturally, Greece under the President of Samaras and latter of Tsipras also supported this idea. Greece took the opportunity to co-operate with Egypt which is an important country in the Eastern Mediterranean and they share common hostile relations with Turkey. Furthermore, the benefits from an energy co-operation are very promising as well as of common interest. The beginning of the tripartite alliance has been achieved with the trilateral summit in Cairo on November 2014 in which President Sisi, Samaras, and Anastasiades, "cognizant of the immense challenges to the stability, security and prosperity of the Eastern Mediterranean," pledged to "nurture our tripartite cooperation ever stronger for years to come' (Lerman, February 2016)

In general, the partnership is based on the productive dialogue of the three leaders in order to achieve their aspirations. The trilateral meetings are being held every six months and the partnership has a mechanism that doesn't want to threat other countries but rather wants to promote peace, stability and regional co-operation in the Eastern Mediterranean. Generally, the partnership is based on common values such as peace and prosperity in the Mediterranean region especially because the area is unstable and faces many challenges which will not only benefit the countries involved but also the Euro-Mediterranean co-operation. (Hellenic Republic Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

4.2.1 Summits

On the second trilateral summit on April 2015, the three leaders discussed over the possibilities of strengthening the economic co-operation given emphasis in the field of energy and merchant shipping. Also they agreed in establishing their political terms of security, defence and combatting terrorism. In the latest summit, namely the fourth Summit Meeting in

Cairo in 2016, the three leaders agreed to a co-operation of mutual respect, joint ownership, common interests and reciprocal commitments. (Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

More specifically, in the Summit Meeting in Cairo in 11 October 2016 the three leaders took their final decision over the empowerment of the trilateral co-operation. Cyprus, Egypt and Greece agreed to work in projects in the field of energy, maritime transport, tourism and agriculture. Furthermore, the presidents of the three countries agreed for mutual respect over independence, sovereignty of each country's peace and friendly relations between them. It is also important to add that in the Summit it was highlighted the importance of the trilateral co-operation not only for the three countries but also for the Egyptian-EU partnership which will bring peace and prosperity in Middle East and Europe. This will be achieved by common agreements and strategies to counterbalance terrorism and extremist ideologies as well as migration, sustainable development and economic prosperity. Also, the three Presidents agreed in projects in the energy sector, maritime transport, tourism and agriculture. (Cyprus Fact Sheet, 2016)

4.3 The reasons for the formation of the tripartite alliance

In the case of Egypt, Greece and Cyprus alliance the main reasons for their co-operation can be classified as diplomatic as well as economic. In the first case, the troubled relations between Turkey and Egypt affected the choice of Egypt to co-operate with Greece and Cyprus, despite the fact that their relations with the latter have been excellent. On the other hand, the prospects of the exploitation of the natural gas reserves that have been discovered in Egypt, as well as in Cyprus can substantially benefit the three countries. More specifically, in 2003 Shell discovered natural gas in the seabed of Egypt, in the Nile Delta region block. Generally this block is estimated to hold 1.5 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. (Ayla Gürel, 2013) However it is important to examine the energy problem that the country faces.

4.3.1. Egypt's energy outlook

Egypt is a country that is considered to be a regional leader in the Middle East. Its control of the Suez Canal, cold peace with Israel, concern about neighbouring Gaza, mediation and

interest in the Israel-Palestine conflict, and the marginalization of the Muslim Brotherhood are all points of significance. (Mason, 2017) Not only, Egypt has a strong cultural heritage and long history but also is the most crowded country with an estimated population of more than 80 million people. However, during the second decade of the twenty-first century Egypt faced many challenges and more specifically the energy sector of the country faced many changes.

To begin with, the domestic demands over energy consumption increased remarkably because of the continuously raising population as well as the economic development that increased the demand in all sectors, such as residential, transportation and industrial. Another fact that contributes in the deterioration of the energy sector of Egypt is the high demand of export obligations. Also, the political instabilities and the heavy regulations have transformed Egypt from a potential powerful exporter to a heavy importer.

4.3.2 The Egyptian gas discoveries

The first gas discoveries in Egypt began in the second half of 1980s in the Egyptians Mediterranean Sea and more specifically in the Nile Delta, north of Alexandria and Port Said. The International oil companies (IOCs) have invested in the gas reserves that have been discovered with the result of increasing the domestic use of gas extremely. In particular, almost all power stations of Egypt are using gas. In addition gas is being used in heavy industry and petrochemical plants as well as in several residential areas of Cairo. Also, Egypt has been exporting gas to Middle East and European states as liquefied natural gas (LNG) or piped gas. However, despite the increased gas discoveries in the offshore Mediterranean, more specifically from 36.4 trillion cubic feet (TCF) in 1998-99 to 77.2 TCF in 2008-9 the domestic consumption also has been risen and thus it is necessary the discovery of new reserves. Statistically, over 55 per cent of the domestic energy consumption is made by gas fuel. Because of the high dependency on gas fuel, the International oil companies (IOCs) organized expenditures in order to discover new gas reserves in the Mediterranean. However, the situation needs a more thorough and careful look as to be balanced, so the Ministry of Petroleum had agreed in a policy in which one-third of the gas reserves will be for domestic use, one-third will be reserved for future generation and lastly the remaining one-third will be used for exports. However, the Ministry of Petroleum has not yet approved any export expenditures since mid-2008 because there is yet to counterbalance the use of the gas supplies with the remaining reserves. (Khadduri, 2012)

More specifically, in 2015 the discovery of the large Zohr gas field in the offshore Egypt was very promising not only as a regional gas outlook but also for new cooperation prospects. Also, the gas discoveries of the Zohr field has created new horizons of opportunities for the President of Egypt, Al-Sisi as the country is dealing with economic difficulties and energy challenges. According to ENI which proceeded appraisal drilling in the Egyptian block confirmed that the Zohr field holds gigantic gas reserves with the possibility of the discovery of more gas blocks beneath Zohr. However, the Zohr gas field although it is considered the largest field discovered in the Eastern Mediterranean will only serve the demanding domestic needs of Egypt. In order to achieve its self-sufficiency, in 2016, the country had agreed with BP and other companies to drill new gas reserves, which is estimated to be self-sufficient until 2020 and to begin the exportations by 2022. (Charles Ellinas, 2016) This will benefit the Egyptian government as the President will have the opportunity to invest in other abandoned sectors of social life, such as healthcare and educational system.

4.3.3 Egypt's expectations

After the gas discoveries of the Zohr field, the Egyptian government expressed the potential and will of becoming a regional energy hub in the area. This ambition derives also from the energy infrastructures that are already available in the country and they are of great importance. Furthermore, Egypt has offered more blocks for oil and gas explorations in big companies with the purpose to increase the energy production and to feed the demands of the country. Excluding the gas reserves from Zohr field, it is estimated that Egypt has 2,000 bcm of gas for the domestic consumption. The target of Egypt is to become self-sufficient until 2020 and as it seems from the LNG import contracts signed they have a very optimistic point of view. (Charles Ellinas, 2016)

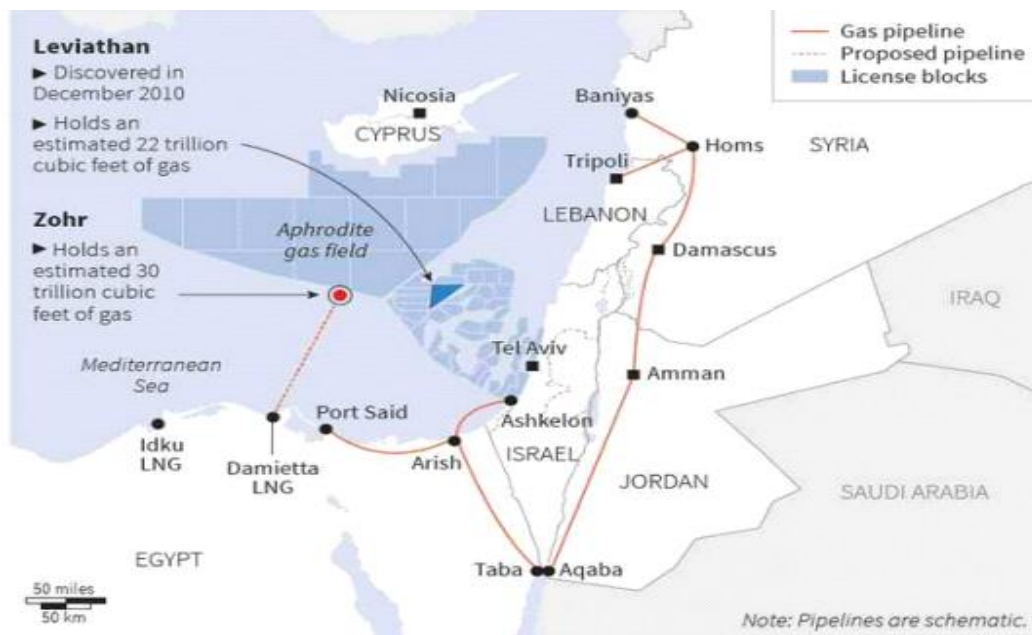
On the other hand, Turkey also claims the role of being an energy hub in the area. Turkey has a very good geopolitical position as it can potentially become a transit hub for Asia, the Caspian Sea, the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean towards Europe. However, the importance of Turkey can be undermined as there are many security problems arisen and troubled relations with its neighbours. (Charles Ellinas, 2016) Furthermore, the existing pipelines in Egypt and more specifically the Idku and Damietta on the Egyptian shores have the potential to export gas from Egypt to Israel, Jordan, Syrian and Lebanon, although they

haven't been utilized yet. The development and the new opportunities of Egypt will help the country to alleviate the dependency on Saudi Arabia and the Gulf monarchies which are the main political and economic supporters of the Egyptian government.

To continue with as already mentioned the relationship between Egypt and the Greek part of Cyprus are very good. On the other hand, the relations of Egypt and Israel have been intense in the recent years because of the discovery of the Zohr field. The Zohr field is estimated to hold 30 tcf natural gas which make it bigger field than the Cypriot and Israeli gas field combined together.(Baconi, 2017)In detail Israel got threatened because Egypt was a remarkable competitor in the export agreements. For those reasons, the two countries got engaged in agreements in order to create a strong economic co-operation as well as military and security co-operation. Furthermore, the Egyptian President Al-Sisi relied on the Israeli intelligence politically along with the pro-Israeli lobby in the USA, because in that way the upheaval of Al-Sisi in the government would not be considered as a coup de tat with the help of the USA and thus it won't be needed a military aid. Overall, Egypt maintains good relations with everyone in the area except from Turkey.

Chart 4.1

The map of the gas pipelines in the Eastern Mediterranean



Source: Egypt Independent, Eni subsidiary Saipem wins start-up contract for Zohr gas field

Summarizing, the energy problem that Egypt is facing is enormous. For that reason in 2014 Egypt began to discuss a possible diplomatic cooperation with Greece and Cyprus in order to fulfil the energy demands by importing gas from Cyprus. During the meeting and according to the former President of Cyprus, Mr. Anastasiades, he stated the unique opportunity of a trilateral cooperation as the three countries share a geographic proximity and the exploitation of the gas discoveries can contribute to the prosperity and stability of the three countries. More specifically, the meeting was held in Cairo in 2014 and the leaders of Greece, Cyprus and Egypt former President Mr. Samaras, Mr. Anastasiades and Mr. Al Sisi discussed that they had a common target towards Turkey with which all three countries have tense relations. In detail, Turkey is questioning the sovereignty of Cyprus over the maritime boundaries and their exploitation mainly because she also wants to have sovereignty over the Aegean Sea in order to have the opportunity to explore and exploit natural gas reserves.

Generally, Turkey's role in the region is very important not only because is a large energy importer but also because she can serve as a regional hub in order to deliver the hydrocarbons to the world market. The possibility of exploring further natural gas reserves has triggered the question of delineation of the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) of the Eastern Mediterranean countries. However, this caused an additional dispute because of the Cyprus issue and their opposition of delineation of EEZ for Turkey and because of the frozen relations of Turkey and Israel. (Grigoriadis, Fall 2014)

4.4 Egypt-Turkey relations

It is important to note the deterioration of the Egyptian-Turkish relationship as it was a major reason that helped the formation of the partnership of Egypt, Cyprus and Greece. (Tziarras, Fall 2015) This partnership began to develop after the ouster of the Muslim Brotherhood from the government which was not accepted by Turkey and the rise of Sisi in power. (Hellenic Republic Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

The Middle East countries are facing numerous problems and one of them is the troubled relations between Turkey and Egypt. After the fall of President Hosni Mubarak in 2011, Turkey became an important regional supporter to Egypt. However, when the new President, Mohammad Morsi was ousted by his office in 2013, the Turkish support switched.

Nevertheless, Turkey became a strong opponent towards the Egyptian government when General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi took the power in Egypt. (Soner Cagaptay, 2015)

To begin with Egypt and Turkey share many similarities in the region of Eastern Mediterranean. First of all, there are the two countries with the majority of Muslim community in the area. Furthermore, both countries have aspirations to become a regional power in the area as well as to become leaders of the Sunni Islam. The tension between the two countries dates back in 1867 when Egypt became semi-independent from the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, the relations between Turkey and Egypt have faced many fluctuations since 1925 that the two countries exchanged diplomatic representatives. However dating back in the earlier years, Turkish- Egyptian relations begin to improve when former Egyptian President Mubarak resigned in 2011 after the massive protests of the Egyptian people. To continue with, after this incident Erdogan presented Turkey as a model of an Islamic democratic state. The Egyptian people supported President Erdogan and the Egyptian newspapers suggested an alignment with Turkey in order to stress Israel. On the other hand, Erdogan recommended a visit to Gaza strip as an indication of support to the Hamas and the Gazan population. (Soner Cagaptay, 2015) Also, in 2011 Turkey has been supportive towards the Egyptian people and their demands in the Tahrir Revolution. During the Hosni government, Turkey and Egypt had developed very close relations thus the Egyptian government had decided not to take part in the Greek-Turkish dispute over the delineation of the maritime zones in the Eastern Mediterranean as well as has refused to have meetings with Greece without the presence of Turkey. However, after the military coup of 2013 the Egyptian government changed position in relation to the delineation of the maritime borders after the strong criticism of Erdogan towards the Egyptian coup.

In general, the Turkish support towards Egypt was connected with the support for the Muslim Brotherhood and the disapproval of Erdogan of the military as a ruler. As follows, the relations strengthened in 2012 when Turkey has been supportive of Mohammad Morsi who won the presidential elections and was a representative of the Muslim Brotherhood. However, the relations began to deteriorate after the Egyptian coup de tat that was held in 3 July of 2013. The result of the coup was the ousting of the President Hosni and that disappointed the Turkish government. More specifically, on July 2013 Sisi announced the collapse of the Morsi government with the help of the army with the justification to prevent an Egyptian civil war. Consequently, the fragile relationship broke and Erdogan opposed

towards the Sisi's government strongly. In August 2013, Turkey asked the UN Council to impose sanctions to the government of Sisi because according to the Turkish President Announcement on the *Al Jazeera* 'does not accept the [Sisi] regime that has undertaken a military coup.' Recep Tayyip Erdogan characterised Sisi as an 'illegitimate tyrant'. (Soner Cagaptay, 2015) According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Turkey the relations deteriorated between the two countries because Turkey is a nation that supports the democracy and the free will of the people and the ousting of Hosni was considered as an act of democratization. After the anti-Turkish protests in front of the Turkish ambassador in Cairo and the cancellation of joint naval manoeuvres in the Eastern Mediterranean, in November 2013 the Egyptian Foreign Ministry told Botsali to leave the country.

Since the sudden interrupt of the relationship, the regional politics have become even more complicated as well as fierce. In November 2014, Sisi took part in the trilateral summit with Cyprus and Greece with the aim to achieve energy co-operation by supplying through an undersea pipeline natural gas, from Cyprus to Egypt. Sisi seek to challenge the Turkish power in the area which doesn't recognize Cyprus and their right to gas explorations.

4.5 Prospects

4.5.1 Natural gas exports

The discovery of natural gas reserves in Aphrodite field in Cyprus was very positive as the reserves could be sufficient for the domestic demands of the island as well as for export possibilities. Cyprus has some options to utilize the Aphrodite gas field by transporting the gas reserves through pipelines. More specifically, Cyprus will either build an LNG pipeline to deliver gas to Europe or will deliver the supplies through LNG pipelines that already exist in neighbouring countries. Naturally, the best worth-profit solution would be to use the existing LNG pipelines of Egypt to transfer the gas as the construction of a new one in Cyprus is extremely costly. From this solution, will also benefit Egypt as the Egyptian LNG terminal, named Idku is only using the 10% of its capacity because of the energy problem that Egypt is facing and the gas reserves from the Zohr field is intended to cover the domestic demands of the country. (Ratner, 2016) Consequently, on August 2016 Cyprus and Egypt signed an agreement in which Cyprus will supply Egypt with natural gas through an undersea

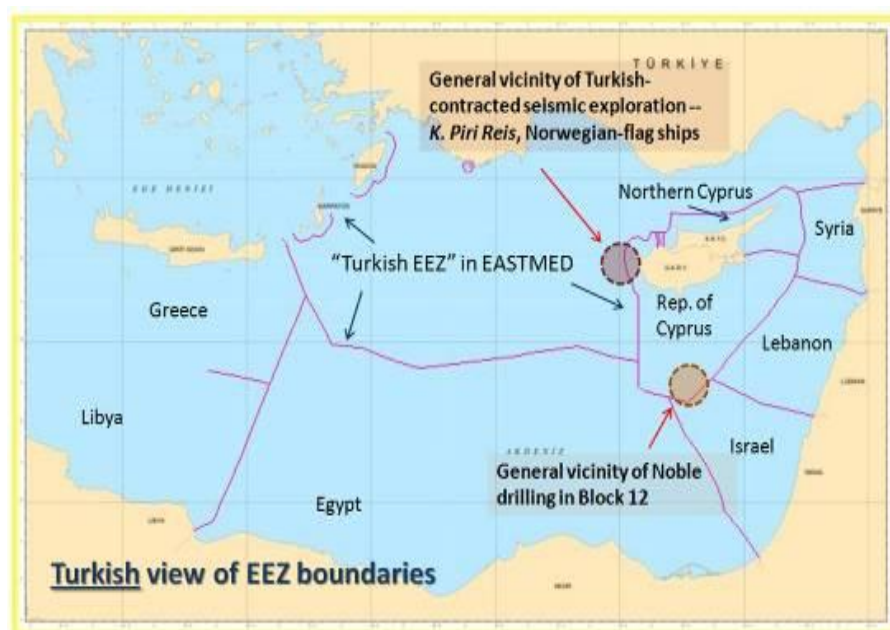
pipeline. The two countries are aiming to build an undersea pipeline which will connect the two countries and transmit natural gas to Egypt. The pipeline will be ready and operational in 2020. Egypt wants the natural gas for domestic consumption but also for re-exporting it. (DW, 2016)

According to the Cypriot Energy Minister, Yiorgos Lakkotrypis the first transportation of gas is estimated to proceed in 2020 and 2022. The Egyptian Petroleum Minister Tarek el-Molla expressed their desire to become a regional hub in the Eastern Mediterranean saying that ‘is part of the development of the east Mediterranean gas as a whole and I think our strategy optimally is to position ourselves as an energy hub in the region’. However, the Turkish Cypriot part of the island has objections towards the deal as their rights in drilling aren’t recognised globally. The Cypriot government had said that they will share the natural gas reserves with the Turkish Cypriot part when a solution for unification is founded. (Tribune, 2016)

Furthermore, Giannakopoulos stated that ‘as for Egypt, if President el-Sisi continues with his reforms in the gas sector, reducing subsidies and raising the price of natural gas, thus enabling the energy majors invested in Egypt and those interested in entering it to undertake comprehensive development of untapped resources in the country, Egypt will return to being a gas exporting country within several years; the recent Eni find substantiates this forecast in this regard.’ (Giannakopoulos, 2016)

Chart 4.2

Turkish view of the EEZ boundaries



Source: Logothetis Georgia, Briefing Memo: The Aphrodite Gas Field and the Southern Mediterranean New triangle

4.5.2 The Cyprus issue

The Cyprus problem consists of great importance as it is a key for the area. Turkey disrupts the process of exploration as well as exploitation of the gas reserves of Cyprus as there isn't found a solution yet. (Charles Ellinas, 2016)

In the recent years a swift has been made in the foreign policy of Cyprus. More specifically, in the years 2013 and 2015 the leaders of Cyprus, Nikos Anastasiades and Turkey, Mustafa Akinci have brought in the table the reunification of the island as a possible conflict relief that will also bring economic profits in both Cyprus and Turkey. The two Presidents are determined to form a negotiation plan that will determine the important issue of land and property. On May 2016 the two leaders have had many meetings in order to discuss crucial points for the agreement of both communities. The terms of the solutions were the maintenance of a two-area and two-community federation. The two leaders are supposed to meet and create a referendum in 2017. However, there are many issues that the two communities need to improve, such as the trust between the Cypriot and Turkish community,

the territory guarantees and the presence of 35,000 Turkish soldiers. In addition, the Greek Cyprus part although the majority approves the reunification, there is a part of the radical right-wing that is growing. In 2003, the Annan plan failed for reunification because the Greek Cyprus party voted against it while the Turkish party was in favour of the reunification. It is important to point out that a possible unification of Cyprus will trigger an economic growth as the GDP is estimated to arise by 4.5 per cent every year. This will be caused from the jointly exploitation of both Cyprus and Turkey of the natural gas reserves. Generally, Cyprus is an island that is located in an important geostrategic position as well as owns many natural riches. It is not a coincidence that many hegemonic powers such as Russia and NATO alliance has military base on the island as well as they have trade relationships.

To conclude, in the recent years, the relations between Cyprus and Israel and Egypt are very good meanwhile the relations with the Gulf monarchies have been intensified. The Gulf monarchies can help the small republic to manage the great fortune that Cyprus has inherited and discovered from the Aphrodite field. The tripartite co-operation can operate as a peace factor in the Eastern Mediterranean by strengthening the relations between the regional countries and also can provide great profits to each country.

Conclusion

The co-operation of Israel, Cyprus and Greece and Egypt, Cyprus, Greece cannot be considered as an alliance because of a series of reasons. According to Tziarras it is considered as a 'quasi'- alliance.

To begin with Israel, Cyprus and Greece co-operation, although there are many reasons for the formation of this alliances, namely material profits from the gas reserves exploitation as well as 'fear of other states' (Tziarras, Israel-Cyprus-Greece: a 'Comfortable' Quasi-Alliance, 2016)in particular Turkey, this partnership cannot be classified as a formal alliance, as it is NATO because the states haven't signed a military treaty.

More specifically Sun has stated the main features that distinguish a formal alliance to a quasi-alliance in six. First of all, a quasi-alliance is formed between two or three countries;

secondly, the elites of the countries establish tacit agreements and its management 'relies on mutual expectation based on communiqués, joint declarations, memoranda, treaties of friendship and co-operation, declarations on the press conference...instead of military treaties.' In particular, the three countries haven't developed any military co-operation in fear of further geopolitical deterioration in the eastern Mediterranean and especially with Turkey. That is because in the case of a possible military involvement between the trilateral alliances, the relations with Turkey would be further threatened. Furthermore, a possible military co-operation would face a serious drawback if any of the three countries decided that they wanted reconciliation with Turkey. For those reasons, the partnership is considered a 'comfortable' quasi- alliance that gives the freedom to each country to fulfil their political as well economic interests accordingly with Turkey. (Sun, 2009)

On the other hand, in the case of Egypt, Greece and Cyprus co-operation fulfils the criteria of a formal alliance as it had been emerged for the energy-related profits as well as because Turkey is perceived as a potential security threat. This co-operation formalised its nature in 21 November of 2017 when it was signed a Greek-Egyptian military agreement to ensure the peace and security in the Eastern Mediterranean. (Mytilineos, November 2017)

Later on, there have been held Greek-Egyptian a six-day military exercises of joint air and naval military exercises from 29 October to 4 November 2017. More specifically, the Medusa exercises included landing ships, frigates, submarine, warplanes and helicopters. However, this triggered an opposition from the Turkish Foreign Ministry that characterised this military exercises hostile acts as well as violating the international law. (Greek-Egyptian military exercises irritate Turkey , November 2017)

To conclude, the partnership has the characteristics of a formal alliance but the countries involved still have the freedom to act according to their political and economic interests.

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