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The 9th Trilateral Summit of Cyprus, Greece and Israel:

Türkiye's struggle for power in the Eastern
Mediterranean, the Competition between India and
China in the Middle East, and the New Era of
“Economic Peace”

By

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Abstract

The trilateral partnership between Cyprus, Greece and Israel was inaugurated in ministerial level in 2013 – mostly due to common interests of economic nature – and was later supported by the United States. Since its establishment, nine Trilateral Summits have been taken place, the most recent of which was held on September 4th, 2023 in Nicosia (Cyprus), and participated by the Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic (Kyriakos Mitsotakis), the President of the Republic of Cyprus (Nikos Christodoulides), and the Prime Minister of the State of Israel (Benjamin Netanyahu).

Cooperation between the three states has been broaden to include many sectors, such as energy, defense industry, emergency response, environment, health, technology and innovation, tourism and diaspora. In the context of the aforementioned US supported partnership, Cyprus, Greece and Israel have signed a significant number of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), developing two major underwater energy infrastructure projects – the “East-Med” natural gas pipeline and the “EuroAsia Interconnector” electricity cable – and most recently announced that their next summit is going to be participated by India, which aims at the development of another major infrastructure project, the “India - Middle East -Europe Economic Corridor” (IMEC).

The aim of this paper is to analyze how this trilateral partnership affects peace & security in regional and international level. Its bibliography is based on books, academic papers, news websites, and official documents. The research method includes a brief analysis of the political background that led to the establishment of the partnership, a short reference regarding the context of the previous eight trilateral summits, the review of the outcome of the 9th trilateral summit –through the respective Joint Statement– and the main recent developments, and several future considerations regarding peace & security in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East.

Key Words: Greece, Cyprus, Israel, Türkiye, India, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, USA, EU, Middle East, Eastern Mediterranean, Energy Security, Partnership

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Table of Abbreviations

AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative (One Belt, One Road))
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
EEC	European Economic Community
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EMGF	East Mediterranean Gas Forum
EU	European Union
IMEC	India - Middle East - Europe Economic Corridor
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NOTAM	Notice to Air Men
PGII	Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment
PMCE	Permanent Ministerial Committee on Energy
PM	Prime Minister
R&T	Research & Technology
RoC	Republic of Cyprus
SG	Secretary General
SoS	Secretary of State
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Introduction

Since the beginning of history, the human quest for security has forced people to cooperate in many aspects of ordinary life. Respectively, in state level many countries have developed schemes of cooperation in various fields – such as defense, economy, health, agriculture, commerce, technology, etc. – seeking to maximize **national security**. In this context, states promote their participation in regional and international organizations, defense alliances, and bilateral or multilateral partnerships. The trilateral partnership between Cyprus, Greece and Israel was inaugurated at ministerial level in 2013, due to energy discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Political Background of the Trilateral Partnership

The **Greek – Israeli** relations were initially poor, as Greece had recognized the *de facto* –and not the *de jure*– independence of the State of Israel in **1949**, also voting against its application for being a UN member. In addition, when the Israeli forces occupied the West Bank in **1967**, Greece considered it as an illegal action similar to the occupation of the northern part of the Cyprus Republic by the Turkish Armed Forces¹. The bilateral relations were amplified after **1987**, the year that Greece held the Presidency of the then European Economic Community (EEC), leading to the *de jure* recognition of the State of Israel in **1990**². Since then, especially after **2010**, the two parts have signed several cooperation agreements and exchanged high-level visits, enhancing their bilateral relations³.

The **Cypriot - Israeli** relations were also poor in the past, mostly due to the strong ties between Cyprus and Greece. Israel though – in the context of maintaining good relations with its neighboring countries– established an embassy in Cyprus upon its independence in **1960**, while the Cypriot one was established in Tel-Aviv in **1994**. Their bilateral relations became stronger after **2000**, and were significantly enhanced in **2009** when Israel issued a NOTAM prohibiting Israeli aircrafts to use airports located in the

¹ Tziampiris A. *The Emergence of Israeli - Greek Cooperation*. Springer, Switzerland, 2015, p. 46.

² Ibid, p. 50.

³ Lindenstrauss G. & Gavrielides P. *A Decade of Close Greece - Israel Relations: An Assessment*. Institute for National Security Studies, Strategic Assessment, 22 (1), 2019. On line: <https://www.inss.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Gallia-and-Polykarpos.pdf> (accessed: 01/10/2023).

northern part of Cyprus that was occupied by the Turkish forces⁴. Since then, the two states have enhanced their bilateral relations by exchanging high-level visits, conducting joint military exercises, and signing several cooperation agreements, the most important of which is the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Delimitation Agreement signed on **December 17th, 2010**⁵.

On the other hand, the **Israeli - Turkish** relations were initially good, since Türkiye was the first Muslim country to recognize the independence of the State of Israel in **1949**. Things changed though in **2002**, when the Justice and Development Party (AKP) party came in power and its leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, implemented a foreign policy supporting Palestine. In **2009**, their bilateral relations deteriorated when Erdogan – during a debate at the World Economic Forum in Davos – held the Israeli Prime Minister (Shimon Peres) responsible for the death of many Palestinians⁶, and in **2010** Türkiye withdrew its Ambassador to Israel, after an Israeli raid to the ship “Mavi Marmara” which resulted in the death of Turkish activists⁷. Finally, the diplomatic relations between the two states were restored in **2013** after the US intervention⁸, and the bilateral relations appeared to be more enhanced after **2022**, when the Israeli President (Isaac Herzog) visited his Turkish counterpart (Recep Tayyip Erdogan) upon invitation of the latter⁹.

Taking into consideration the aforementioned circumstances along with the fact that the **Cypriot - Greek** relations have always been strong, it must be stressed that the main reason behind the strengthening of cooperation between Cyprus, Greece and Israel is the discovery of major energy deposits in the Levantine basin in **2009, 2010** and **2011** the

⁴ Koukakis G.. *The Greece, Cyprus & Israel Trilateral Cooperation and its consequences in the Energy Security of Greece and the European Union, and in the Eastern Mediterranean Stability*. Hellenic Institute of Strategic Studies, Dossiers of Geopolitical Analysis and Studies, Issue 5, 2022. p. 13. On line: <https://elisme.gr/trimeris-ellados-kyproy-israil/> (accessed: 04/10/2023).

⁵ United Nations Treaty Collection. *Agreement between the Government of the State of Israel and the Government of the Republic of Cyprus on the Delimitation of the Exclusive Economic Zone*. 2010. On line: <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%202740/v2740.pdf> (accessed: 01/10/2023).

⁶ The Guardian. *Recep Erdogan storms out of Davos after clash with Israeli president over Gaza*. 2009. On line: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jan/30/turkish-prime-minister-gaza-davos> (accessed: 01/10/2023).

⁷ FRANCE 24. *Turkey expels Israeli ambassador over flotilla raid*. 2022. On line: <https://www.france24.com/en/20110902-turkey-expels-israeli-ambassador-2010-flotilla-raid-gaza-palestinian-territories> (accessed: 01/10/2023).

⁸ Al Jazeera. *Israel and Turkey to restore diplomatic ties*. 2013. On line: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2013/3/23/israel-and-turkey-to-restore-diplomatic-ties> (accessed: 01/10/2023).

⁹ Kershner I. & Timur S. *Israel's President Visits Turkey in Sign of Thawing Relations*. The New York Times, 2022. On line: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/09/world/middleeast/israel-isaac-herzog-turkey-visit.html#:~:text=JERUSALEM%20%E2%80%94%20President%20Isaac%20Herzog%20of,between%20the%20onetime%20regional%20allies>. (accessed: 01/10/2023).

exploitation of which through the trilateral partnership reduces cost and provides Israel the ability of transferring natural gas to the European market¹⁰. Another reason is the aggressive Turkish foreign policy in the Eastern Mediterranean, combined with the fact that both Greece and Cyprus are members of the European Union (EU), which means that they could facilitate the promotion of the Israeli national interests among the rest members of the EU.

The partnership between Cyprus, Greece and Israel was officially inaugurated at ministerial level on **August 8th, 2013** during a meeting in Nicosia (Cyprus) between the Greek Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (Yiannis Maniatis), the Cypriot Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment (Nicos Kouyialis), the Cypriot Minister of Energy, Commerce and Industry (George Lakkotrypis), and the Israeli Minister of Energy and Water Resources (Silvan Shalom), where they signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and expressed their countries' intention to develop two major energy projects¹¹. The first one was the “**EuroAsia Interconnector**” (Annex A) – an underwater cable transferring electricity from Israel (through Cyprus) to Greece – and the second one was the “**Eastern Mediterranean Pipeline**” – a pipeline also known as “East-Med” – transferring natural gas from the Israeli gas deposits located in Eastern Mediterranean (through Cyprus) to Greece and then Italy.

A year later, on **November 12th, 2014** the Secretaries General (SG) of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) of Greece, Cyprus, and Israel held a meeting of political dialogue in Athens (Greece), where they agreed to enhance cooperation of their countries and to meet on a regular basis to further discuss issues of common interest¹². A second meeting took place on **December 16th, 2015** in Jerusalem (Israel), where the three SGs discussed about future cooperation regarding energy development, migration, fighting terrorism, tourism, environment, water management, and research & technology (R&T). Moreover, they agreed to establish a trilateral steering committee in order to oversee the

¹⁰ Zemach S. “Israel’s Exploitation of Hydrocarbons: Status quo or Quo vadis?” in Giannakopoulos Angelos (editor) *Energy Cooperation and Security in the Eastern Mediterranean: A Seismic Shift towards Peace or Conflict?*. The S. Daniel Abraham Center for International and Regional Studies, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, 2016, p. 65.

¹¹ Zeiger A. *Israel, Greece, Cyprus sign energy and water deal: Three-way agreement enhances cooperation over electricity, natural gas and sewage treatment*. The Times of Israel, 2013, On line: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-greece-cyprus-sign-energy-and-water-deal/> (accessed: 01/10/2023).

¹² Embassy of Israel in Romania. *Greece, Israel and Cyprus hold political consultations in Athens*. 2014. On line: <https://embassies.gov.il/bucharest/NewsAndEvents/Pages/Political-consultations-Greece,-Israel-and-Cyprus-12-Nov-2014.aspx> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

implementation of their common decisions, and to meet on a regular basis, having their first trilateral summit in Nicosia (Cyprus) the year after¹³.

Previous Trilateral Summits (2016 - 2021)

The first trilateral summit between Greece, Cyprus and Israel was held on **January 28th, 2016** in Nicosia (Cyprus), where the Prime Minister of Israel (Benjamin Netanyahu), the Prime Minister of Greece (Alexis Tsipras) and the President of Cyprus (Nikos Anastasiades) agreed to strengthen cooperation between their countries in order to promote their trilateral partnership in various fields of common interest (energy, water management, agriculture, tourism, technology, high-tech ventures, and emergency services) and to work together towards promoting peace, stability, security and prosperity in the Mediterranean and the wider region¹⁴.

The 2nd trilateral summit took place on **December 8th, 2016** in Jerusalem (Israel), between the Israeli Prime Minister (Benjamin Netanyahu), the Greek Prime Minister (Alexis Tsipras) and the Cypriot President (Nikos Anastasiades)¹⁵. After the summit, the three leaders reaffirmed their excellent cooperation, welcomed the establishment of a Permanent Ministerial Committee on Energy (PMCE), stated that their partnership is not exclusive in design or nature, and that they are ready to welcome other like-minded parties to join them in promoting coordination and cooperation, as well as regional peace and stability. They also stressed the strategic importance of “East-Med” pipeline and “EuroAsia Interconnector”¹⁶.

The 3rd trilateral summit between Cyprus, Greece and Israel was held on **June 15th, 2017** in Thessaloniki (Greece), where the Israeli Prime Minister (Benjamin Netanyahu), the Greek Prime Minister (Alexis Tsipras) and the Cypriot President (Nikos Anastasiades)

¹³ Israeli Missions Around the World. *Political consultations between Secretaries General of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Israel, Greece and Cyprus*. 2015. On line: <https://embassies.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2015/Pages/Political-consultations-between-Secretaries-General-of-the-Ministries-of-Foreign-Affairs-of-Israel,-Greece-and-Cyprus-16-De.aspx> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

¹⁴ Embassy of Israel in Turkmenistan. *Trilateral meeting between Israel, Greece and Cyprus*. 2016. On line: <https://embassies.gov.il/ashgabad/AboutIsrael/PressRoom/2016/Pages/Trilateral-meeting-between-Israel-Greece-and-Cyprus-28-Jan-2016.aspx> (accessed: 01/10/2023).

¹⁵ TO BHMA. *Trilateral Greece, Cyprus, Israel Summit in Jerusalem*. 2016. On line: <https://www.tovima.gr/2016/12/08/international/trilateral-greece-cyprus-israel-summit-in-jerusalem/> (accessed: 01/10/2023).

¹⁶ Protothema. *Declaration of trilateral meeting between Greece, Israel and Cyprus*. 2016. On line: <https://en.protothema.gr/declaration-of-trilateral-meeting-between-greece-israel-and-cyprus/> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

agreed to enhance their cooperation on energy sector. Moreover, they expressed their strong support for the establishment of the “East-Med” pipeline and cross-sector synergies between the “EuroAsia Interconnector” project and fiber optic connections¹⁷, and to have exchanges of Israeli, Greek and Cypriot students¹⁸.

The 4th trilateral summit took place on **May 8th, 2018** in Nicosia (Cyprus), between the Prime Minister of Israel (Benjamin Netanyahu), the Prime Minister of Greece (Alexis Tsipras) and the President of Cyprus (Nikos Anastasiades). After the summit the three leaders expressed their commitment to continue strengthening the cooperation between their states in the framework of a trilateral partnership encompassing an ever-increasing number of areas of common interest and –in the process– contribute to the promotion of peace and prosperity in regional level¹⁹.

The 5th trilateral summit between Greece, Cyprus and Israel was held on **December 20th, 2018** in Beersheba (Israel), where Netanyahu, Tsipras and Anastasiades reaffirmed the excellent relations of their countries, agreed to establish a **Permanent Secretariat** in Nicosia, signed a **MoU on Cyber Security Cooperation** between their respective national agencies, and reconfirmed their support and commitment for the implementation of the “East-Med” pipeline project²⁰.

The 6th trilateral summit took place on **March 20th, 2019** in Jerusalem (Israel) between the Netanyahu, Tsipras and Anastasiades, in the presence of the US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo. The US official underlined the support of the USA for the trilateral mechanism established by the three countries and noted the importance of increased cooperation²¹, leading many actors to address the trilateral partnership as “**3+1 Scheme**”²².

¹⁷ EuroAsia Interconnector. *Greece-Cyprus-Israel Trilateral Summit, Thessaloniki 15.06.2017 – Joint Declaration*. 2018. On line: <https://euroasia-interconnector.com/at-glance/the-big-picture/official-support/> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

¹⁸ Prime Minister’s Office. *Statement by PM Netanyahu after the Trilateral Meeting between Israel, Greece and Cyprus*. 2017. On line: <https://www.gov.il/en/departments/news/eventsign150617> (accessed: 01/10/2023).

¹⁹ Protothema. *The Declaration of the 4th Cyprus-Greece-Israel Trilateral Summit*. 2018. On line: <https://en.protothema.gr/the-declaration-of-the-4th-cyprus-greece-israel-trilateral-summit-full-text/> (accessed: 01/10/2023).

²⁰ Greece in Israel. *Israel-Cyprus-Greece 5th Trilateral Summit Declaration (Beersheba December 20th, 2018)*. 2018. On line: <https://www.mfa.gr/missionsabroad/en/israel-en/news/israel-cyprus-greece-5th-trilateral-summit-declaration-beersheba-december-20th-2018.html> (accessed: 01/10/2023).

²¹ U.S. Embassy & Consulate in Greece. *Joint Declaration Between Cyprus, Greece, Israel, and the U.S. After the 6th Trilateral Summit*. 2019. On line: <https://gr.usembassy.gov/joint-declaration-between-cyprus-greece-israel-and-the-u-s-after-the-6th-trilateral-summit/> (accessed: 01/10/2023).

The 7th trilateral summit was held on **January 2nd, 2020** in Athens (Greece) where the Israeli Prime Minister, the Greek Prime Minister and the Cypriot President reaffirmed the excellent cooperation between their countries and signed an **Interstate Agreement** for the construction of the “East-Med” pipeline²³.

The 8th trilateral summit was held on **December 7th, 2021** in Jerusalem (Israel) with the participation of the Prime Minister of Israel (Naftali Bennett), the Prime Minister of Greece (Kyriakos Mitsotakis) and the President of Cyprus (Nikos Anastasiades). The three leaders agreed to strengthen cooperation between their states emphasizing on the defense sector, highlighted the importance of the **US role** in the Eastern Mediterranean, and expressed their full and unwavering support to the ongoing negotiation process for a just, comprehensive and viable settlement of the **Cyprus problem**. Moreover they stated that the energy sector can become a solid foundation for cooperation in the region pointing out the role of the “East-Med” pipeline and the **East Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF)**²⁴, and reiterated their steadfast commitment to enhance the EU-Israel relations.

The Outcome of the 9th Trilateral Summit

The 9th trilateral Summit between Greece, Cyprus, and Israel was initially scheduled for **July 26th, 2023**, but it was postponed due to a medical emergency regarding the health of the Israeli Prime Minister (Benjamin Netanyahu)²⁵. The Summit finally took place on **September 4th, 2023** in Nicosia (Cyprus), where the Greek Prime Minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis), the Cypriot President, Nikos Christodoulides) and the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu –through a Joint Statement (Annex B)– reaffirmed their commitment

²² U.S. Department of State. *Joint Statement on the 3+1 (Republic of Cyprus, Greece, Israel + United States) Foreign Ministerial*. 2022. On line: <https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-on-the-31-republic-of-cyprus-greece-israel-united-states-foreign-ministerial/> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

²³ Πρωθυπουργός. *Signing Ceremony of the Interstate Agreement for the construction of the EastMed gas pipeline*. 2020. On line: <https://www.primeminister.gr/en/2020/01/02/23049> (accessed: 01/10/2023) and Consulate General of Israel to New England. *EastMed Gas pipeline agreement signed at trilateral summit between PM Benjamin Netanyahu, Greek PM Kyriakos Mitsotakis and Cypriot Pres. Nicos Anastasiades*. 2020. On line: <https://embassies.gov.il/boston/NewsAndEvents/Pages/EastMed-Gas-pipeline-agreement-signed-at-trilateral-summit-2-January-2019.aspx> (accessed: 01/10/2023).

²⁴ The EMGS was established in Cairo (Egypt) in 2019 upon imitative of Egypt, having as founding members Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Israel, Italy, Palestine and Jordan. Later on France became also a member, while the USA, the World Bank Group, and the EU hold the status of the “Observer”. For more details visit: East Mediterranean Gas Forum. “Home”. n.d. <https://emgf.org/Home.aspx> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

²⁵ Cyprus Business News. *Cyprus-Greece-Israel Summit postponed after Netanyahu's medical procedure*. 2023. On line: <https://www.cbn.com.cy/article/2023/7/24/724183/cyprus-greece-israel-summit-postponed-after-netanyahus-medical-procedure/> (accessed: 01/10/2023).

to continue strengthening their dynamic cooperation, which reflects their shared values and ever-increasing common interests²⁶.

They also repeated the fact that their cooperation is not exclusive but open to like-minded countries, and agreed that the energy sector is a solid foundation for cooperation in the region. They also highlighted the importance of international law including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) – including the ability of all states to exercise their sovereign rights in their respective Exclusive Economic Zone/Continental Shelf– and stressed the importance of further promoting energy synergies and regional projects, such as the “EuroAsia Interconnector” and possible natural gas/hydrogen pipelines.

They also addressed the global challenge of climate change, agreeing to reinforce their efforts through regional cooperative projects, and reaffirmed their mutual commitment to assist each other in responding to emergencies such as wild fires. Moreover, they stressed the importance of the “3+1” format with the United States and the positive momentum created by the historic **Abraham Accords** (Annex C)²⁷, which may allow further cooperation with other regional formats, including the **Negev Forum**²⁸.

The three leaders welcomed the amplification between Israel and the Arab world along with the Cypriot initiative to include an enhanced EU role in the efforts to resume negotiations regarding the **Cyprus question**, and expressed their concern over the incident in the buffer zone near Pile (Cyprus) where Turkish Cypriots assaulted the UN

²⁶ Athens-Macedonian News Agency. *Joint statement of the 9th Greece, Cyprus, Israel Trilateral Summit*. 2023. On line: <https://www.amna.gr/en/article/757367/Joint-statement-of-the-9th-Greece--Cyprus--Israel-Trilateral-Summit> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

²⁷ The Abraham Accords include the following agreements: 1) The Abraham Accords Declaration (signed by the United States, the State of Israel, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates on September 15th, 2020, and the Republic of Sudan on January 6th, 2021), 2) The Abraham Accords Declaration of Peace, Cooperation, and Constructive Diplomatic and Friendly Relations (announced by the State of Israel and the Kingdom of Bahrain on September 15th, 2020), 3) The Abraham Accords Peace Agreement: Treaty of Peace, Diplomatic Relations and Full Normalization between the United Arab Emirates and the State of Israel (signed at Washington on September 15th, 2020), and 4) The Joint Declaration (signed at Rabat on December 22nd, 2020 between the Kingdom of Morocco, the United States of America and the State of Israel). For more details visit: U.S. Department of State. “The Abraham Accords Declaration”. n.d. <https://www.state.gov/the-abraham-accords/> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

²⁸ The members of the Negev Forum include Bahrain, Egypt, Israel, Morocco, the United Arab Emirates UAE), and the United States. For more details visit: Blinken J. Antony. “The Negev Forum Working Groups and Regional Cooperation Framework”. U.S. Department of State. 2023. On line: <https://www.state.gov/the-negev-forum-working-groups-and-regional-cooperation-framework/> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

Peacekeeping Forces²⁹, condemning all forms of terrorism, as well as incitement to violence and hatred. Moreover, they reiterated their steadfast commitment to the enhancement of EU - Israel relations through the promotion of cooperation in the framework of the **EU - Israel Association Agreement**³⁰, and noted the importance of the meetings that took place in **Aqaba**³¹ (Jordan) and **Sharm El Sheikh**³² (Egypt) followed by two Joint Communiqués (Annex F, G). Finally, they agreed that the next trilateral Summit will be held in Israel in 2024.

Recent Developments

As far as “East-Med” pipeline is concerned, there have been several scenarios not only about its route, but also about its viability. For example the Israeli Ambassador to Greece stated that “East-Med” could be redirected to **Egypt**³³ characterizing it as a “key country” for the progress of the projects³⁴, while US officials –despite the US support to the trilateral partnership – expressed the opinion that “East-Med” is too expensive and time-consuming³⁵. They also declared their preference to **electricity** and other **renewable energy** sources³⁶, emphasizing on **Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)**, through the cooperation

²⁹ United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus. *UNFICYP CONDEMNS ASSAULTS AGAINST UN PEACEKEEPERS*. 2023. On line: <https://unficy.unmissions.org/unficy-condemns-assaults-against-un-peacekeepers> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

³⁰ The agreement was signed on November 20th, 1995 and came entered into force on June 1st, 2000. For more details visit: Israeli Mission To The European Union. “Association Agreement”. n.d. <https://embassies.gov.il/eu/IsraelEU/Associationagreement/Pages/Departments.aspx> (accessed: 02/10/2023) and European Commission. “Israel: EU trade relations with Israel. Facts, figures and latest developments”. n.d. https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/israel_en (accessed: 02/10/2023).

³¹ The meeting took place between Jordanian, Egyptian, Israeli, Palestinian and U.S. Senior Officials on February 26th, 2023. For more details visit: Office of Spokesperson. “Aqaba Joint Communiqué”. U.S. Department of State. 2023. On line: <https://www.state.gov/aqaba-joint-communicue/> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

³² The meeting took place between Jordanian, Egyptian, Israeli, Palestinian and U.S. Senior Officials on March 19th, 2023. For more details visit: Office of Spokesperson. “Joint Communiqué from the March 19 meeting in Sharm El Sheikh”. U.S. Embassy in Israel. 2023. On line: <https://il.usembassy.gov/joint-communicue-from-the-march-19-meeting-in-sharm-el-sheikh/> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

³³ Γ. Αμράνι. *Δεν επηρεάζει η Τουρκία τις σχέσεις Ελλάδας-Ισραήλ* (In Greek). Η ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΗ, 2021. On line: <https://www.kathimerini.gr/politics/561635200/g-amrani-stin-k-den-epireazei-i-toyrkia-tis-scheseis-elladas-israil/> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

³⁴ Hellas Journal. *Με όλο το σεβασμό κ.Νούλαντ, αλλά οι χώρες της περιοχής θα αποφασίσουν για τον EastMed λέει ο Πρέσβης του Ισραήλ*. (In Greek). 2022. On line: <https://hellasjournal.com/2022/04/me-olo-to-sevasmo-k-noulant-alla-i-chores-tis-periochis-tha-apofasisoun-gia-ton-eastmed-lei-o-presvis-tou-israil/> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

³⁵ ΠΡΩΤΟ ΘΕΜΑ. *Βικτόρια Νούλαντ: Ασύμφορος και μη βιώσιμος ο EastMed, χρειάζονται άμεσες λύσεις* (In Greek). 2022. <https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/1230416/viktoria-noulad-asumforos-kai-mi-viosimos-o-eastmed-hreiazodai-ameses-luseis/> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

³⁶ Η ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΗ. *Στέιτ Ντιπάρτμεντ για EastMed: Οι ΗΠΑ παραμένουν δεσμευμένες στο σχήμα 3+1*. (In Greek). 2022. On line: <https://www.kathimerini.gr/politics/561661954/steit-ntipartment-gia-eastmed-oi-ipa-paramenoun-desmeymenes-sto-schima-3-1/> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

of Greece, Cyprus, Israel, Egypt and **Türkiye**³⁷, a scenario that is preferred by the Turkish side³⁸.

The **energy crisis** though that followed Russia's invasion of **Ukraine** led many actors – such as the EU – to postpone their plans related to renewable energy and seek new energy suppliers³⁹. On **June 17th, 2022** the EU signed a **MoU** with Egypt and Israel on cooperation related to trade, transport, and export of **natural gas** (Annex E)⁴⁰. It must also be stressed that the value of all the energy projects was highlighted during a visit of the US Deputy Secretary of State in Athens (Greece) on **April 6th, 2022**⁴¹. Finally, despite all the technical and political issues regarding the construction of “East-Med”, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Italian Energy group “Edison” stated on **July 7th, 2023** that the pipeline could still be built⁴².

As far as “**EuroAsia Interconnector**” is concerned, contrarily to the “East-Med” pipeline the viability of which is still at stake, the construction of underwater electricity cable connecting Israel, Cyprus, and Greece was celebrated on **October 14th, 2022** at ceremony in Nicosia (Cyprus) – with the participation of the EU Commissioner for Energy (Kadri Simson), the President of Cyprus (Nicos Anastasiades) and the Ministers for Energy of Cyprus (Natasa Pilides) and Greece (Kostas Skrekas) – estimating that the project is going to be completed by the end of **2026**⁴³.

³⁷ Η ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΗ. *Βικτόρια Νούλαντ στην «Κ»*: *Ναι σε LNG, όχι σε αγωγούς στη Μεσόγειο* (In Greek). 2022. On line: <https://www.kathimerini.gr/politics/561797341/synenteyxi-viktoria-noylant-stin-k-nai-se-lng-ochi-se-agogoyis-sti-mesogeio/> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

³⁸ Η ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΗ. *Ο Σινάν Ουλγκέν στην «Κ»*: *Ο EastMed μπορεί να επανέλθει αν ενταχθεί στο σχέδιο και η Τουρκία* (In Greek). 2022. On line: <https://www.kathimerini.gr/politics/561790435/o-sinan-oylgken-stin-k-o-eastmed-mporei-na-epanelthei-an-entachthei-sto-schedio-kai-i-toyrkia/> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

³⁹ Ν. Τσάφος. *Νέα πνοή για το φυσικό αέριο στην Ανατολική Μεσόγειο* (In Greek). Η ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΗ, 2022. On line: <https://www.kathimerini.gr/politics/foreign-policy/561759079/nea-pnoi-gia-to-fysiko-aerio-stin-anatoliki-mesogeio/> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

⁴⁰ European Commission. *EU Egypt Israel Memorandum of Understanding*. 2022. On line: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/publications/eu-egypt-israel-memorandum-understanding_en (accessed: 02/10/2023).

⁴¹ Η ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΗ. *Επανέρχονται στο προσκήνιο δύο ενεργειακά σχέδια* (In Greek). 2022. On line: <https://www.kathimerini.gr/politics/561795643/epanerchontai-sto-proskinio-dyo-energeiaka-protzekt/> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

⁴² Donaldson Alex. *Edison CEO says EastMed pipeline still possible*. Offshore Technology. 2023. On line: <https://www.offshore-technology.com/news/edison-israel-greece-gas/> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

⁴³ European Commission. *Commission participates in launch of EuroAsia Electricity Interconnector*. 2023. On line: https://commission.europa.eu/news/commission-participates-launch-euroasia-electricity-interconnector-2022-10-14_en (accessed: 02/10/2023).

Another recent development related to energy, is the **agreement** on the delimitation of maritime zones⁴⁴ reached between **Israel and Lebanon** on **October 11th, 2022** upon mediation of the USA⁴⁵, putting an end to the long-lasting dispute of the two parts and allowing both countries to exploit their respective energy deposits located in the area⁴⁶. Another cooperative scheme in the Eastern Mediterranean that was established on **November 8th, 2014** is the trilateral partnership between **Greece, Cyprus and Egypt**⁴⁷, which led to an agreement for the construction of a second underwater electricity cable by the name “**EuroAfrica Interconnector**” (Annex A) from Egypt (through Cyprus) to Greece⁴⁸. It also led to the partial **delimitation agreement** of the EEZ between Greece and Egypt on **August 6th, 2020**⁴⁹, that basically **cancelled the illegal MoU between Türkiye and the Government of National Accord-State of Libya** on “Delimitation of the Maritime Jurisdiction Areas in the Mediterranean” that was signed on **November 27th, 2019**⁵⁰.

A matter of great concern related to the future of both the trilateral partnership and the construction of “East-Med”, is the Turkish President’s (Recep Tayyip Erdoğan) statements on **September 19th, 2023** – after his meeting with the Israeli Prime Minister

⁴⁴ United Nations. *List of Geographic Coordinates for the Delimitation of a Maritime Boundary Line of the Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone of Israel*. Maritime Zones and Maritime Delimitation. 2023. On line: <https://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/IsraelCoordinates.pdf> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

⁴⁵ Hellenic Republic. *Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the agreement reached between Israel and Lebanon on the delimitation of their maritime zones*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2022. On line: <https://www.mfa.gr/en/current-affairs/statements-speeches/statement-by-the-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-regarding-the-agreement-reached-between-israel-and-lebanon-on-the-delimitation-of-their-maritime-zones.html> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

⁴⁶ Meier Daniel. *Lebanon’s Maritime Boundaries: Between Economic Opportunities and Military Confrontation*. St. Anthony’s College. University of Oxford. 2013. On line: <https://lebanesestudies.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/maritime.pdf> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

⁴⁷ Hellenic Republic. *Egypt – Greece – Cyprus Trilateral Summit Cairo Declaration*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2014. On line: <https://www.mfa.gr/en/current-affairs/news-announcements/egypt-greece-cyprus-trilateral-summit-cairo-declaration.html> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

⁴⁸ EuroAfrica Interconnector. *EuroAfrica at a glance*. n.d. On line: <https://www.euroafrica-interconnector.com/at-glance/> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

⁴⁹ United Nations. *Agreement between the Government of the Hellenic Republic and the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt on the delimitation of the exclusive economic zone between the two countries. Maritime Zones and Maritime Delimitation*, 2020. On line: <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/TREATIES/GRCEGY.pdf> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁵⁰ United Nations. *Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of National Accord-State of Libya on Delimitation of the Maritime Jurisdiction Areas in the Mediterranean. Maritime Zones and Maritime Delimitation*. 2019. On line: https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/TREATIES/Turkey_11122019_%28HC%29_MoU_Libya-Delimitation-areas-Mediterranean.pdf (accessed: 03/10/2023).

(Benjamin Netanyahu) on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly⁵¹ that **Türkiye and Israel will explore joint energy drilling** in the Eastern Mediterranean, an action that (if true) will endanger the Israeli relations with Greece and Cyprus, and might result in the abandonment of the “East-Med” project⁵². According to Turkish media, President Erdogan seems to have said that:

*“God willing, we will take this step without much delay and we will start energy drilling operations with Israel. We will also start operating energy transfer networks to Europe through Turkey, not just to Turkey [...] At the moment, our total trade volume is \$9.5 billion. We agreed to raise this \$9.5 billion trade volume to a minimum of \$15 billion in the first phase [...]”*⁵³.

As mentioned earlier in the paper, Türkiye has recently tried to restore its bilateral relations with Israel through high-level political visits. This sudden shift in its foreign policy – characterized by some as a “**charm offensive**” –⁵⁴ was also observed in its relations with several regional actors. For example Türkiye restored its diplomatic relations with **Egypt** on **July 4th, 2023** by mutually appointing ambassadors,⁵⁵ re-approached the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** on **February 14th, 2022** by signing thirteen agreements (defense, trade, technology, agriculture, etc.)⁵⁶, followed by a second major trade agreement on **March 3rd, 2023**,⁵⁷ and improved its bilateral relations with **Saudi Arabia** by transferring the trial of Khashoggi’s suspected killers from Ankara to Riyadh when the Turkish President visited the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Jeddah (Saudi

⁵¹ Pamuk Humeyra. *UN General Assembly: Erdogan, Netanyahu meet for first time as relations thaw*. Reuters, 2023. On line: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/un-general-assembly-erdogan-netanyahu-meet-first-time-relations-thaw-2023-09-19/> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁵² Middle East Eye. *Turkey and Israel will explore joint drilling in East Mediterranean, Erdogan says*. 2023. On line: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/turkey-and-israel-explore-joint-drilling-east-mediterranean-erdogan-says> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁵³ Reuters. *Erdogan says Turkey, Israel to take steps in energy drilling soon, media report*. 2023. On line: [https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/erdogan-says-turkey-israel-take-steps-energy-drilling-soon-media-2023-09-21/#:~:text=ANKARA%2C%20Sept%2021%20\(Reuters\),networks%20to%20Europe%20through%20Turkey](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/erdogan-says-turkey-israel-take-steps-energy-drilling-soon-media-2023-09-21/#:~:text=ANKARA%2C%20Sept%2021%20(Reuters),networks%20to%20Europe%20through%20Turkey). (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ A. Pınar & D. Ziada. *Putting Egypt-Turkey relations on a sustainable footing*. Middle East Institute (MEI), 2023. On line: <https://www.mei.edu/publications/putting-egypt-turkey-relations-sustainable-footing> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁵⁶ A. Amjad & A. Defne. *Turkey and the UAE are getting close again. But why now?*. Atlantic Council. 2022. On line: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/turkey-and-the-uae-are-getting-close-again-but-why-now/> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁵⁷ Uppal Rachna. *Turkey, United Arab Emirates sign trade agreement*. Reuters, 2023. On line: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkey-united-arab-emirates-sign-trade-agreement-2023-03-03/> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

Arabia) on **April 28th, 2022**.⁵⁸ A year later on **July 17th, 2023**, the two countries signed several defense agreements⁵⁹.

On **May 12th, 2023** (during his pre-election campaign) President Erdogan – who had repeatedly threatened Greece during 2022 that “*Türkiye would suddenly come one night to Greece*”⁶⁰, also stating on **May 23rd, 2022** that the Greek Prime Minister (Kyriakos Mitsotakis) no longer existed for him using the Turkish phrase “*Mitsotakis yok*”⁶¹ expressed the desire to normalize the Greek - Turkish relations, stating that:

“We can put aside hostilities and competitions with Greece, as these have significantly harmed both countries and should not persist. I hope that the elections in Greece and Türkiye will mark the beginning of a new era. From Türkiye, we send our warm and friendly greetings to Greece”.⁶²

Indeed, the Greek Prime Minister (Kyriakos Mitsotakis) and the Turkish President (Recep Tayyip Erdogan) met in Vilnius (Lithuania) on the sidelines of the **NATO Summit** that took place on **July 11th-12th, 2023**⁶³. After the meeting an announcement was posted on the Greek Prime Minister’s official webpage, stating among others that:

“[...] Mr. Mitsotakis and Mr. Erdogan agreed that it is to the benefit of both countries that the positive climate formed in bilateral relations over recent months has continuity and consistency. To this end, the two sides agreed to build on the positive momentum and activate multiple channels of communication between the two countries in the coming period.

⁵⁸ C. A. Steven. *Why Turkey Is Resetting Relations With Saudi Arabia*. Council on Foreign Relations, 2022. On line: <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/why-turkey-resetting-relations-saudi-arabia> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁵⁹ Tokyay Menekse. *Landmark defense deals are evidence of warmer Saudi-Turkish relations, experts say*. Arab News, 2023. On line: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2341796/middle-east> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁶⁰ Fiedler Tristan. *Erdoğan repeats threat against Greece during G20*. Politico, 2022. On line: <https://www.politico.eu/article/recep-erdogan-turkey-threat-against-greece-g20/> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁶¹ Reuters. *Turkey's Erdogan says Greek PM Mitsotakis 'no longer exists' for him*. 2022. On line: <https://www.reuters.com/world/turkeys-erdogan-says-greek-pm-mitsotakis-no-longer-exists-him-2022-05-23/> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁶² M. Kostidis. *Erdogan speaks to Kathimerini, calls for new era in Greece-Turkey relations*. Ekathimerini, 2023. On line: <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1210811/erdogan-speaks-to-kathimerini-calls-for-new-era-in-greece-turkey-relations/> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁶³ N. Stamouli. *Greece and Turkey seek fresh start to bilateral relations*. Politico, 2023. On line: <https://www.politico.eu/article/greece-pm-kyriakos-mitsotakis-turkey-president-recep-tayyip-erdogan-agree-fresh-start-bilateral-relations-vilnius/> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

*They agreed to hold the next meeting of the High-Level Cooperation Council between Greece and Turkey in Thessaloniki in the fall. [...]*⁶⁴.

On **September 5th, 2023** the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the two countries met in Ankara (Türkiye) to address several issues, so that tension between Greece and Türkiye would reduce. After the meeting, the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs (George Gerapetritis) stated that:

“[...] We do not set utopian goals. We are aware of the fact that distances created over time and passions inherited from generation to generation cannot be erased overnight. We are, however, willing and ready to invest in honesty and mutual understanding. To seek common ground and shatter entrenched perceptions. And disagreements should not be allowed to escalate into crises. Achieving this requires adherence to universal and fundamental values, most notably the strict and universal implementation of International Law [...]”⁶⁵.

On **September 20th, 2023** the Greek Prime Minister (Kyriakos Mitsotakis) and the Turkish President (Recep Tayyip Erdoğan) met again in New York (USA) – in the presence of their Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Diplomatic Advisors – on the sidelines of the **78th UN General Assembly**, after of which Mitsotakis stated that they had a productive discussion regarding their bilateral relations and the common challenges that the two countries face, expressing the opinion that the field of cooperation can also be further explored⁶⁶. Unfortunately, President Erdogan did not show the same will to improve (even slightly) his country’s bilateral relations with **Cyprus**, as – during his address to the UN General Assembly – called on the international community to recognize

⁶⁴ Hellenic Republic. *Announcement on the meeting between Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and the President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan*. Prime Minister, 2023. On line: <https://www.primeminister.gr/en/2023/07/12/32167> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁶⁵ Hellenic Republic. *Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. George Gerapetritis’ statement following the meeting with his Turkish counterpart, Mr. Hakan Fidan*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023. On line: <https://www.mfa.gr/en/current-affairs/top-story/minister-of-foreign-affairs-mr-george-gerapetritis-statement-following-the-meeting-with-his-turkish-counterpart-mr-hakan-fidan-ankara-05092023.html> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁶⁶ Hellenic Republic. *Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis’ statement after his meeting with the President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in New York*. Prime Minister, 2023. On line: <https://www.primeminister.gr/en/2023/09/20/32571> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

the Turkish-occupied northern part of the Republic of Cyprus as an independent state⁶⁷, despite the UN Resolutions condemning the Turkish illegal occupation.

One of the most important recent developments though regarding the trilateral partnership between Greece, Cyprus, and Israel has to do with **India's participation in the next trilateral summit**, a prospect that was announced in a joint press conference after the 9th trilateral summit⁶⁸. The broadening of the partnership was in fact suggested by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi to the Greek and Cypriot leaders due to India's special interest in creating a **trade corridor** connecting India through the Arabian Peninsula and onto the Mediterranean⁶⁹. The project was revealed on **September 9th, 2023** at the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) event during the 18th **G20 Summit** that took place in Delhi (India)⁷⁰. There, the leaders of USA, India, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, France, Germany, Italy and the EU signed a MoU (Annex D) for developing **India - Middle East - Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**⁷¹, a major infrastructure project comprising railroads, shipping routes, underwater electricity and telecommunications cables, and natural gas pipelines⁷².

At this point it must be reminded that Modi had visited Greece on **August 25th, 2023** – four decades after the last visit of an Indian leader to the Hellenic Republic – upon

⁶⁷ Ekathimerini. *Erdogan calls for international community to recognize breakaway Turkish Cypriot entity*. 2023. On line: <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1220385/erdogan-calls-for-international-community-to-recognize-breakaway-turkish-cypriot-entity/> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁶⁸ Ministry of Interior (Press and Information Office). *Remarks by the President of the Republic, Mr Nikos Christodoulides, at the joint Press conference with the Prime Ministers of Greece and Israel, within the framework of the 9th Trilateral Summit, in Nicosia, today*. 2023. On line: <https://www.pio.gov.cy/en/press-releases-article.html?id=36658#flat> (accessed: 04/10/2023).

⁶⁹ E. Lefkovits. *India seeks to join Israel-Cyprus-Greece alliance*. Jewish News Syndicate (JNS), 2023. On line: <https://www.jns.org/israel-news/eastern-mediterranean/23/9/4/315979/> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁷⁰ The White House. *FACT SHEET: World Leaders Launch a Landmark India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor*. Briefing Room, 2023. On line: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/09/09/fact-sheet-world-leaders-launch-a-landmark-india-middle-east-europe-economic-corridor/> (accessed: 04/10/2023).

⁷¹ For more details about PGII visit: The White House. *FACT SHEET: President Biden and G7 Leaders Formally Launch the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment*. Briefing Room, 2022. On line: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/06/26/fact-sheet-president-biden-and-g7-leaders-formally-launch-the-partnership-for-global-infrastructure-and-investment/> (accessed: 04/10/2023) and The White House. *FACT SHEET: Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment at the G7 Summit*. Briefing Room, 2023. On line: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/05/20/fact-sheet-partnership-for-global-infrastructure-and-investment-at-the-g7-summit/> (accessed: 04/10/2023)

⁷² D. Nachiket. *What the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor means for India and the world*. Scroll.in, 2023. On line: <https://scroll.in/article/1055922/what-the-india-middle-east-europe-economic-corridor-means-for-india-and-the-world> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

invitation of his Greek counterpart⁷³, issuing a **Joint Statement** in which they stressed their will to enhance their cooperation in several fields⁷⁴, and took note of the signing of the MoU on Cooperation in the field of **Agriculture**⁷⁵. Moreover, India is also a strategic partner with the State of **Israel**⁷⁶, maintains a very good bilateral relation with **Cyprus**⁷⁷, **Saudi Arabia**⁷⁸, and the **UAE**⁷⁹. On the other hand, India's bilateral relations with **Türkiye** have recently deteriorated, mostly due to Türkiye's stance towards Jammu and Kashmir⁸⁰. As far as the India-Middle East - Europe Economic Corridor is concerned, President Erdogan stated that:

“We say that there is no corridor without Türkiye. [...]Türkiye is an important production and trade base. The most convenient line for traffic from east to west has to pass through Türkiye”⁸¹.

Future Considerations

All the facts presented in this paper – such as the trilateral partnerships between Greece, Cyprus, and Israel as well as Greece, Cyprus, and Egypt, the future construction of major energy and trade projects, and the restoration of the bilateral relations of several past “adversaries” in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East – indicate the transition to a new era of “**economic peace**” in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East, driven by

⁷³ Hellenic Republic. *Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis' statement following his meeting with Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi-Upgrade of the India-Greece bilateral relationship to a Strategic one* (Athens, 25.8.2023). Greece in India, 2023. On line: <https://www.mfa.gr/missionsabroad/en/india-en/news/prime-minister-kyriakos-mitsotakis-statement-following-his-meeting-with-the-prime-minister-of-india-narendra-modi-upgrade-of-the-india-greece-bilateral-relationship-to-strategic-one-athens-2582.html> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁷⁴ These included defense, shipping, science and technology, cyber space, education, culture, and tourism.

⁷⁵ Prime Minister of India. *India-Greece Joint Statement*. 2023. On line: https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/news_updates/india-greece-joint-statement/ (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁷⁶ Embassy of India. *India - Israel Bilateral Relations*. On line: <https://www.indembassyisrael.gov.in/pages?id=mbk5e&subid=lejRe> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁷⁷ High Commission of India - Nicosia, Cyprus. *India-Cyprus Bilateral Relations*. On line: <https://hci.gov.in/nicosia/?0700?001> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁷⁸ M. Niranjan. *Is India Redefining Its Role in the Politics of the Middle East?*. The Diplomat, 2019. On line: <https://thediplomat.com/2019/10/is-india-redefining-its-role-in-the-politics-of-the-middle-east/> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ M. Niranjan. *India and Turkey Still Searching for a Breakthrough*. The Diplomat, 2022. On line: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/09/india-and-turkiye-still-searching-for-a-breakthrough/> (accessed: 03/10/2023) and D. Nachiket. *Why India's ties with Turkey are worse than ever before*. Scroll.in, 2023. On line: <https://scroll.in/article/1056167/why-indias-ties-with-turkey-are-worse-than-ever-before> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁸¹ S. Ragip. *Turkey's Erdogan opposes India-Middle East transport project*. Middle East Eye, 2023. On line: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/turkey-erdogan-opposes-india-middle-east-corridor> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

common national interests⁸². These are mainly related to economic security⁸³ and energy security⁸⁴, through the broadening of the available energy resources and networks, along with the attraction of new investments and the reach to new markets.

The only factor though that could disturb this peace is the aggressive foreign policy implemented by **Türkiye**, especially towards Cyprus and Greece which are the basic members of the two trilateral partnerships in the Eastern Mediterranean. Taking into consideration that the Cypriot - Turkish relations will remain the same as long as Türkiye continues to occupy illegally the northern part of Cyprus, the only bilateral relations that seem to have been improving are the ones between Türkiye and Greece. Although this contributes to the overall peace and security of the region, the ongoing Turkish irrational demands⁸⁵ combined with Greece's refusal to move in the slightest from its national positions⁸⁶, since they are based on the principles of legality and international law, lead many scholars to the conclusion that:

“The rapprochement between Greece and Türkiye is seemingly impossible, yet not unimaginable”⁸⁷.

As far as the **Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment** is concerned, it is believed that it will close the infrastructure gap in many countries and strengthen the global economy and supply chains⁸⁸, while the **India - Middle East - Europe Economic Corridor** is expected to stimulate economic development through enhanced connectivity

⁸² International Institute for Middle East and Balkan Studies (IFIMES). *2022 Israel-Lebanon: Gas Agreement between Israel and Lebanon- A Model for Economic Cooperation without a Peace Agreement*. 2022. On line: <https://www.ifimes.org/en/researches/2022-israel-lebanon-gas-agreement-between-israel-and-lebanon-a-model-for-economic-cooperation-without-a-peace-agreement/5094> (accessed: 02/10/2023).

⁸³ M. Goodman. *G7 Gives First Definition to “Economic Security”*. Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2023. On line: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/g7-gives-first-definition-economic-security> (accessed: 05/10/2023).

⁸⁴ Θ. Τσακίρης. *Ενεργειακή Ασφάλεια και Διεθνής Πολιτική: Η Γεωπολιτική του «Μαύρου Χρυσού» από την ανακάλυψη πετρελαίου στη Μέση Ανατολή έως τη Σχιστολιθική Επανάσταση (1908-2018) (In Greek)*. Παπαζήση, Αθήνα, 2018, σσ. 19-39.

⁸⁵ Some of them include the demilitarization of the Aegean islands, the delimitation of the EEZ contrarily to the provisions of the UNCLOS, and the demand for revising the Lausanne Treaty.

⁸⁶ A. Genturk. *Greece says improving relations with Türkiye would contribute to regional prosperity*. Anadolu Ajansı, 2023. On line: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/greece-says-improving-relations-with-turkiye-would-contribute-to-regional-prosperity/3004875#> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁸⁷ A. Coşkun. *Rapprochement Between Greece and Türkiye: Seemingly Impossible, Yet Not Unimaginable*. Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, 2023. On line: <https://gija.georgetown.edu/2023/05/13/rapprochement-between-greece-and-turkiye-seemingly-impossible-yet-not-unimaginable/> (accessed: 03/10/2023).

⁸⁸ The White House. *FACT SHEET: President Biden and G7 Leaders Formally Launch the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment*. Ibid.

and economic integration across two continents, thus unlocking sustainable and inclusive economic growth⁸⁹. Although some analysts consider IMEC as a reasonable action for Saudi Arabia and the UAE in terms of diversifying their network and broadening their sphere of influence⁹⁰, others view it as a US countermeasure to China's **Belt and Road Initiative** (BRI)⁹¹. According though to the director of the Wilson Center's South Asia Institute:

“US officials have already described the project as transparent and non-coercive, a clear contrast with how the US views BRI. So, at least from a US perspective, the goal of the project in part will be to provide an alternative infrastructure investment model”⁹².

At this point it must also be stressed that the President of China, Xi Jinping did not attend the G20 Summit, an action that was interpreted by many as a further deterioration to the **Indo - Chinese relations**⁹³, although Chinese authorities deny it, characterising their bilateral relations as “generally stable”⁹⁴. In any case, the development of the India - Middle East - Europe Economic Corridor will minimise China's influence in the Indo-Pacific, the Middle East and Europe and increase the commercial/economic competition. Thus, it will threaten the Chinese national interests in the formentioned regions.

As far as **Greece** is concerned, its cooperation with Cyprus and Israel in the domains of energy, defense, emergency response, environment, health, technology and innovation will facilitate in **addressing several challenges** such as future energy and health crises, climate change, and the aggressive Turkish foreign policy, while cooperation in the field of tourism and diaspora will boost its economy, as tourism is one of the main pillars of the Greek economy. Moreover, the fact that the international law – including **UNCLOS** – is

⁸⁹ The White House. *FACT SHEET: World Leaders Launch a Landmark India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor*. Ibid.

⁹⁰ T. Hussain. *Why India's new US-backed trade corridor to Europe is no 'anti-China project' for the Middle East*. South China Morning Post, 2023. On line: <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/economics/article/3235497/why-indias-new-us-backed-trade-corridor-europe-no-anti-china-project-middle-east> (accessed: 04/10/2023).

⁹¹ N. Deuskar. *What the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor means for India and the world*. Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ YP Rajesh, K. Krishn and M. Q. Pollard. *Xi skipping G20 summit seen as new setback to India-China ties*. Reuters, 2023. On line: <https://www.reuters.com/world/xi-skipping-g20-summit-seen-new-setback-india-china-ties-2023-09-05/> (accessed: 04/10/2023).

⁹⁴ Associated Press. *Despite Xi's decision not to attend G20 in India, China says bilateral ties are generally stable*. 2023. On line: <https://apnews.com/article/china-india-g20-xi-jinping-e5d8649d6f0644f7da5eeebc595fe42d> (accessed: 04/10/2023).

emphasised in almost every Joint Statement, enhances the Greek national positions regarding the exercise of the rights in the Hellenic EEZ/Continental Shelf and the delimitation process⁹⁵.

The same thing applies for **Cyprus** regarding the occupation of its northern part by Türkiye, as the three countries highlighted in their last Joint Statement the incidents in the buffer zone near Pyla (Cyprus), also involving the EU in the negotiation process about the Cyprus question. The fact though that the “**East-Med**” pipeline – unlike “EuroAsia Interconnector” – was not mentioned at all in their last Joint Statement, probably indicates that the hydrocarbon deposits of the Eastern Mediterranean will be exported either by ships in the form of **LNG** or through a pipeline to **Egypt**. Either way, the exploitation of the energy deposits will greatly benefit not only Cyprus and Israel, but also Greece.

As far as the members of the partnership are concerned, taking into consideration that Greece, Cyprus and Israel have always stated that they remain committed to welcoming other like-minded parties in their effort to create and advance synergies, it is of no surprise that **India** will most likely join the trilateral partnership next year. Besides, the three countries have already gained the support of the United States transforming the Trilateral Partnership into a “3+1 Scheme”, an action that might attract more like-minded (and with common-interests) parties in the future, such as **Italy**, **France** and **Egypt**. This is also because for a non-European country, a cooperation with Greece and Cyprus acts a gateway to the EU market.

Conclusion

Multilateral partnerships such as the one between Greece, Cyprus, and Israel are usually driven by many factors, such as geography, the political system, common interests and cultural heritage, some of which might change in the course of time. Although in most cases the cooperation between partners refers to low-politics fields, it can also lead to synergies in major fields such as the defense industry. Even though this does not transform a partnership into an alliance⁹⁶, it creates strong bonds that result in the interdependence of

⁹⁵ For more details see: Καρυώτης Θεόδωρος. “Η ΑΟΖ της Ελλάδας” (In Greek). Λιβάνης, Αθήνα, 2014.

⁹⁶ According to Nael Shama “[...] *the most crucial function of an alliance – its deterrent effect – is believed to be “completely lacking or at least much weaker” in an entente [...] On the hierarchy of types of cooperation among states – from détente to entente to alliance to special relationship – an entente occupies the middle position; ententes are less rigid and not as binding as an alliance, but more significant than*

the states, maximizing the duration of the partnership and attracting new members. In fact Dr. Zenonas Tziarras has characterized these kind of partnerships as “**Quasi-Alliances**”⁹⁷.

This interdependence creates a feeling of security, which in turn enhances stability and facilitates development – not only for the members of the partnership, but also for neighboring countries as well – as major infrastructure projects are also the result of such multilateral partnerships. A factor that needs to be underlined though is that the excessive development of some states “at the expense” of others might change the balance of power, leading to the phenomenon known as “**Thucydides trap**” or “**security dilemma**” that usually ends to conflict⁹⁸.

In the case of the Trilateral Partnership between Greece, Cyprus, and Israel – a cooperative scheme established in 2013 and supported by the USA – the development of its members cannot be characterised as excessive at the expense of others so far. The Turkish reactions though to the creation of the “East-Med” pipeline and the “India - Middle East - Europe Economic Corridor” indicates that **Türkiye feels threatened** (mostly by Greece) by its exclusion from these major projects. The same thing – in smaller scale though– seems to apply for **China** in relation to India, due to the development of the “India - Middle East - Europe Economic Corridor”.

Regardless of the negative reaction of Türkiye and China though, the trilateral partnership between Greece, Cyprus, and Israel must be seen as a positive cooperative scheme that benefits not only its members but other states too, in regional and international level. This was declared by the leaders of Greece, Cyprus, and Israel in their Joint Statement after the 9th Trilateral Summit, in which they stated that:

“Our engagement reflects our shared values and ever-increasing common interests, aiming to contribute to peace, stability, security

détentes, rapprochements, nonaggression pacts, and consultation pacts”. For more details visit: N. Shama. *Between Alliance and Entente: The Egyptian-Greek-Cypriot Partnership*. In Z. Tziarras (ed.) “The new Geopolitics of the Eastern Mediterranean: Trilateral Partnerships and Regional Security”. Re-imagining the Eastern Mediterranean Series: PCC Report: 3, Nicosia, PRIO Cyprus Centre, 2019, pp. 95-97. On line: https://files.prio.org/publication_files/cyprus/GeopoliticsEasternMediterranean/The%20New%20Geopolitics%20of%20the%20Eastern%20Mediterranean%20-%20Chapter%206%20-%20Between%20Alliance%20and%20-%20Nael%20Shama.pdf (accessed: 05/10/2023).

⁹⁷ Z. Tziarras. *Israel-Cyprus-Greece: A ‘Comfortable’ Quasi-Alliance*. *Mediterranean Politics* 21 (3), 2016, pp. 407-427.

⁹⁸ J. Bartosiak. *The Thucydides Trap and the Rise and Fall of Great Powers*. *Geopolitical Futures*, 2020. On line: <https://geopoliticalfutures.com/the-thucydides-trap-and-the-rise-and-fall-of-great-powers/> (accessed: 04/10/2023).

and prosperity in the Eastern Mediterranean and the wider region”⁹⁹.

⁹⁹ Ministry of Interior (Press and Information Office). *Joint Statement by Cyprus, Greece, Israel after the 9th Trilateral Summit, held on 4 September, 2023, in Lefkosia*. 2023. On line: https://www.pio.gov.cy/en/press-releases-article.html?id=36656&utm_source=hootsuite&utm_medium=sdfs&utm_term=&utm_content=&utm_campaign=#flat (accessed: 04/10/2023).

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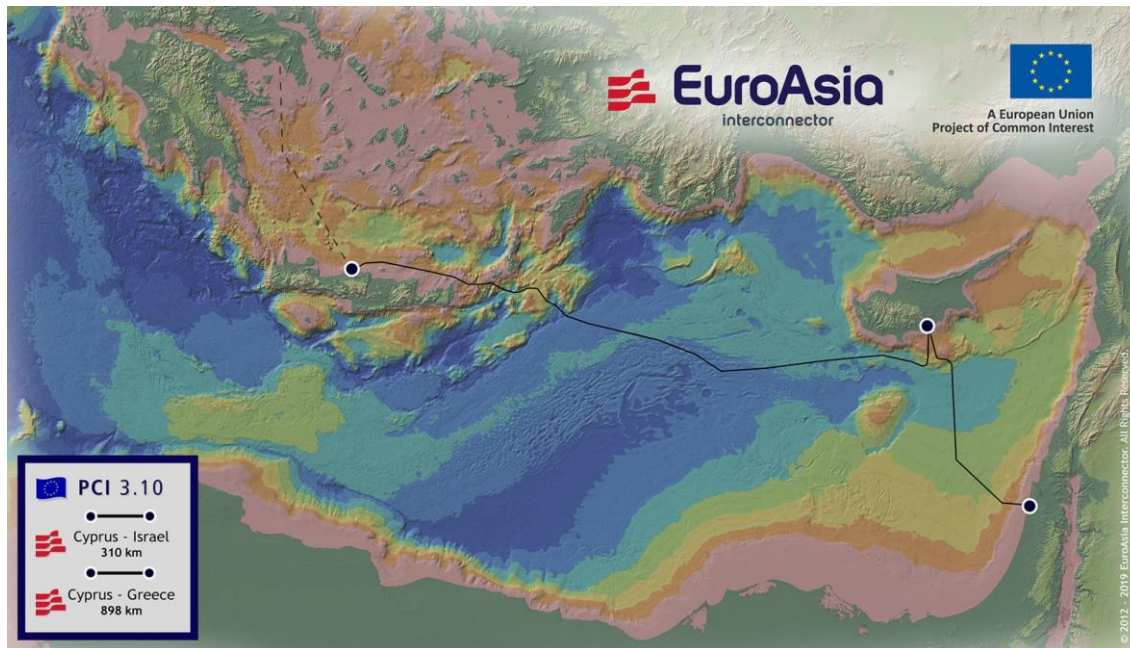
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Annex A. The Proposed Routes for EuroAsia and EuroAfrica Interconnector



Source: <https://euroasia-interconnector.com/at-glance/the-route/> (accessed 02/10/2023).



Source: <https://www.euroafrica-interconnector.com/at-glance/> (accessed 02/10/2023).

Annex B. The Joint Statement of the 9th Trilateral Summit

Joint Statement by Cyprus, Greece, Israel after the 9th Trilateral Summit, held on 4 September, 2023, in Lefkosia

We, Nikos Christodoulides, President of the Republic of Cyprus, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic, and Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of the State of Israel, having met in Lefkosia today, September 4th 2023, for the 9th Trilateral Summit between our countries and reaffirmed our commitment to continue strengthening the dynamic cooperation of our trilateral partnership platform. Our engagement reflects our shared values and ever-increasing common interests, aiming to contribute to peace, stability, security and prosperity in the Eastern Mediterranean and the wider region.

As underlined on previous occasions, our three countries remain committed to welcoming other like-minded parties in our resolute effort to create and advance synergies, to the benefit of our countries and peoples, as well as of our region.

We reviewed progress achieved in a multiplicity of cooperation pillars, which have been developing in the eight years since the inception of this Trilateral forum and reaffirmed our aim to propel collaborations in key domains, such as energy, defence, emergency response, environment, tourism, health, technology and innovation, and diasporas.

We agreed that the energy sector, and in particular, natural gas, electricity and renewable energy, is a solid foundation for cooperation in the region, based on international law including the law of the sea and the respect of all states to exercise their rights in their respective EEZ/Continental Shelf.

In light of the growing need for energy diversification and interconnectivity, due to the geopolitical developments, we reaffirmed the common interest to advance prospects for a reliable energy corridor from the Eastern Mediterranean basin to Europe. In this context, we stressed the importance of further promoting energy synergies with like-minded countries including the EMGF and regional projects such as electrical interconnections, like the EuroAsia Interconnector, and possible natural gas/hydrogen pipelines. Addressing the global challenge of climate change, we agree to reinforce our efforts through regional cooperative projects, R&D, innovative energy technologies and promoting further regional energy connectivity.

Against the backdrop of recent wildfires in Greece and Cyprus, taking note of the recent assistance provided by Israel, we reaffirm our mutual commitment to assist each other in responding to emergencies and further enhance our coordination and joint capabilities for that purpose.

We also reaffirmed on the value of the 3+1 format with the United States, which can offer tangible deliverables, inter alia, in the areas of energy, economy, climate action, emergency preparedness and counterterrorism. It was agreed to work together towards holding a ministerial 3+1 meeting later this year.

Given the positive momentum unleashed by the historic Abraham Accords and the new opportunities that it has created, we explored ways of linking work done in our Trilateral platform with other regional formats, including the Negev Forum.

The strengthening and widening of the circle of peace between Israel and the Arab world, unthinkable only a few years ago, holds the promise for a more secure and prosperous region, and we are committed to encourage and support this process.

Prime Minister Mitsotakis and Prime Minister Netanyahu were briefed by President Christodoulides on the latest developments around the Cyprus Issue and welcomed his initiative to include an enhanced EU role in the efforts to resume negotiations. In this context the three sides expressed unwavering support for a just, comprehensive, and viable settlement of the Cyprus problem, based on international law and relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.

They also expressed serious concern over recent actions in the buffer zone near Pyla, taking note of the Security Council's 21 August press statement on this matter. In this vein, they underscored the need to avoid any further unilateral or escalatory actions that could raise tensions and harm the prospects for a settlement.

We agreed that a settlement which will reunify the island, based on the respect of democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Cypriots, would not only benefit the people of Cyprus in its entirety, but also significantly contribute to the peace and stability of the region.

We firmly and unequivocally condemned all forms of terrorism, as well as incitement to violence and hatred.

We called on our regional partners and the rest of the international community to step up the efforts to curb terrorism and hold all entities which promote and sponsor it accountable. Recent terror plots against Israeli and Jewish targets were encouraged by foreign actors who aim to destabilize the region. These malicious attempts were foiled thanks to the Greek and Cypriot authorities and demonstrated the common threat of terrorism and the importance of our close cooperation in the fight against it.

We reiterated our steadfast commitment to the enhancement of EU-Israel relations. We underline the need to promote cooperation in the framework of the EU-Israel Association Agreement, and the reconvening of the EU-Israel Association Council during the last quarter of this year.

We also noted the importance of the Aqaba and Sharm El Sheikh meetings and their key contribution to de-escalation and stability, as well as their potential for rebuilding trust between the parties, which is needed for advancing a just and lasting peace.

We agreed that the next trilateral Summit will be held in Israel, during 2024.

Source: https://www.pio.gov.cy/en/press-releases-article.html?id=36656&utm_source=hootsuite&utm_medium=sdfs&utm_term=&utm_content=&utm_campaign=#flat (accessed 04/10/2023)

Annex C. The Abraham Accords Declaration

The Abraham Accords Declaration:

We, the undersigned, recognize the importance of maintaining and strengthening peace in the Middle East and around the world based on mutual understanding and coexistence, as well as respect for human dignity and freedom, including religious freedom.

We encourage efforts to promote interfaith and intercultural dialogue to advance a culture of peace among the three Abrahamic religions and all humanity.

We believe that the best way to address challenges is through cooperation and dialogue and that developing friendly relations among States advances the interests of lasting peace in the Middle East and around the world.

We seek tolerance and respect for every person in order to make this world a place where all can enjoy a life of dignity and hope, no matter their race, faith or ethnicity.

We support science, art, medicine, and commerce to inspire humankind, maximize human potential and bring nations closer together.

We seek to end radicalization and conflict to provide all children a better future.

We pursue a vision of peace, security, and prosperity in the Middle East and around the world.

In this spirit, we warmly welcome and are encouraged by the progress already made in establishing diplomatic relations between Israel and its neighbors in the region under the principles of the Abraham Accords. We are encouraged by the ongoing efforts to consolidate and expand such friendly relations based on shared interests and a shared commitment to a better future.

Signed:



Source: <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Abraham-Accords-signed-FINAL-15-Sept-2020-508-1.pdf> (accessed 02/10/2023)

Annex D. The MoU about India-Middle East-Europe Corridor

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON THE PRINCIPLES OF AN INDIA - MIDDLE EAST - EUROPE ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

Pursuant to this Memorandum of Understanding, the Governments of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the European Union, the Republic of India, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the French Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Italian Republic, and the United States of America (the “Participants”) commit to work together to establish the India - Middle East - Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). The IMEC is expected to stimulate economic development through enhanced connectivity and economic integration between Asia, the Arabian Gulf, and Europe.

The IMEC will be comprised of two separate corridors, the east corridor connecting India to the Arabian Gulf and the northern corridor connecting the Arabian Gulf to Europe. It will include a railway that, upon completion, will provide a reliable and cost-effective cross-border ship-to-rail transit network to supplement existing maritime and road transport routes – enabling goods and services to transit to, from, and between India, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, and Europe.

Along the railway route, Participants intend to enable the laying of cable for electricity and digital connectivity, as well as pipe for clean hydrogen export. This corridor will secure regional supply chains, increase trade accessibility, improve trade facilitation, and support an increased emphasis on environmental social, and government impacts.

Participants intend that the corridor will increase efficiencies, reduce costs, enhance economic unity, generate jobs, and lower greenhouse gas emissions - - resulting in a transformative integration of Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

In support of this initiative, Participants commit to work collectively and expeditiously to arrange and implement all elements of these new transit 2 routes, and to establish coordinating entities to address the full range of technical, design, financing, legal and relevant regulatory standards.

Today’s Memorandum of Understanding is the result of initial consultations. It sets forth political commitments of the Participants and does not create rights or obligations under

international law. The Participants intend to meet within the next sixty days to develop and commit to an action plan with relevant timetables.

Signed at _____ on _____, 2023, in the English language.

For the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:

For the European Union:

For the Republic of India:

For the United Arab Emirates:

For the French Republic: 3

For the Federal Republic of Germany:

For the Italian Republic:

For the United States of America:

Source: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Project-Gateway-Multilateral-MOU.pdf> (accessed 04/10/2023)

Annex E. The MoU on Natural Gas between the EU, Egypt & Israel

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

ON COOPERATION RELATED TO TRADE, TRANSPORT, AND EXPORT OF NATURAL GAS TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

BETWEEN

THE EUROPEAN UNION REPRESENTED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT REPRESENTED BY THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND MINERAL RESOURCES

THE STATE OF ISRAEL REPRESENTED BY THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY

TOGETHER HEREINAFTER REFERRED TO AS THE "SIDES",

Emphasising the importance of regional cooperation between natural gas producing and consuming countries to support security of the energy supply;

Recalling the objectives defined under the Paris Agreement that has been ratified by the Sides and that defines their commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions;

Acknowledging that natural gas shall continue to play an important role in terms of energy consumption and electricity generation in the European Union until 2030, after which its use in the European Union will decline in line with its climate neutrality commitment by 2050;

Recalling the importance of the recent declarations, initiatives and agreements in implementing the cooperation of the Sides in the field of energy, in particular:

- The Memorandum of Understanding on a Strategic partnership on energy between the Arab Republic of Egypt and the European Union signed in 2018;
- The Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Ministry of Energy of the State of Israel signed in November 2021, which aims to set forth a general framework to study the construction and operation of a pipeline to transport additional quantities of natural gas from Israel's offshore gas fields to Egypt;
- The East Mediterranean Gas Forum Statute signed on 22nd September 2020, which established a regional inter-governmental organization of natural gas producing, consuming and transit countries, which aims to coordinate structured discussions and develop joint initiatives with the objective of supporting and accelerating the establishment of an efficient and competitive regional East Mediterranean gas market.

Noting that the Arab Republic of Egypt and the State of Israel, along with four EU member-states (Cyprus, France, Greece and Italy), are members of the East Mediterranean Gas Forum, of which the European Union is an observer, and which serves as a platform for a structured policy dialogue on natural gas;

Noting the intention of the Arab Republic of Egypt to serve as a regional energy hub for natural gas;

With a view to recording their intention to work together on the transport, trade and export of natural gas to the European Union and enhancing their cooperation on their respective green energy transitions;

THE SIDES HAVE DECIDED to conclude the following Memorandum of Understanding:

Section 1

(Affordable, Stable and Secure Natural Gas Supply)

The Sides will endeavour to work collectively towards enabling a stable delivery of natural gas to the EU that is consistent with long-term decarbonisation objectives and is based on the principle of market-oriented pricing, to the extent that it coincides with each Side's domestic laws, regulations, policies and procedures.

Any shipment of natural gas from the Arab Republic of Egypt and the State of Israel to the European Union may be shipped inter alia via the use of the LNG infrastructure in the Arab Republic of Egypt.

The activities contemplated in this Memorandum of Understanding shall be without prejudice to, and shall not restrict the ability of, the Arab Republic of Egypt or the State of Israel to export natural gas to other buyers or through other routes.

Any natural gas to be shipped to the European Union will originate either from the Arab Republic of Egypt, the State of Israel, or any other source in the East Mediterranean region, including EU Member States in the region, that is deemed acceptable by the Sides.

This goal is without prejudice to the needs of the local consumption of the domestic markets, as well as to the existing and future contractual commitments of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the State of Israel, or their licensees.

The Sides will endeavour to promote the reduction of methane leakages, and in particular examine new technologies for reducing venting and flaring and explore possibilities for the utilisation of captured methane throughout the entire supply chain.

Section 2

(Implementation)

The Sides will explore the possibility of working collaboratively to set forth the appropriate ways and means for implementing the purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding in order to expedite the export of natural gas to the EU. Such collaboration will focus on, but not be limited to the following areas:

- a) Formulating a plan for the efficient utilization of infrastructure in order to accelerate the export and shipment of natural gas to the EU;
- b) Developing a road map for attaining the requisite governmental and regulatory approvals for advancing the objectives of this Memorandum of Understanding;
- c) Endeavouring to encourage by the EU for European companies to invest in natural gas exploration and production in Israel and Egypt, including participation in competitive tenders for exploration licenses taking into consideration the EU's climate policies and its REPowerEU strategy;
- d) Exploring possibilities to apply carbon capture and carbon sequestration, and assisting in the creation of a plan to reduce emissions of natural gas to international industry-best-practice standards;
- e) Exploring ways to make funds available, including by the EU to develop technologies, and provide best-practice standards, knowledge and technologies regarding emissions reduction and natural gas decarbonization.

Section 3

(Environmental Protection)

The Sides will endeavour to ensure, jointly and severally, that future investments in projects or activities developed within the framework of this Memorandum of Understanding will not cause pollution of the marine or land environment, or damage by pollution to a coastline, shore facilities or amenities, or be a hindrance to vessels or fishing gear of any country.

Section 4

(Safety)

The Sides may consult one another with a view to preventing safety hazards to the extent necessary for natural gas infrastructure used for the trade, transport and export of natural gas between the Sides, in accordance with each Side's domestic laws, regulations, policies and procedures.

Section 5

(Promotion of Hydrogen, Green Energy Production, and Energy Efficiency)

The Sides will endeavour to encourage the Sides' public and private sector corporations to cooperate on the means for achieving green energy goals and combatting climate change in the following areas:

Hydrogen – Utilizing renewable and low carbon hydrogen in a large number of applications such as industrial processes, transportation and energy storage.

Green Energy – Developing safe and sustainable energy technologies and identifying innovative ideas for enhancing incentives for promoting the use of green energy, and finding solutions relating to their integration into the energy grid.

Energy Efficiency – Promoting energy efficiency.

Section 6

(Meetings of the Sides)

The Sides intend to meet in order to monitor the adequate implementation of the provisions of this Memorandum of Understanding, and may meet at least once a year at a place and time mutually agreed by the Sides, or upon the request of any Side.

The Sides, may, from time to time, propose a Ministerial level meeting for strategic matters, including the renewable energy transition.

Section 7

(The Laws in Force & Dispute Settlement)

Nothing in this Memorandum of Understanding will create any legally binding obligations or commitments, or any financial obligations or commitments, between the Sides or in relation to any third party, under domestic or international law. This Memorandum of Understanding does not constitute an obligation to allocate funds.

The implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding and any other activity hereunder shall be in accordance with each Side's domestic laws, regulations, policies and procedures, as well as each Side's international obligations.

Any dispute that may arise between the Sides regarding the application or interpretation of this Memorandum of Understanding shall be settled amicably through mutual consultation or negotiation between the Sides, in good faith and in the spirit of this Memorandum of Understanding, through diplomatic channels, and will not be referred to any national or international tribunal or third party for settlement.

Section 8*(Confidentiality)*

1. It is the intention of the Sides to exchange information generated in the course of the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding.
2. Subject to its applicable domestic law, a Side will not disclose to third parties any information received from any other Side, including any information expressed in writing or orally, without its prior written consent.
3. Notwithstanding the above, a Side may disclose information generated during the course of the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding, without obtaining the other Side's prior written consent, to any consultant or legal counsel retained by said Side, in order to facilitate the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding, provided that said Side requires its consultant or legal counsel to subject itself in writing to the terms of this section.
4. This section will not apply to information which was in the public domain before being disclosed or information which was already known by the receiving participant before its dissemination.

Section 9*(Duration & Termination)*

This Memorandum of Understanding will come into effect on the date of its signature by the Sides and will continue to have effect for a period of three (3) years. It will be renewed automatically for two successive three (3) year periods.

This Memorandum of Understanding may be modified by the written consent of the Sides, and such modifications will come into effect with the same procedures that were followed for coming into effect of this Memorandum of Understanding on the date determined by the Sides. Any such modification will be included in an addendum signed by the Sides and will form an integral part of this Memorandum of Understanding.

This Memorandum of Understanding may be terminated by a six (6) months' prior written notice via diplomatic channels by any of the Sides. The termination of this Memorandum of Understanding will not affect any ongoing activity arising out of this Memorandum of Understanding, unless the Sides agree otherwise in writing.

Signed in Cairo on 15th June 2022, in three original copies in English language equally authentic.

For the European Union

Kadri Simson

EU Commissioner for Energy



**For the Ministry of Petroleum and
Mineral Resources of the Arab
Republic of Egypt**

Eng. Tarek El Molla



Minister

For the Ministry of Energy of Israel

Karine Elharrar



Minister

Annex F. The Aqaba Joint Communiqué

Aqaba Joint Communiqué

Media Note

Office of the Spokesperson

February 26, 2023

The following text reflects the Joint Communiqué following today's meeting in Aqaba, Jordan:

At the invitation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Jordanian, Egyptian, Israeli, Palestinian and U.S. Senior Officials met in Aqaba, Jordan today, 26 February 2023.

Following comprehensive and frank discussions, the participants announced the following:

1. The two sides (Palestinian and Israeli sides) affirmed their commitment to all previous agreements between them, and to work towards a just and lasting peace. They reaffirmed the necessity of committing to de-escalation on the ground and to prevent further violence.
2. The five parties recognize the importance of upholding unchanged the historic status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem in word and practice, and emphasizes in this regard the Hashemite Custodianship / special role of Jordan.
3. The Government of Israel and the Palestinian National Authority confirmed their joint readiness and commitment to immediately work to end unilateral measures for a period of 3-6 months. This includes an Israeli commitment to stop discussion of any new settlement units for 4 months and to stop authorization of any outposts for 6 months.
4. The five parties agreed to convene again in Sharm El Sheikh in March to achieve the goals listed above.
5. The participants also agreed to pursue confidence-building measures and strengthen mutual trust in order to address outstanding issues through direct dialogue. The two parties will work in good faith to assume responsibilities and to enhance mutual trust through this arrangement.
6. Jordan, Egypt and the United States consider these understandings as major progress towards re-establishing and deepening relations between the two sides, and commit to assisting and facilitating as appropriate their implementation.

7. The participants stressed the importance of the Aqaba meeting, the first of its kind in years. They agreed to continue meeting under this formula, maintain positive momentum and expand this agreement towards wider political process leading to a just and lasting peace.

8. The participants thanked Jordan for organizing and hosting this meeting and for its efforts to ensure it produced positive results. They also thanked Egypt for its support and essential role and active participation.

They also thanked the United States for its important role in efforts to reach understandings that led to this agreement today, emphasizing its indispensable role in efforts to prevent deterioration and find horizons for peace.

Source: <https://www.state.gov/aqaba-joint-communicue/> (accessed 06/10/2023)

Annex G. The Sharm El Sheikh Joint Communiqué**MEDIA NOTE****OFFICE OF THE SPOKESPERSON**

MARCH 19, 2023

The following text reflects the Joint Communiqué following today's meeting in Sharm El Sheikh Egypt:

At the invitation of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Jordanian, Israeli, Palestinian and U.S. political and security senior officials met in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt today, 19 March 2023, in furtherance of the understanding reached in Aqaba, Jordan on 26 February 2023.

The five Parties held thorough discussions on ways and means to de-escalate tensions on the ground between Palestinians and Israelis, in order to pave a way forward towards the peaceful settlement between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Towards achieving this purpose, and beginning implementation, the Parties have agreed to the following:

1 – The Parties reaffirmed their commitment to advancing security, stability and peace for Israelis and Palestinians alike, and recognized the necessity of de-escalation on the ground, the prevention of further violence, as well as of pursuing confidence building measures, enhancing mutual trust, creating political horizon, and addressing outstanding issues through direct dialogue.

2 – The Government of Israel and the Palestinian National Authority reaffirmed their joint readiness and commitment to immediately work to end unilateral measures for a period of 3-6 months. This includes an Israeli commitment to stop discussion of any new settlement units for 4 months, and to stop authorization of any outposts for 6 months.

3 – The two sides reaffirmed, in this regard, their unwavering commitment to all previous agreements between them, in particular, the legal right of the Palestinian National Authority to carry out the security responsibilities in Area (A) of the West Bank, in accordance with existing agreements, and will work together towards realizing this objective.

4 – The two sides agreed to develop a mechanism to curb and counter violence, incitement, and inflammatory statements and actions, which will report to the quintet leadership in April, in a resumed session of the meeting in Sharm El Sheikh.

5 – The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to all previous agreements between them, and reaffirmed their agreement to address all outstanding issues through direct dialogue.

6 – The Parties agreed to establish a mechanism to take the necessary steps towards improving the economic conditions of the Palestinian people, per previous agreements, and to significantly enhance the fiscal situation of the Palestinian National Authority, which will report to the quintet leadership in April, in a resumed session of the meeting in Sharm El Sheikh.

7 – They also reiterated the commitment of upholding unchanged the historic status quo at the Holy Sites in Jerusalem, both in word and in practice, and reaffirmed in this context the importance of the Hashemite Custodianship/special role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. They emphasized the necessity of both Israelis and Palestinians to actively prevent any actions that would disrupt the sanctity of these sites, inter alia during the upcoming Holy Month of Ramadan, which coincides with Easter and Passover this year.

8 – The Parties reaffirmed the importance of maintaining the meetings under this format, and are looking forward to cooperating with a view to consolidating the basis for direct negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis, towards achieving comprehensive, just and lasting peace, and promote cooperation and coexistence between all people of the Middle East. They will convene again in Egypt.

9 – The Parties expressed their appreciation to the Arab Republic of Egypt for organizing and hosting this meeting, as well as their efforts to ensure that it produces positive results, and for its primary role aiming to achieve a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian question and maintain calm and stability in the region. They also thanked the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the United States of America for their crucial and significant role in reaching understandings with a view to preventing escalation and creating a horizon for peace.

Source: <https://il.usembassy.gov/joint-communique-from-the-march-19-meeting-in-sharm-el-sheikh/> (accessed 06/10/2023)