

**THE EUROPEAN UNION AND TURKEY: CONTESTATION OF
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN RESOURCES AND CLASH OVER
SOVEREIGNTY RIGHTS**

by
HAZAL SELİN ATİK

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Approved by:

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ABSTRACT

THE EUROPEAN UNION AND TURKEY: CONTESTATION OF EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN RESOURCES AND CLASH OVER SOVEREIGNTY RIGHTS

HAZAL SELİN ATİK

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Thesis Supervisor: Prof. MELTEM MÜFTÜLER-BAÇ

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Cyprus, Security of Supply

The Eastern Mediterranean has become the important focus for the states due to its newly found hydrocarbon reserves. At the beginning of discoveries, it was thought that these reserves could contribute to promoting peace in the region. However, these reserves increased the tensions among littoral states and heated old disputes such as the Cyprus issue. The drilling activities aim to discover potential hydrocarbon reserves in the region induced tension because of the uncertainty and ongoing disagreement regarding the maritime jurisdiction in the Eastern Mediterranean. The European Union and Turkey are the main sides of the conflict that arose in the region since both sides seek to diversify their energy resources. This thesis claims that the hydrocarbon reserves and drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean have adverse effect on the EU-Turkey relations because of the Cyprus issue and contestation over the maritime zones in the region.

ÖZET

AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ VE TÜRKİYE: DOĞU AKDENİZ'E İLİŞKİN ÇEKİŞME VE EGEMENLİK HAKLARININ ÇAKIŞMASI

HAZAL SELİN ATIK

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Doğu Akdeniz, Enerji, Avrupa Birliği, Türkiye, Kıbrıs, Arz
Güvenliği

Doğu Akdeniz yeni keşfedilen hidrokarbon rezervleri sayesinde devletlerin odak noktası haline gelmiştir. Keşiflerin başlangıcında, bulunan rezervlerin bölgesel bir barış ortamına katkı sunma potansiyeli değerlendirilmekteydi. Ancak, rezervler bölgede Kıbrıs sorunu gibi tarihsel anlaşmazlıkları gün yüzüne çıkarmıştır. Bölgedeki potansiyel doğal gaz kaynaklarını bulabilmek için gerçekleştirilen sondaj faaliyetleri, deniz yetki alanlarındaki sınırlandırmanın muğlaklığı nedeniyle ülkeler arasında tansiyonun yükselmesine sebep olmuştur. Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye, enerji kaynaklarını çeşitlendirme arayışında oldukları için bölgede ortaya çıkan çatışmanın ana taraflarıdır. Tez, Doğu Akdeniz'de keşfedilen hidrokarbon rezervlerinin ve bu rezervlere ulaşmak için gerçekleştirilen sondaj faaliyetlerinin Kıbrıs sorunu ve deniz yetki alanlarındaki çatışma dolayısıyla, AB- Türkiye ilişkilerini olumsuz etkilediğini savunmaktadır.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BCFG Billion Cubic Feet of Gas	21
Bcm Billion Cubic Meters	23
BP British Petroleum.....	3
CU Customs Union.....	45
EC European Community	49
EEAS European External Action Service.....	41
EEC European Economic Community	14
EEZ Exclusive Economic Zone.....	4
EU European Union	1
HR High Representative	2
ICJ International Court of Justice	33
IEA International Energy Agency.....	3
ITLOS International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea	31
LNG Liquefied Natural Gas	25
MMBtu Million British Thermal Units.....	55
NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization.....	12
NAVTEX Navigational Telex	44
OPEC The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries	55
RoC Republic of Cyprus.....	2

TANAP Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline Project.....	52
TAP Trans Adriatic Pipeline	52
TcF Trillion Cubic Feet.....	57
TMT Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı	7
TRNC Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.....	5
UK United Kingdom	4
UN United Nations.....	4
UNCLOS United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea	3
UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.....	3
US United States.....	3
USSR Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	12

1. INTRODUCTION

Energy became one of the valuable resources in a globalized world. Countries with low energy production seek to diversify their energy imports so as to diminish their reliance on one supplier. In this regard, both the European Union (EU) and Turkey aim to diversify their energy sources due to their dependency on imported natural gas. In this context, the discovery of hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean whetted both the EU's and Turkey's appetite due to their deficiency in natural gas resources. Apart from the EU and Turkey's reactions, this new discovery became a hot topic both at the regional and international level. It is crucial to understand why hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean are important for both the EU and Turkey in terms of energy-politics.

The EU places importance on the energy issue since European countries don't have enough energy resources to meet their energy needs. The energy supply security comes to the forefront in the EU's energy policy due to the lack of domestic resources. The EU imports energy to satisfy its requirements, and Russia is the biggest exporter and supplier of natural gas to the EU. Considering the EU's high level of dependence on Russian gas, European countries search for diversifying their energy resources. In line with the EU's aim to diversify its energy supply sources, it is reasonable to ask whether the Eastern Mediterranean would provide an alternative for the Union or not. From the European perspective, the Eastern Mediterranean presents an opportunity to find an alternative for Russian gas. However, the EU is not the only actor in the Eastern-Mediterranean energy equation. Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Israel and Turkey come to the forefront because they also lack adequate energy resources. Thus, they are eager to take advantage of the region's gas reserves.

In terms of the economic size of these states, Turkey gives much more importance to the region compared to other littoral states. In fact, Turkey is a transit country, and it has an extensive network of pipelines. As such, Turkey ensures and facilitates energy flow to the European natural gas market. In addition to its geostrategic position, Turkey is also indispensable for the Union precisely because it is a gateway

for opening up to energy markets other than the Russian one. Yet, it should be noted that Turkey is an import-dependent country in terms of energy ¹. In this regard, Russia is the biggest supplier of natural gas and plays a prominent role in Turkey's energy balance. That is why the Eastern Mediterranean is also considered to be as an opportunity by Ankara: to reduce this natural gas dependency. Accordingly, Turkey has started drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean. However, Turkey's drilling activities reflect a contest over sovereignty rights in the Eastern Mediterranean among Cyprus, the EU and Turkey. Moreover, this contest rekindles old disputes and rivalries concerning the Cyprus issue.

At present, energy appears to be the overriding issue of dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean. There is a fierce competition among the regional states to discover hydrocarbon reserves in the region. However, the dispute about energy resources is essentially connected with the unresolved issue of Cyprus, the main source of the region's tensions. The conflicting legal claims of states regarding the Eastern Mediterranean, combined with old problems such as the Cyprus issue, lead to a geopolitical front in the region that is defined by the differing objectives of several states. The Cyprus question has been on the international agenda of conflicts for more than sixty years, involving Turkey, Greece, the UK and the increasing number of actors. As the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) is a member of the EU with its divided status, the EU and Turkey have come to confront each other in the region. In the ongoing process, the EU High Representative's (HR) statements and the European Council's sanction decisions regarding Turkey's activities in the Eastern Mediterranean has come to the forefront. In turn, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' statements heats up the region and triggers the tension in bilateral relations.

This thesis sets out to question how the Cyprus issue has affected the policies towards the Eastern Mediterranean of those actors and how the outcomes of these policies have affected the EU-Turkey relations. The topic covers an analysis that diversifies from politics and international maritime law to energy and is addressed four chapters. Chapter I investigates Cyprus' political history from the perspective of sovereignty and legitimacy by showing the EU and Turkey's positions towards the island and explains how Cyprus' political divide is linked with these parties' activities Eastern Mediterranean region. Chapter II contains an analysis of the discovery and expectations from the energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean and how those resources have paved the way for contestation and rivalry over resources in terms of sovereignty rights. Chapter III examines the conflict over sovereignty rights regarding the maritime jurisdiction between the Republic of Cyprus, Greece,

¹According to the Eurostat, Turkey's import-dependency on energy is 117 Million Tonnes of Oil Equivalent (Mtoe) in 2017, "Energy, transport and environment statistics" Eurostat Statistical Books, 2019 edition.

and Turkey and articulates how the EU High Representative's statements and the EU's sanction decisions, as well as the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' statements, have an effect on the EU-Turkey relations. Chapter IV firstly investigates the EU's energy strategy and its energy dependency in the framework of energy supply security and explains how the EU's energy policy is linked with the Eastern Mediterranean region. Then, it argues why the Eastern Mediterranean is full of *hard realities and hyped expectations*² for the European Union, and defines the East-Med pipeline project, and discusses its effect on bilateral relations between the EU and Turkey. This thesis argues that the EU activities regarding the region, sanction decisions, the East-Med pipeline project and the legal claims of the EU towards Turkey have an adverse effect on the EU-Turkey relations.

As for methodology, the thesis contains both quantitative and qualitative methods. On the one hand, I looked into the EU energy demand projections, the feasibility of East-Med gas exports to the EU, reports for possible energy reserves in Eastern Mediterranean, the EU Energy Market's export-import volumes per annum, natural gas trade statistics, estimations for Covid-19 effects on the energy markets. On the other hand, I made an analysis of process tracing, the political history of Cyprus, statements of the High Representative of the EU, statements of the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the EU Energy Strategy papers. Besides, I interpret the International Maritime Law rules and how it implemented through United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

In parallel with this, I made a literature review by covering books, e-books, articles, reports, infographics, statistics, research papers, newspapers, and several resources to enhance my arguments. The main websites that I consulted have been the European Commission, the European Council, the European Parliament, Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Directorate for EU Affairs which I used for gathering data and justify my arguments. I evaluated different points of view from journal articles such as Centre for European Reform, European Council on Foreign Relations, the Financial Times, Foreign Affairs; research papers such as SWP-German Institute for International and Security Affairs, and several other sources included in the Bibliography. The primary report that I analyzed is The World Energy Outlook published by the International Energy Agency (IEA). Besides, I used statistics from British Petroleum (BP), Eurostat, Oxford Energy Institute, United States (US) Geological Survey and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The newspapers that I used are Al-Monitor, Cyprus Mail, Reuters and The Guardian.

²The definition retrieved from Bassam Fattouh.

2. THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN: THE CYPRUS QUESTION

2.1 Introduction

Cyprus, the Eastern Mediterranean's largest island, is surrounded by the region's littoral states Egypt, Greece, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Syria, and Turkey. The island of Cyprus is a key transit point between Anatolia and the Middle East, which accounts for its strategic significance both for trade and security. For this reason, competing powers attempted to gain control of Cyprus for centuries. The existence today of two United Kingdom (UK) sovereign bases point to the continued strategic importance in the island. Yet, the very division of the island along ethnic Greek and Turkish zones with United Nations (UN) peacekeeping forces stationed at the border makes Cyprus itself contributor to the geopolitical problems of the Eastern Mediterranean. The main parties of the Cyprus question are Greece, the United Kingdom, Turkey, and indirectly the European Union.

The discovery of hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean has attracted other actors into the region. Drilling activities have brought sovereignty issues to the forefront and a broad disagreement over the demarcation of an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around Cyprus, as well as a between Turkey and Greece, against this background. It is necessary to consider the Cyprus problem from a historical perspective in order to shed light on the factors that lie behind the ongoing disputes and the currently rising tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean.

In this chapter, I argue that, in terms of international law, the unresolved historical problems of Cyprus further complicate the drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean and that the issue poses a political problem between the states beyond that of solely competing the identify hydrocarbon reserves. In this respect, I will focus on three aspects of Cyprus' historical background after and 1960. Firstly, I take up the establishment of the state of Cyprus, and then assess the significance of the

1960 Constitution for both communities on the island. Thereafter, I explain why the 1960 Constitution did not work. Secondly, I dwell on the 1974 coup d'état in Cyprus, triggered chiefly by the military junta in Greece, followed by the Turkish intervention on the island that eventually led to the establishment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Finally, I discuss the reunification solution for the island, namely Annan Plan. In addition, I assess Cyprus' membership of the European Union in connection with my discussion of the EU's approach to the Cyprus issue. In this framework, I discuss Turkey's reaction to the Cyprus' issue and to the European Union's policy towards Cyprus with a view to sharing how all these developments are linked to today's Eastern Mediterranean energy issue as well.

2.2 Historical Background

Cyprus has changed hands many times over the centuries. Firstly, Cyprus was conquered by the Turks in 1571 under Selim II. The island remained in Ottoman possession between 1571 and 1878, and many Turks migrated to the island during this period (Papadakis 2006). At the end of the 19th century, three quarters of the island of Cyprus was ethnically Greek while one quarter was Turkish. With the decline of Ottoman Empire, its grip on Cyprus also weakened. The island itself demonstrated typical characteristics of a remote province where Greeks and Turks lived in their own communities separate from one another.

After the Ottoman-Russian war of 1878 resulting in the Ottoman defeat, Britain took over the administration of Cyprus, fearing that, a weakened Ottoman state would not be able to push back the Russian's from gaining access to the Mediterranean. In doing so, British wanted to secure their strategic trade routes to the Suez Canal. Although, Britain took over the ad interim administration of Cyprus in 1878, the island remained under Ottoman sovereignty. During World War I, the British unilaterally occupied the island of Cyprus. After the Ottoman Empire, was defeated in World War I, Turkey formally recognized Cyprus as a British crown colony at the Lausanne Conference as a party to the war (1923) (Hannay 2004).

Due to the fact that, the UK, having war-weary country, having lost its influence east of Suez chose to maintain its influence in the Mediterranean by any means possible, even to the extent of adopting a divide and rule¹ policy. This way, the UK aimed to act as a negotiator between the two communities namely the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Apparently, the UK's policy in ruling Cyprus paved the way for cleavages between the two communities along their nationalist and religious loyalties (Papadakis 2006). Accordingly, Greek Cypriots appealed to Greece so as to strengthen their position on the island and made an emphasis on its claim regarding the unification of Cyprus with its fatherland, Greece, on the basis of "self-determination"²

As the tension in bilateral relations increased, the Greek Orthodox Church started to campaign for "ENOSIS"³, which means the union of Cyprus with Greece. In the middle of the 1950s, the ENOSIS campaign began to be supported by Greece. As a response to Greek policies towards the island, Turkish Cypriots called on Turkey for counterbalancing what the Greek Cypriots strived to achieve their objectives on the island. In parallel with this escalation on the island, the 6-7 September events occurred in İstanbul, which hampered the multicultural structure of Turkish society and put into question Turkey's attitude towards the Greek minority. As a consequence, the UK got Turkey involved in the Cyprus dilemma in 1955 precisely because if Greece and Turkey faced each other, the UK would be able to set in motion its exit policy, at a time when it needed to reduce the costs of its overseas exposure. By doing so the UK could concentrate on its internal affairs and economy.

In 1955, the campaign continued under the leadership of Archbishop Makarios, head of the Cyprus Orthodox Church, and Colonel George Grivas, the leader of EOKA⁴, which was founded as an underground political organization. Even if these two Greek leaders had an objective of liberating the island from British colony, they were in fact diametrically different personalities with very different agendas. On the one hand, Makarios favoured diplomatic means and ways rather than violent con-

¹Divide and rule policy is a way used by states to weaken the state's rivals by dividing them or keeping them divided. Demetriou Charles, "Divide and rule Cyprus? Decolonization as process", 403-420, accessed on 4.10.2020.

²The principle of self - determination means that nations determine their own futures in accordance with Article 1 and 55 of the UN Treaty under prescribed conditions. First, when using this right, the territorial integrity of the states will not be violated and everyone who is party to the issue must be in agreement. Charter of the United Nations, the UN, accessed on 04.10.2020.

³It refers to the unification of Cyprus with Greek motherland within the framework of the "Megali Idea" target, Fırat, Melek. "Batı Bloku Ekseninde Türkiye 1945-1960", Türk Dış Politikası (1919-1980), by Baskın Oran, Ankara: İletişim, 2004.

⁴EOKA has been recognized by Turkey as a terrorist organization, retrieved from the website of Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, retrieved from <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sub.en.mfa?55806b36-748e-4504-bab5-4ca952070a1c>, accessed on 11.09.2020.

frontation. On the other hand, commander Grivas as the head of EOKA movement put an emphasis on confrontational means rather than negotiating diplomatically. With the militia activities of EOKA in Cyprus, the campaign for ENOSIS turned into violent demonstrations (Thompson and Vassiliadou 2004). Radical political organization had become responsible for the assassinations and deaths of thousands of people. British citizens, police officers and Turkish Cypriots were among those victims (Clement 2010). After these acts of violence that resulted in death, Turkish Cypriots had to flee from their home neighbourhoods where they had been living side by side with Greek Cypriots for a long time. Nevertheless, Turkish Cypriots rejected the idea of ENOSIS despite all the violence and intimidation.

At the first stage of events orchestrated by EOKA Turkish Cypriots resistance against Greek Cypriots' use of force resulted in many civilian casualties. As a result, Turkish Cypriots established a paramilitary force called Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı (TMT) ⁵ in 1958 with the help of the Turkish government as response to Greek Cypriot violence against them. Thereafter, Turkey launched in 1958 a "Partition Plan" which called for the division of the island between the Greek and Turkish communities. The Greek community would be located in the southern part while the Turks would be in the north. The surprising aspect in the plan was that it foresaw the division of the island between Greece and Turkey rather than between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Basically, the parties to this Plan were Greece and Turkey. Turkish community was engaged in animated demonstrations with the slogan "Either partition or death", but the plan could not be implemented due to Makarios' objections. The position of two actors regarding the status of the island were crystalized. In such an atmosphere, Greece and Turkey realized that they could not put into practise either ENOSIS or the Partition Plan, and the issue of Cyprus unfolded in a different direction.

⁵The Turkish Resistance Organization (TMT) is the armed organization established in Cyprus on 1 August 1958 to fight against the EOKA organization. Yiğit Yüksel Dilek, Kıbrıs'ta Yaşananlar ve Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı (1957-1964), accessed on 4.10.2020.

2.3 The Constitution of 1960

As it is noted above, after World War II, the UK had already taken necessary measures to withdraw from the island due to the decolonization process ⁶. After the British withdrawal, Greece and Turkey held a series of meetings in order to ensure that Greek and Turkish Cypriots could peacefully live together on the island. As a joint effort, on 11 February 1959, Greece, the UK, Turkey and the representation of the two communities Archbishop Makarios and Dr. Fazıl Küçük signed the London and Zurich Accords which defined the legal status of the Greek and Turkish Cypriots on the island. The signing of these agreements enabled the approval of the Constitution and opened the way for the establishment of an independent the Republic of Cyprus by de-escalating tensions between two parties. Following the London and Zurich Agreements, three main agreements that recognized the island of Cyprus as a sovereign state were signed in 1960. These were: the Treaty of Establishment, which instituted the Republic of Cyprus; Treaty of Guarantee which recognized the UK, Greece, and Turkey collectively or individually as a guarantors of the Republic and its Constitution gave them the right to intervene in case the states of the Republic of Cyprus was threatened; and third the Treaty of Alliance which enabled Greece and Turkey to deploy their troops of on the island (Meltem Müftüler-Baç 2005).

As a result of these agreements, Cyprus gained its independence from the UK, and Greece, Turkey, UK, Greek and Turkish Cypriots agreed on Cyprus as an independent republic. Following the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus, Britain transferred its territorial sovereignty to the two communities that are the two parties constituting together the citizenry of the island Republic. As a result of this constitution, the Republic of Cyprus was established as a bi-communal Republic under the joint sovereignty and administration of the two communities on the basis of equal rights.

According to the 1960 Cyprus Constitution, it is stated that there will be no discrimination based on ethnicity before any public instances and courts according to Article 6, so it can be said that both communities were given equal rights on the island.

⁶The UK still has a base called “sovereign base” on the island according to the Treaty of Establishment, 1960, retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---ilo_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms_127461.pdf, accessed on 10.09.2020.

“Subject to the express provisions of this Constitution no law or decision of the House of Representatives or of any of the Communal Chambers, and no act or decision of any organ, authority or person in the Republic exercising executive power or administrative functions, shall discriminate against any of the two Communities or any person as a person or by virtue of being a member of a Community.”⁷

The two communities then became founding partners with equal status. According to Article 1 of the 1960 constitution, the president of the Republic would be elected from among the members of the Greek community, and the vice president from the Turkish community. A new era started for Cyprus with the election of president Makarios and vice president Fazıl Küçük in 1960 (Thompson and Vassiliadou 2004).

“The State of Cyprus is an independent and sovereign Republic with a presidential regime, the President being Greek and the Vice President being Turk elected by the Greek and the Turkish Communities of Cyprus respectively as hereinafter in this Constitution provided.”⁸

These equal rights also comprise the economic sphere in that the two communities are given the right to benefit from the natural resources of the island in fair and equal terms. It thus follows that these two communities have equal rights on the air, continental shelf, land, and on maritime resources in the island’s Exclusive Economic Zone. Article 23 paragraph 1 and 2 illustrates the sovereignty of the central government over the full range all kinds of underground resources of the Republic.

“Every person, alone or jointly with others, has the right to acquire own, possess, enjoy or dispose of any movable or immovable property and has the right to respect for such right. The right of the Republic to underground water, minerals and antiquities is reserved. No deprivation or restriction or limitation of any such right shall be made except as provided in this Article.”⁹

⁷Cyprus’s Constitution of 1960 with Amendments through 2013, retrieved from https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Cyprus_2013.pdf?lang=en, accessed on 4.08.2020.

⁸Ibid, accessed on 3.10.2020.

⁹Ibid, accessed on 3.10.2020.

In addition, Article 25 paragraph 3 of the 1960 Constitution of Cyprus defines public interest and demonstrates how natural resources could be exploited on behalf of Republic of Cyprus.

“As an exception to the aforesaid provisions of this Article a law may provide if it is in the public interest, that certain enterprises of the nature of an essential public service or relating to the exploitation of sources of energy or other natural resources shall be carried out exclusively by the Republic or a municipal corporation or by a public corporate body created for the purpose by such law and administered under the control of the Republic, and having a capital which may be derived from public and private funds or from either such source only: Provided that, where such enterprise has been carried out by any person, other than a municipal corporation or a public corporate body, the installations used for such enterprise shall, at the request of such person, be acquired, on payment of a just price, by the Republic or such municipal corporation or such public corporate body, as the case may be.”¹⁰

Given the Constitution of 1960, it was assumed that the issues causing tensions between two communities had been peacefully resolved. However, the calm and stable atmosphere between Turks and Greeks did not last long due to several factors discussed in the following section.

2.4 Why did the 1960 Constitution not work?

In 1961, Makarios, who was elected as the first president of the Republic of Cyprus, began to claim that Cyprus could not be governed with the 1960 constitution. In claiming that the constitution did not resolve the key issues facing the government he pointed to the problems regarding administrative disagreement over authority to tax; creation of the RoC armed forces and its composition, issues relating to the recruitment into public services from the two communities, determining the participation rates in public services and the boundaries of separate municipalities; and the distribution of authority between the two communities (Firat 2004). In this context, Greek Cypriots came up with two ideas that would reduce the influence of Turkish Cypriots in government. On the one hand, Greek Cypriots backed by Greece prepared a plan that included the use of military force. The Akritas Plan aimed to intimidate the Turkish Cypriots and reinforce the position of the Greek Cypriots

¹⁰Ibid, accessed on 4.10.2020.

who had the majority in government of the Republic of Cyprus. The intimidation of the island's Turkish minority was considered to be an efficient way to pursue the goal of ENOSIS and unite the whole island with Greece (Loizides 2007). On the other hand, Makarios also proposed a thirteen-article amendment to the constitution in November 1963. This proposal was rejected by Turkey and Turkish Cypriots since it changed the status of Turkish Cypriots from being one of the two communities of equal standing into that of a minority. Under these circumstances, EOKA first conducted in 1963 armed attacks against Turkish Cypriots within the framework of Akritas Plan. Greek Cypriots are known to have supported the Akritas Plan and EOKA's action. These armed attacks are regarded as the beginning of the inter-communal clashes on the island.

Bloody Christmas is the name given to the armed attacks against Turkish Cypriots on 20-21 December 1963 (Clement 2010). A total of 364 Turkish Cypriots and 174 Cypriot Greek Cypriots lost their lives in the fighting (Burrows 1983). As a result of the Bloody Christmas attacks carried out by EOKA in 1963, the bi-national republic came to an end and the bi-communal republic was dissolved. This event has shown that the 1960 constitution did not work to meet the demands and expectations of both communities. There were several interpretations regarding the main reasons behind the Bloody Christmas fighting. It could be inferred from the context summarized above that Turkish Cypriots had not been able to exercise equal rights with the Greek Cypriots in a situation which placed them de facto on a minority status in the island after its independence. Being the more numerous and stronger party, the Greek side nurtured a long-lasting desire for the unification of Cyprus with Greece. The Greek side also saw the Turkish community as an obstacle in the way of achieving their aims.

After the Bloody Christmas and the following separation of the two communities, it was clearly seen that the founding principles of the 1960 Constitution had been violated and, as a result, Turkish Cypriots began to establish their own administration on the island so that they could manage their own internal affairs. However, attacks on Turkish Cypriots continued. Between 1963 and 1974, about 30,000 Turkish Cypriots were forced to flee north, and 103 villages were destroyed ¹¹. The violence on the island took a heavy toll on lives.

¹¹ According to Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, retrieved from <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-cyprus-issue-overview.en.mfa>, accessed on 13.09.2020.

Unsurprisingly, during the Cold War period, the Cyprus issue also attracted international attention. Throughout the 1950s, the UN emphasized the importance of pursuing a resolution to the issue by diplomatic means and proposed several resolutions regarding the peaceful settlement of this dispute. The tension between two communities, however, escalated. Although, the United Nations deployed peace-keeping forces to the island as early as 1964, the situation on the island did not improve for either community. The United Nations stepped in to conclude a cease-fire agreement and a buffer zone was created between the two sides, so as to prevent, Greece and Turkey, both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members, from facing each other. NATO would find itself in a doubly hazardous situation in case the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) meddled into Eastern Mediterranean politics, given that Cyprus was a non-aligned state and a founding member of the Group of 77 (Hannay 2004). Therefore, NATO was concerned about a rift between NATO allies by supporting the UK as a mediator between Greece and Turkey. However, NATO's efforts to prevent a probable conflict between these two NATO members came to nothing. Simultaneously, Greece started to send its armies to the island. In 1974, an army of 20,000 ENOSIS supporters was sent to the island by Greece for support of EOKA (Firat 2004). From then onwards, the Cyprus issue became entrenched and tension escalated between two communities after the intervention of multiple stakeholders.

2.5 1974 Coup d'état

On 15 July 1974 there was a coup d'état in Cyprus. The Greek military junta supported the coup and the new Cypriot government it put in place to gain more influence on the island (Hannay 2004). The leader of the Greek Cypriots, Makarios, was ousted and replaced by the pro-enosis nationalist leader Nikos Sampson, who was none but a reincarnation of George Grivas. Nikos Sampson was backed by the military junta which had come to power in Greece in 1967 under the leadership of Colonel Papandreu. In this context, it can be claimed that an oppressive regime that ruled in Greece from 1967 to 1974 helped to precipitate the coup at a time when it was facing increased opposition at home. This way Greek junta hoped to attract nationalist support to the remilitarized EOKA and helped to create the EOKA-B, a more violent and radical organization under the leadership of Sampson than its predecessor had been. Meanwhile, Turkey was not pleased with the developments on the island since the UK refused take part in the joint action plan in accordance with the 1960 Guarantee Treaty while even the Republic of Cyprus and its Con-

stitution was disregarded by the Sampson regime and EOKA-B (Hannay 2004). Left alone, Turkey intervened as a guarantor state, and carried out the “Cyprus Peace Operation” on July 20, 1974. In response to the violent acts carried out by EOKA-B, particularly against civilian population, Cyprus Peace Operation was an unsurprising intervention by Turkey as a guarantor state in line with the 1960 Guarantee Treaty. After the operation, Turkey took control of 37 percent of the island (Bahcheli 2014). Turkey’s objective of launching the Cyprus Peace Operation was both to stop the annexation of the island by Greece and to stop violence against Turkish Cypriots (Fırat 2004). However, the Greek Cypriots claims of sovereignty over the entire island has continued unabated since.

2.6 Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)

Since 1974, Cyprus has been divided de facto and politically and Turkey has not withdrawn from the island since the 1974 Peace Operation. While both communities call themselves Cypriots, one side is ethnically Greek living in the southern part of the island and the other side is ethnically Turk living in the northern part of the island (Hannay 2004). In other words, both sides have separate governments, and the situation was made official in 1983 when the northern part of the island declared independence as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. On 15 November 1983, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus declared independence on grounds of "self-determination" of the Turkish Cypriot people who claimed the right of political equality¹². However, TRNC has been recognized only by Turkey while no other UN member state recognized it as an independent state.

The international community, including the United Nations and the European Union, recognize the Republic of Cyprus as the only sovereign state that has sovereignty over the entire island. The relations between the north and the south, that is between the Turkish community claiming independence, Greek community claiming sovereignty over both sides, has been a delicate and difficult matter to handle, leading to disagreements and serious tensions. At present tensions have risen to new highs over several issues which will be taken up later in this thesis.

¹²This is the official opinion about Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on the basis of 1960 Constitution shared by Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, retrieved from <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-cyprus-issue-overview.en.mfa>, accessed on 13.09.2020.

2.7 The European Union Involvement into Cyprus Question

The EU's involvement and influence in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Cyprus issue began when Greece, which made a transition to democracy in 1974 under the leadership of Konstantinos Karamanlis and joined the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1981 as part of the EEC's Southern Enlargement process. Consequently, the borders of the EU expanded to the middle of the Aegean and to the Mediterranean Sea. After Greece's accession to the EEC, however, it did not seem possible for Turkey's candidacy for membership of the EEC to proceed because of the military regime in Ankara. The EEC's guiding principles for enlargement shifted from economic to democratic objectives. Greece was then one step ahead of Turkey in moving towards the European club and this disparity was going to continue.

In the forthcoming years, there were developments regarding Turkey's status in the eyes of the European Economic Community and later the European Union. When Turkey was accepted as a candidate country to the EU at the 1999 Helsinki Summit, it triggered a new process in the relationship between the EU, Greece and Turkey and for the Cyprus issue as well. On the one hand, Turkey's 1999 official candidacy for the EU membership began a new process for resolving border disputes with Greece, especially regarding the coastal waters in the Aegean Sea. On the other hand, the process suggested new ways of considering and resolving the 'Cyprus problem'.

2.8 The Annan Plans

After the membership of Greece, with the EU's geographical and political borders extending to the Eastern Mediterranean, the EU increased its geopolitical claims. Furthermore, the EU's increased membership, widening external borders, and conflict areas around these borders required the EU to develop preventive and regulatory strategies. Said differently, this situation provided significant strength to EU member countries and necessitated developing peace, stability, and cooperative relations with the neighbours along the EU's borders (Asmussen 2012). As a result, the EU and its members began an intense political effort to prevent conflict via political-legal means.

From 1999 to 2004 in Cyprus, the belief that a fair solution could be found under the aegis of the UN Secretary General's mediation, increased the expectation of a solution to the Cyprus dispute and in tandem with promoting Turkey's EU membership

(Hannay 2004). In this regard, several proximity talks between the parties were organized by the UN to find a solution to the Cyprus problem. These proximity talks continued for several years without reaching any concrete results. In the course of these meetings several plans were made demarcating the boundaries between communities. Due to the divergence among positions held by Greece, Turkey, and the two communities, the Annan Plan was revised five times before it was released to the public. The latest version of the plan which was put to a referendum proposed the unification of the island in the form of a bizonal federation: the Nicosia Government and TRNC, as an independent federation of two states (Sözen Ahmet 2007).¹³

The solution, suggested by the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, was put to a referendum simultaneously both by the Nicosia Government and TRNC. However, hopes for a solution vanished when 65 percent of the Turkish Cypriot Community voted in favour of the Annan Plan, while 75 percent of the Greek Cypriot community voted against it (Maral 2014). Turkey supported the approval of the Annan Plan with the intent to start its own EU membership negotiation process. However, referendum results set the stage for Cyprus EU membership in 2004. Therefore, the rejection of the Annan Plan posed yet another major stumbling block in the Cyprus deadlock.

2.9 Cyprus' European Union Membership

The politically unstable Republic of Cyprus, represented only by Greek Cypriots, signed the Accession Agreement with the European Union on 16 April 2003 and became a full member of the EU on 1 May 2004 (Meltem Müftüler-Baç 2005). EU-Turkey relations and search for a solution for the Cyprus issue worsened when the RoC was accepted in 2004 as a full member of the EU and as the only legitimate government of the island. Turkey and TRNC argued that according to the Treaty of Guarantee, if any of the guarantor powers, namely Greece, Turkey, and the UK, were not a member of an international organization, Cyprus could not become a member either. In this case, it was argued that Greece's EU membership is not enough to admit the RoC as member, but Turkey needed to be a member of the EU as well for Cyprus to accede to the EU. Moreover, Cyprus' EU membership had adversely affected Turkey's membership process by allowing the RoC to have a decisive vote in the Union.

¹³The Annan Plan, 26 February 2003, retrieved from https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2004/annan-cyprus-problem_maps_26feb03.pdf, accessed on 05.10.2020.

Cyprus's EU membership has taken a great deal of criticism from both inside the EU and from Turkey. According to the EU enlargement principles, member states or candidate countries had to resolve border disputes with their neighbours in peaceful ways when joining the Union or accept the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice in order to resolve such disputes (Christou 2010). However, Cyprus became a member of the European Union without solving its internal border dispute. Therefore, the EU inherited its members borders and therefore maritime jurisdiction issues. Because the EU accepted the RoC's authority and recognized its sovereignty before resolving the border issue, the EU itself became a party to the imbroglio (Suvrierol 2003). With the RoC admitted into the Union as a sovereign state before the border issue was resolved, the differences between Ankara and Brussels led to a fundamental disagreement on the sovereign rights of the RoC over TRNC.

The border dispute in the island and the issue of coastal waters between Turkey and Greece as well as Cyprus became mutually reinforcing disagreements. The ongoing border uncertainty on several sides led to an absence of clear division of authority and responsibility among the countries in the region (Hannay 2004). The confrontation between the EU and Turkey over these border issues, as noted, has adversely affected both the Cyprus issue and Turkey's membership negotiation process. In addition, Cyprus' membership of the Union while Turkey was kept out, widened the gap between Turkey, Greece, as well as the Greek Cypriots. From the economic perspective, the difference between the economies of the RoC and TRNC has increased over the years due to the fact that Turkish Cypriots were isolated from the EU market as a result of the embargoes placed on them (Müftüler-Baç 1999). Since TRNC only trades with Turkey, it fell behind RoC economically. While RoC's GDP reached 24,96 billion US dollar in 2018, TRNC's GDP remained at 4.234 billion US dollar¹⁴, just about a sixth of the size of the RoC's total GDP. The economic isolation of TRNC and its near total dependence on Turkey has also been contributing to the regional tensions and hostility among all the actors involved.

2.10 Turkey's Perspective

There are two specific conflicts, both revolving around the question of Cyprus. One is the issue of international recognition of the Republic of Cyprus. The EU, other littoral states such as Greece, Israel and Egypt, and the other international ac-

¹⁴According to World Bank statistics, retrieved from World Bank, <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/world-development-indicators/>, accessed on 04.10.2020.

tors recognize the RoC as a sovereign state along with all UN members, except Turkey. Officially, however, Turkey does not share this view. Ankara argues that the RoC¹⁵ does not represent the interests of the Turkish community located in Northern Cyprus¹⁶ and therefore claims that, the RoC cannot represent the entire island. The second issue flowing from the first is a legitimacy dispute: where Turkey do not recognize the sovereignty of the RoC over the entire island, no international body recognizes TRNC which prevents all disputing parties on the island to engage with each other. The Cyprus issue constitutes the knot of all disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean since Turkey claims that there are two governments on the island, the Nicosia Government and TRNC. The division between these two entities which are given reciprocal recognition neither by one another nor by the other parties to the dispute creates strong and potentially explosive tensions.

2.11 Conclusion

Throughout history, Cyprus, which is an important island due to its strategic location, has almost never been free from being the target of rivalries and tension. In this chapter, the historical background of these hostilities is discussed in terms of the divergence, division, frustration, and mistrust between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. With the 1960 Constitution, the system that gave equal rights to two communities on the island created a quasi-federal administration, but it did not last long. The peaceful environment that the Constitution intended to establish on the island began to disappear in 1963 leaving its place to hostility and mistrust between the two communities on the island. Later, numerous acts of violence occurred such as Bloody Christmas against Turkish Cypriots and inviting Turkey's intervention in 1974. After, the declaration of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the island virtually come to be divided between the Republic of Cyprus representing essentially by the Greek Cypriots, and the TRNC representing by the Turkish Cypriots, which is recognized only by Turkey. This difference of opinion about the status of Cyprus has made it harder to solve the Cyprus question even today due to the divergence and division between two communities. These various factors continue to contribute to tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean today. Over the past ten years another factor that emerged has been contributing substantially to increase the existing ten-

¹⁵In Turkey's official statements, the Nicosia Government refers to the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) which is recognized by the UN as a sovereign state. Hereafter RoC refers to Nicosia Government.

¹⁶This is the official opinion about Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus shared by Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, retrieved from <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-cyprus-issue-overview.en.mfa>, accessed on 13.09.2020.

sions not only on the island but throughout in the Eastern Mediterranean as well as across the EU. The discovery of hydrocarbon reserves in the region, especially in the proximity of Cyprus was at least seen as an opportunity for initiating conflict resolution approaches to the Cyprus problem. It soon turned out, however, that the prospect of natural gas resources had the effect of reinforcing the existing disagreements and increasing the tensions among the several parties. The following chapter will assess how all these historical divergences between Greeks and Turkish Cypriots came to the forefront once again by the discovery of hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean and how the issue of energy resources has exacerbated not only the Cyprus problem but between the whole range of international actors involved.

3. EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN ENERGY RESOURCES

3.1 Introduction

Since 2009, the newly discovered hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean have attracted international attention. The discovery in 2009 of the first significant field, Tamar, in the Israeli Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), followed in 2010 by that of Leviathan, a much larger field also in Israeli waters. The year after a much smaller field, Aphrodite was discovered in Cyprus' EEZ, but in close proximity to the Leviathan (see Table 3.1). These three discoveries made in quick succession, raised high hopes for the region's economic future. It was claimed that Eastern Mediterranean would evolve into a major natural gas export hub. In addition, the energy resources were expected to be a catalyst for conflict resolution in the region to help resolve even the Cyprus dispute. However, these natural gas reserves have instead added to the existing tensions and triggered regional and international conflict. Rising interest in these reserves led to a geopolitical contest, especially between the EU and Turkey, over sharing existing resources in the region. Other major players in this competition include the littoral states of Israel and Egypt, in addition to several EU member states, Greece and the Republic of Cyprus, in particular. In this respect, it is important to assess the increasing attention towards hydrocarbon reserves by taking into consideration the changing nature of energy policies – particularly regarding natural gas. This discussion focuses on the energy reserves in the maritime zones of Cyprus since these reserves are at the center of the new disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean.

This chapter begins with the rapidly changing regional and global context of the natural gas and what the key transformations on the energy issue are. In light of these trends, I discuss the geopolitics of the region in terms of the potential natural gas reserves and the latest discoveries, focusing on that of hydrocarbon reserves by the Republic of Cyprus, and examine the volume of the discoveries with

a view to assessing the gap between expectation and capacity. I explore whether the Eastern Mediterranean natural gas reserves create cooperation or further tension(s) among regional states especially in terms of the gap between the actual size of the discoveries and the high expectations those discoveries have given rise to. In this context I explain how Turkey's objections regarding the Republic of Cyprus' claim on Cyprus energy resources are connected with the historical background of the Cyprus question. Finally, I assess how the EU energy issues affect Cyprus, the EU and Turkey triangle and how the disputes over the border and legitimacy issues regarding the status of Cyprus spill over the entire Eastern Mediterranean.

3.2 Discovery and Expectation of Resources

The Eastern Mediterranean contains potential hydrocarbon reserves. Some of these are already being extracted while still others lie deep in the seabed. There are many variables that need consideration while assessing Eastern Mediterranean gas supplies. Considering the political tensions of the RoC's sovereign rights in the region explained throughout this thesis, the main focus of this chapter is how the EU-Turkey relation have been affected by the Cyprus question. Before analyzing the effect of Eastern Mediterranean gas explorations on the bilateral relations, the discussion provides a sketch of the global energy outlook on natural gas with a view to taking into consideration the likely demand for gas in the region and global markets.

Taking a step back, it must be stated that what makes natural gas special is its cleanliness. It is the cleanest fossil fuel, compared with coal and oil. As such, it easy to see why must countries' energy policies are increasingly oriented toward natural gas. This change has a direct effect on the consumption of natural gas in global energy markets. There is a growing demand for natural gas as states move away from highly polluting carbon sources – which cause damage to the environment – to natural gas, which is cleaner and less harmful. China, the EU, and the US are important examples of countries that have shifted their policies toward natural gas. The *World Energy Outlook* for 2019 states that natural gas constitutes almost 50 percent of the world's energy demands, stemming from consumption in the US and China, making up 70 percent of total demand (IEA 2020*d*). Although many EU member states have adopted a zero-carbon target since 2019, the fact that the most populous middle-income countries still have a mounting demand for gas in order to transition away from coal and that will result in increasing dependence globally on

natural gas as a leading primary energy source.

The United States geological satellite survey concluded that there were potentially large hydrocarbon reserves underneath the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. According to the survey “the mean of the distribution for undiscovered gas, the total mean volume is 122,378 billion cubic feet of gas (BCFG), with a range from 50,087 BCFG to 227,430 BCFG¹”. This discovery led to a competition among the Eastern Mediterranean coastal states to take advantage of those resources and they began to conduct drilling activities in the region with the intent of exploring these potential hydrocarbon reserves. The drilling activities set the stage for a contestation especially between the EU and Turkey due to the unresolved Cyprus problem discussed in the Chapter I. Given that the island remained de facto divided, there arose a dispute regarding equitable distribution of the energy, resources among the two communities. Turkey objected to the RoC government making decisions about the natural gas discoveries in its exclusive economic zone, because, it argued, that the Nicosia Government did not represent the Turkish community. On the other hand, because TRNC was not recognized by any international body except Turkey, Ankara stepped in to defend the interests of the Turkish community, and thus became a party to the Eastern Mediterranean resource competition. Because of the border issues related to the de facto division of Cyprus, Turkey also objected to the maritime zones delineated according to the single sovereign state on the island. Ankara, unsurprisingly, did not recognize the EEZ claimed by the RoC and put forward a different plan in the Eastern Mediterranean. This disagreement further discussed in Chapter III, below, raised tensions between Turkey and the EU in addition to Cyprus and Greece.

Like all other littoral states in the region, Turkey had its own interest in entering into a competition for resources in the region. One reason is that Turkey is an energy-poor country dependent on imports particularly on natural gas. The possibility of finding gas resources in its own territory was a very strong motivation for Turkey to begin its own drilling. Secondly, new Eastern Mediterranean resources could potentially be transited to Europe through Turkey. Both Turkey’s and the EU’s interest converged in promoting this possibility. Turkey has always wanted to attract as much gas from the region in order to become a trading hub in addition to transiting or exporting higher volumes of gas for revenues. The EU promoted the Southern Corridor linking non-Russian gas to Europe without using Russian owned pipelines. The Eastern Mediterranean would offer a new opportunity for the Southern Corridor, diversifying the EU’s gas supply. It raises the question of

¹Assessment of Undiscovered Oil and Gas Resources of the Levant Basin Province, Eastern Mediterranean, retrieved from <https://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2010/3014/>, accessed on 30.11.2020.

whether Turkey is a bridge between the Eastern Mediterranean and the EU since it could be a transit country to carry hydrocarbon reserves from the region to the EU (Gürel Ayla 2014).

The question of the EU's supply security brings us to the issue of geopolitics in the region. With the discovery of natural gas in 2009-2010, both the EU and Turkey converged on the idea of increased volumes of Eastern Mediterranean gas transported to the EU through Turkey, the shortest and most economical route to reach the European market. The importance of Turkey as a transit country for the EU's energy supply security policy is discussed in detail in Chapter IV. In time, however, Turkey's initial attitude of cooperation changed as Ankara began to question the RoC's authority over the resources, drilling licenses, and delimitation agreement with other littoral states. Ankara's argument, as previously noted, was that because the RoC did not represent the Turkish community on the island, it did not have the authority to take decisions on mineral resources that had to be shared equitably among the two communities.

While Greece and the EU supported the RoC with regard to agreements and licenses for drilling, Turkey took an increasingly a hardline approach to emphasize the Turkish rights as well as its own interest in the region. The question then turned to be whether Turkey's activity in the region should be perceived as an exercise of power projection (Cupolo 2020) against the EU's efforts to increase its activities in the Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey's stance in the Eastern Mediterranean depends not only on international political issues but also on its overall policy aims and economic interests. The effects of its domestic political situation make Turkey's agenda highly volatile, and Ankara's attitude toward the RoC and its supporters can also be interpreted as a calculated means for attracting political support at home. This is reflected in Turkey's decisive and active role in the region, partially as exemplified by its active involvement in the Cyprus issue on behalf of the Turkish community, especially by its vigilant protection of TRNC.

The Eastern Mediterranean cannot be assessed without examining several political and economic motivations of the region's states. Focusing solely on its geographic location is insufficient to understand the whole picture (Bassam 2109). Since states have high expectations because of hydrocarbon resources in the region, tensions among them have risen and each party involved in and around the Cyprus issue has served to escalate the EU-Turkey tensions. However, the main problem in the region is whether its potential volume of the reserves is sufficient to match the high expectations from it. In some ways, these expectations are seemingly paradoxical because of the relatively small size of the actual proven reserves, as discussed in the

Chapter IV. Although, there are insufficient gas reserves in the region's seabed to meet the high expectations (Butler 2020) it does not mean that the existing gas reserves are not important. Rather, it is likely that there are as yet undiscovered hydrocarbon resources in the Eastern Mediterranean. Indeed, there may be potential in terms of gas resources but the proven gas reserves at present are not substantial. The question remains: how much gas is recoverable?

3.3 Proven Resources

In parallel with the changes in global energy trends, states and energy companies shifted their focus to the Eastern Mediterranean. Gas exploration activities in coastal areas date back to the 1950s, in the Eastern Mediterranean. These drilling activities were initiated by Israel and continued in deeper waters in the 1970s and 1990s. Discoveries in the Noa and Mari-b fields in offshore Israel in 1990 and 2000 (Demiryol 2020), paved the way for further discoveries. However, discovered reserves in the '90s and early 2000s, were not capable of meeting Israel's domestic needs. Although Israel carried out many drillings works in the region until 2009, no significant reserves were found. In this sense, 2009 is considered as a turning point for the region. The Tamar field discovered in 2009 contained 318 billion cubic meters (Bcm) of natural gas. Leviathan discovered a year later had 605 bcm of natural gas.²

²The Eastern Mediterranean gas reserves, BP, July 1, 2019, accessed on 03.05.2020.

Table 3.1 Discovered Eastern Mediterranean Natural Gas Reserves

	Country EEZ	Discovery	Operators	gas in bcm
Tamar	Israel	2009	Delek Drilling (22%), Noble Energy (25%), Isramco (28.75%), Tamar Petroleum (16.75%) Dor Gas (4%) and Everest (3.5%)	318
Leviathan	Israel	2010	Delek Drilling (45.33%) Ratio Oil Exploration (15%) Noble Energy (39.66%)	605
Aphrodite	RoC	2011	Delek Drilling (30%), Noble Energy (35%) and Shell (35%)	129
Zohr	Egypt	2015	ENI	850
Calypso	RoC	2018	ENI (50%) and TOTAL (50%)	170 to 230. Yet, further appraisal is needed to determine the exact size of the field
Glaucus	RoC	2019	ExxonMobil and Qatar Petroleum	142 to 227 (estimations)

Source: British Petroleum (BP)

As the Eastern Mediterranean gas reserves shown in Table 3.1, there are six significant gas fields in the Eastern Mediterranean. Considering the volumes of these reserves, Israel with its two large fields, namely the Tamar and Leviathan, seems to have the lion's share of hydrocarbon reserves. The total amount of Israel's proven reserves is almost 930 bcm of natural gas. This is more than sufficient to meet Israel's domestic demands since its natural gas demand is very low³. In addition, these two fields could provide enough gas to meet Israel's electricity need for thirty years (Zhukov 2013). The EU is willing to import Israel's supplies and carry those through its own East Med pipeline project to be discussed in Chapter IV. However, the East-Med pipeline project is costly, requiring substantial capital and investment. It is crucial to note that pipeline connections from Israel to the EU are much shorter, therefore, more economical than any other route and as such, Israel would prefer transiting its gas through Turkey. To this end, Israel signed an agreement with the RoC to limit the RoC's maritime zones while Turkey opposed the agreement, as discussed in the next Chapter. The agreement indicates that there is close cooperation between Israel and the RoC, especially in transmitting energy resources (Zhukov 2013). However, if the agreement is put into practice, the gas would go through the RoC and Turkey. Due to the dispute between the RoC and Turkey, it

³Israel natural gas consumption is 10.5 in billion cubic meters in 2018, BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2019, 68th edition, accessed on 04.08.2020.

is unlikely that Turkey will agree to conveying the gas through the disputed EEZ of RoC before the island's sovereignty issue is resolved and the rights of the Turkish community are recognized by RoC. As mentioned in Chapter I, Turkey required that the TRNC's sovereignty and legitimacy ought to be acknowledged just as that of the Greek Cypriot community. Therefore, the alternative was to consider if the gas could be transferred to Egypt from Israel. If natural gas could not come to Turkey because of this situation, it might need to be transferred via the Middle East to the EU.

As it proceeded to work with Egypt, the Italian energy company ENI discovered the Zohr field in 2015. The Zohr field is one of the largest discovered so far in the Eastern Mediterranean, containing 850 bcm of natural gas. The Zohr reserve helped Egypt's recovery in the years when Egypt had become a net importer of gas (Tagliapietra 2020*b*). Currently, Egypt's gas demand is rising⁴, and it is capable of using all the gas found in Zohr field to meet its own demand and it can probably absorb more. It is highly likely that the natural gas in Egypt's EEZ is enough to meet Egypt's gas demands only – not to be exported. Taking into consideration that Egypt has two liquefaction facilities (LNG) but no pipeline connection for transferring natural gas, Zohr to Europe, in the form of LNG would increase its cost for consumers. The gas would first have to be brought on to the mainland by pipeline, then to the LNG terminal in Egypt to be liquified and shipped. All of this would add to the cost of the natural gas imported from the Eastern Mediterranean.

3.4 Findings of Cyprus

Natural gas exploration in the Eastern Mediterranean drew the EU and Turkey's attention to the region due to the Cyprus question. Both the EU and Turkey started their drilling activities offshore of the Republic of Cyprus. In this regard, RoC has carried out research activities with the help and support of the European Union. The first discovery was in the Aphrodite field and the stakeholders were 30 percent Israeli Delek Drilling, 35 percent American Noble Energy and 35 percent Anglo-Dutch Shell in 2011. As a result of the first drilling, the discovered amount of gas was 129 bcm. The second discovery was in the Calypso field and was conducted by 50 percent Italian ENI and 50 percent French Total in 2018. The estimated amount of gas was between 170 to 230 bcm. Finally, American Exxon Mobil and Qatar

⁴Fossil fuels demand, production and net trade in Africa by scenario, World Energy Outlook, 2019, accessed on 12.04.2020.

Petroleum have held drilling activities offshore of RoC, namely Glaucus in 2019. It was estimated that the amount of natural gas could vary as much as from 142 to 227 bcm. These have been the three big discoveries in Cyprus' EEZ.

It is obvious from the Table 3.1. that the existing amount of gas does not meet high expectations – to which it had originally given rise. Despite the earlier perception that the energy resources would bring all the countries of the region's into cooperating with one another (Scazzieri 2020), the small size of the reserves did not have such an effect on competing or disputing parties. As such, an 'energy peace' – among states' with long-running historical problems such as the Cyprus dispute came to be seen as a remote possibility.

3.5 Turkey's Objection to RoC' Claim on Cyprus Energy Resources

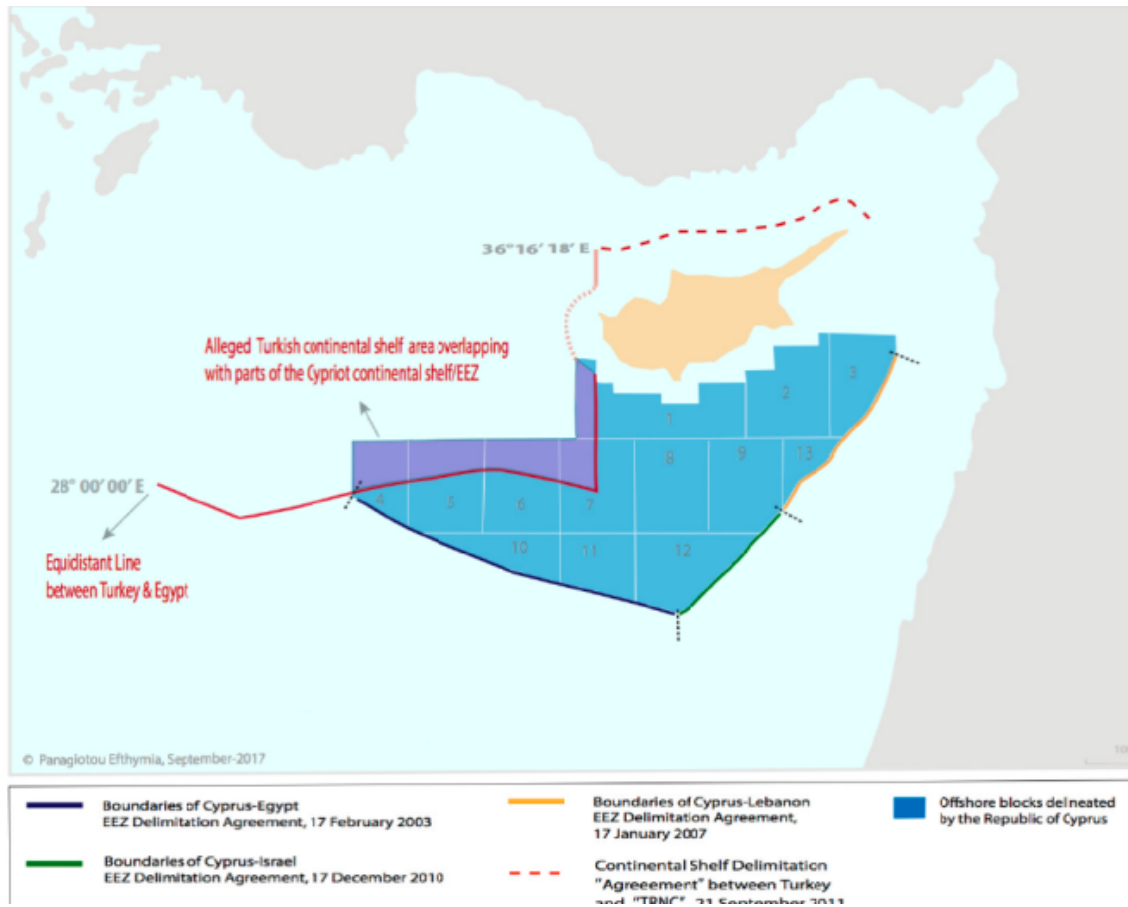
The drilling activities triggered tensions in the region because of the divided structure of Cyprus. Since the RoC conducts the explorations in the licensed areas in its EEZ via EU and US-based companies, Turkey objects to those drilling activities by questioning the RoC's right to conduct them without the consent of the Turkish community. Because the RoC does not represent the Turkish community, Turkey takes on the responsibility for defending their rights, represented by TRNC and also pursues its own claims in continental shelf rights in the area around Cyprus. A brief consideration of its background is necessary to better understand Turkey's objection to RoC claims on those natural gas resources. Firstly, the RoC, by disregarding the rights of both the Turkish Republic and the TRNC, declared an EEZ from 21 March 2003 in the Eastern Mediterranean with the support of the EU. The Cyprus 'problem' became much more visible in the Eastern Mediterranean due to the 2003 declaration. In this framework, the Exclusive Economic Zone delimitation agreement was signed between the RoC and Egypt in March 2003 (Yaycı 2012) and went into effect the following year. Consequently, Turkey submitted a diplomatic note to the UN Secretary-General on March 2, 2004.

"Following a thorough examination of the said agreement, the Republic of Turkey has reached the view that the delimitation of the EEZ or the continental shelf in the Eastern Mediterranean, especially in areas falling beyond the western part of the longitude of 32 ° 16' 18", also concerns Turkey's existing ipso facto and ab initio legal and sovereign rights, emanating from the established principles of international law. It is considered opinion of the Republic of Turkey that the delimitation of the EEZ and continental shelf beyond the western part of the longitude of 32 ° 16' 18" should be affected by agreement between the related states at the region based on the principle of equity. The Republic of Turkey for the above stated legal reasons which arise from the established principles of international law, does not recognize the said agreement and reserves all its legal rights related to the delimitation of the maritime areas including the seabed and subsoil and superjacent waters in the west of the longitude of 32 ° 16' 18". Finally, the Republic of Turkey wishes to reiterate that there is no single authority which in law or in fact is competent to represent jointly the Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, consequently Cyprus as a whole." ⁵

This diplomatic memorandum clearly expressed the main components of Turkish foreign policy in the region, since the EEZ treaty signed between Egypt and Cyprus restricts Turkey's continental shelf and its maritime zone. The continental shelf is the natural extension of a coastal state in the maritime area, it is normally claimed by states without making an official declaration (Yaycı 2020). The continental shelf of a state cannot extend beyond the EEZ of another state, as the rights to the seabed overlap. Since the declared EEZ overlaps with Turkey's continental shelf, shown with red line below, Turkey objected to this agreement. In other words, Turkey has a continental shelf in the region and, the agreements restrict Turkey's rights without taking into consideration the equity principle.

⁵United Nations Law of the Sea Bulletin, Vol. 54, p. 127, retrieved from https://www.un.org/depts/los/doalos_publications/LOSBulletins/bulletinpdf/bulletin54e.pdf, accessed on 07.08.2020.

Figure 3.1 Maritime Borders According to RoC and Egypt EEZ Delimitation Agreements



Source: FEUTURE Online Paper No. 22 “Gas Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean: Trigger or Obstacle for EU-Turkey Cooperation?”

This diplomatic note states that Turkey has *ab initio* (from the beginning) and *ipso facto* (spontaneous) rights⁶ in the maritime territories west of the meridian of $32^{\circ} 16' 18''$ and emphasizes Turkey has rights, defined as sovereign rights, in its continental shelf in accordance with international law (Başeren 2014). Furthermore, the note argues that an agreement could not be made without Turkey’s consent. As such, Turkey does not recognize the delimitation agreement signed between RoC and Egypt. Moreover, the agreement clearly expresses that Turkey will help to protect the sovereign rights of the TRNC and that the whole island could not be represented by the RoC precisely because it does not represent the entirety of the island’s population.

⁶The continental shelf right of the state’ was confirmed by the International Court of Justice decision in 1969, as ‘*ab initio*’ (from the beginning) and ‘*ipso facto*’ (spontaneous). Yaycı, Cihat. “Yunanistan Talepleri (Ege Sorunları) Soru ve Cevaplarla.” *Türk Tarih Kurumu*, 2020: 137-138.

The diplomatic note outlines the Turkish government's position vis-a-vis the region. According to the note, since Turkey has the rights stipulated above, all the parties should act in consultation with each other by taking the consent of the parties into consideration (Başeren 2014). Although Turkey does not declare an EEZ in the Eastern Mediterranean, the diplomatic note asserts Turkey's sovereign rights over the continental shelf, and throughout the area that the continental shelf covers. This diplomatic note also states that the rights of TRNC are protected by Turkey. According to this memorandum, Turkey argues that the RoC does not represent both communities of the island, unilaterally. Therefore, Turkey asserts its position towards the region by defending its sovereign rights against any violations by the RoC and aims to protect the rights of the TRNC. As noted in the Chapter I, Turkey does not recognize any single authority representing the whole Cyprus island. Article 23 paragraph 1-2 and Article 25 paragraph 3 of the 1960 Constitution of Cyprus give equal rights to Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. These equal rights comprise every dimension of social, political, economic life of the EU communities in the island. They also include all maritime areas and resources around the island. Although the TRNC is in the north, Turkish Cypriots have rights in the sea south of Cyprus. Likewise, Greek Cypriots have rights in the north, therefore Southern Cyprus authority can also conduct drilling activities in the north of the island and seek hydrocarbon resources (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1959).

It needs to be considered that Cyprus and Greece have had a tense relationship with Turkey for decades (Scazzieri 2020). Although Turkey's legal arguments are in line with the equity principles of international law, there are obstacles to overcome the efforts of Greece and the RoC regarding the limitation of maritime zones in the Eastern Mediterranean which is discussed in the next Chapter. While Turkey is in the way of being the EU member, it must also contend with pressure from the EU itself to resolve maritime zone delimitation in the Eastern Mediterranean.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter argues that with the discovery of energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean, the region's importance has started to increase. In this regard, both the international community and regional states have taken actions towards the region regarding the region's potential hydrocarbon reserves. In this regard, Cyprus with its strategic location in the middle of the Eastern Mediterranean has become a hot spot. In order to find the hydrocarbon reserves in the region, first Israel

and Egypt then the Republic of Cyprus started drilling activities. As a result of these drillings, the proven reserves seem to not enough to fulfill the dream however, especially actual and potential reserves offshore of Cyprus have posed a problem in terms of relations between the EU and Turkey. The RoC is comprised of two parts, namely Nicosia Government and TRNC, the Turkish government does not recognize the Nicosia Government as the sole representative of the whole island, the TRNC is only recognized by Turkey though. Since the RoC declared its EEZ and conducts drilling activities in the region on behalf of the RoC and the EU, Turkey opposes to this situation by asserting that no one can ignore TRNC's sovereign rights on the island. From this point forth, with the intention of protecting the Turkish community's rights, Turkey supports the TRNC and conducts drilling activities both in the EEZ of the TRNC and its continental shelf. To conclude, drilling activities based on sovereignty rights have become a dispute with political intentions rather than legal claims between the states. The next chapter takes up issues of legitimacy, representation, and delimitation disputes which are the causes of the conflict over sovereignty rights in the Eastern Mediterranean with the purpose of showing how they adversely affect Turkish-EU relations.

4. THE EUROPEAN UNION AND TURKEY TENSIONS: CLASH OVER SOVEREIGNTY RIGHTS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

4.1 Introduction

The discovery of hydrocarbon reserves led to a competition among the Eastern Mediterranean coastal states to take advantage of those resources. Many of them rushed to conclude delimitation agreements with other coastal states in the region in order to determine their Exclusive Economic Zone. The EEZ is beyond the 12-mile limit for coastal waters and, according to the UNCLOS agreement concluded in 1982, a coastal states' EEZ extends 200 miles from its shore. The coastal nation given exclusive right to benefit from all natural resources, both in the sea and below the seabed. Where there is less than 400 miles between two coastal states across the sea, then the midpoint is taken as the limit of both sides' EEZ. Neighboring states delimit their EEZ usually by extending their borders into the sea at right angles with the shore. After a coastal state's EEZ is determined by means of bilateral or multilateral agreements among the parties involved or as a result of dispute resolution by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), it is divided into exploration blocks, which then may be leased to energy companies to conduct drilling.

The situation in the Eastern Mediterranean turned out to be more complicated. Since there are several coastal states and ongoing unresolved maritime disputes among them, the Eastern Mediterranean stands out to exemplify the difficulty of the limiting maritime zones. The struggle over determining maritime zones is known in international law as a 'limitation of the realm of authority' (Başeren 2011). In other words, this dispute is primarily a struggle of sovereignty. The disputes between Turkey and Greece, for example, concerning maritime jurisdiction areas in the Aegean Sea go back to 1973 when Ankara and others could not agree on each other's right for prospecting mineral resources. Although determining the bound-

aries of the exclusive economic zone in the Eastern Mediterranean is regarded as the problem of determining the limits of sovereignty rights among the coastal states according to international law, the European Union itself is also included in the dispute because of the involvement of a member state, RoC (Nikolaos Salavrakos 2012).

These disputes are mostly motivated by national interests of the countries in the region. As areas where drilling activities are conducted overlap, conflict arises among member states especially in the Eastern Mediterranean. The main disputing actors in the region are the EU and Turkey, which clash over their sovereignty rights on the basis of exploiting energy and other mineral resources in the region. The EU is involved in the dispute by fully supporting one of its members, the RoC – and, by extension, Cyprus’ Greek inhabitants. The Turkish side, by contrast, promotes the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus while pursuing its own claims on the continental shelf. The EU therefore objects to Turkey’s drilling activities in the RoC’s Exclusive Economic Zone. The EU expresses its policy position through the EU’s High Representative (hereafter HR) and has been raising the threat of sanctions on Turkey by the EU Council. Meanwhile, Turkey makes statements through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs which articulates its position against that of the EU.

In this chapter, I examine the dispute about maritime jurisdiction between the Republic of Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey while exploring how the conflict might influence EU-Turkey relations. I argue that the challenges of delimitation over the maritime zone have an adverse effect on the bilateral relationship between the EU and Turkey due to both parties’ maximalist positions that make it difficult to reach a compromise. In this framework, the chapter firstly focuses on the historical background of relations among these with particular reference to the Cyprus issue and the delimitation of maritime zones. Secondly, I discuss the RoC policy towards the Eastern Mediterranean in line with the EU’s effort on the delimitation of the maritime areas in the region. Then, I discuss Turkey’s position towards the Eastern Mediterranean by taking into consideration the special relationship between TRNC and Turkey. While assessing the ongoing clash over sovereignty rights in the Eastern Mediterranean, I analyze the issue of the bilateral relationship in terms of the specific actions of the EU and Turkey that cause an escalation of tensions. Finally, I discuss how these specific actions have an effect on EU-Turkey relations.

4.2 Delimitation Dispute

As the EU's membership increased after the 2004 enlargement, its external borders widened, and conflict areas around these borders required the EU to develop security measures and regulatory strategies. Said differently, this situation provided significant strength to EU member countries and necessitated developing peace, stability, and cooperation with the neighbors along the EU's borders. Under these circumstances, the EU appeared as the last resort of ensuring amicable relations among member states and even of promoting good neighborliness policies. In the aftermath of the RoC's membership of the Union, the EU got involved in Eastern Mediterranean politics. Coupled with the already existing problems in Aegean Sea, due to the dispute between Greece and Turkey regarding the delimitation of maritime zones, the EU now needed to focus on resolving similar issues. In a different way, the EU considers the Aegean Sea and Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone as being within its borders. However, the EU's intention to defend its contiguous sovereignty area in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean raised tensions with Turkey and revealed Aegean dispute came to the fore.

Even if there is no provision regarding the delimitation of maritime zones between Greece and Turkey in the 1923 Lausanne Treaty, it clarifies the extent of territorial waters only in the Aegean. According to Article 6 of the 1923 Lausanne Peace Treaty, parties agreed that coastal waters would extend to a maximum of 3 miles under the provisions of the treaty. However, Greece took a unilateral decision in 1936 and extended its coastal waters to 6 miles. In response, Turkey remained silent until 1964. At that time, Turkey promulgated a law extending its coastal waters from 3 miles to 6 miles. This issue did not come to the forefront until 1971 when Turkey sent a seismic research vessel to Aegean. In the following five years, parties did not agree on a common base of understanding. Greece sent a communiqué to UN Security Council and applied to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in order to seek a solution to the territorial waters issue in the Aegean. In November 1976, parties came together and signed the Bern Treaty which stated that both parties had assumed an obligation to refrain from any activities to escalate the Aegean dispute. Both the UN Security Council and ICJ declared that disputes in the Aegean were a bilateral problem and therefore they can be solely resolved by Greece and Turkey. As a consequence, Greece and Turkey came together and agreed on several points formulated in the Bern Agreement 1976, that set the legal basis for future disputes in the region. Contrary to the provisions of the afore mentioned agreement, Greece withdrew from negotiations with Turkey and began in March 1987 to carry out its

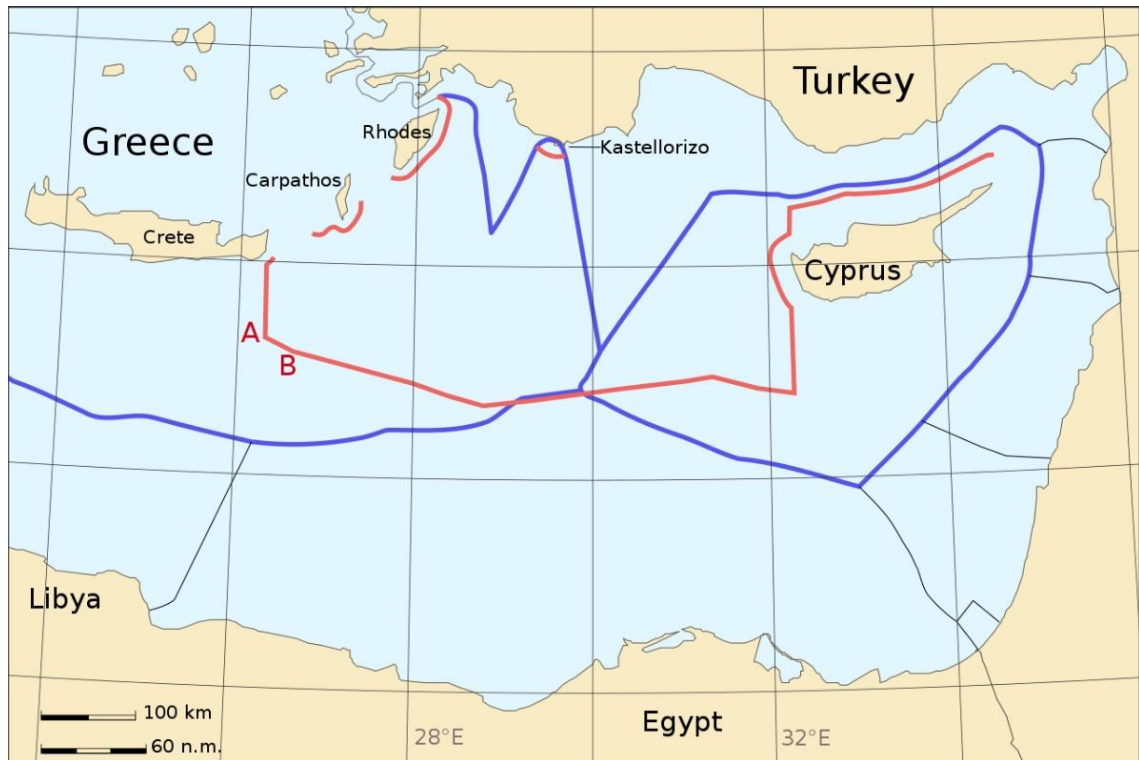
seismic and drilling activities in the Aegean that escalated tensions in the region ¹. Considering the long history between the two parties, there is obviously, an ongoing dispute on the continental shelf issue in the Aegean.

The confrontation between the EU and Turkey over these border issues has adversely affected Turkey's membership negotiation process. It is important to stress that when the EU's geographical and political borders expanded over the Eastern Mediterranean by the membership of the Republic of Cyprus in 2004, it became a part of a long-lasting problem in the Eastern Mediterranean. On this basis, it would be logical to take a look at the EU's approach to handling delimitation issues. Basically, the EU acts as a solid unity to defend its member's rights. Therefore, the EU internalized its members' maritime jurisdiction issues.

Apart from the EU's approach towards coastal waters issue in the Aegean Sea and delimiting the maritime realm in the Eastern Mediterranean, a handful of international conventions regarding maritime zones have already set a regime guiding for the peaceful settlement of disputes. UNCLOS gives the coastal states the right to declare an exclusive economic zone in territorial waters and beyond up to other states' maritime zone. Besides, Article 74 of the UNCLOS states that in order to restrict the Exclusive Economic Zone between the countries which are adjacent or facing the coast, Article 38 of the International Court of Justice Status should be applied in accordance with the international law (United Nations 1982). There is, however, no regulation that EEZ cannot be declared unilaterally. In the Eastern Mediterranean, states prefer declaring their EEZ unilaterally and make bilateral agreements instead of consulting with all the coastal states. Moreover, UNCLOS has given the right to the coastal state to explore living resources and establish artificial islands or facilities within the framework of the EEZ (Pazarıcı 2006). In this context, Turkey disputes maritime delimitation in the Eastern Mediterranean according to the UNCLOS, which Turkey did not sign and was not party to. Turkey rejected the UNCLOS because of the Aegean issue and continental shelf question.

¹The Outstanding Aegean Issues, Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, retrieved from <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/maritime-issues---aegean-sea---the-outstanding-aegean-issues.en.mfa>, accessed on 01.12.2020.

Figure 4.1 Maritime Delimitation Zones in The Eastern Mediterranean



Source: Ahmet Evin Lecture Presentation, Sabancı University

As mentioned, the EEZ can be a maximum of 200 miles. In that case, the midpoint between the two shores is taken as the limitation. According to the maritime delimitation zones map above², blue lines show the maritime zones of Cyprus. Hence, there is a midpoint between Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Egypt. This maritime delimitation also can be considerably expanded as far as the Greek maritime zone. Essentially, the Greek zone, which is indicated with blue lines on the map, extended from Rhodos and proceeds south. Following that, the blue line draws close to the Turkish coast because of the Greek island Kastellorizo, in Turkish Meis. The delimitation here is just a few hundred meters from the Turkish shore. The delimitation according to the UNCLOS convention does not leave much room for Turkey's economic interests in the Mediterranean.

Conversely, the Turkish government argues that Cyprus is an island, therefore, it does not have a right to claim a continental shelf at all. From Turkey's perspective the same is true for the EU border as well, which extends only 2 meters that demarcates Cyprus territorial waters. In fact, Cyprus has a smaller maritime delimitation area indicated by the red line on the map. Apart from the fact that the TRNC is

²The Eastern Mediterranean's Conflicting Delimitations of Exclusive Economic Zone Map, Evin, Ahmet. The EU Energy Dependence and Energy Policies. May 4, 2020. Lecture Presentation, Sabancı University, accessed on 19.05.2020.

separate from the Nicosia Government, Turkey's position is that it has a right to the continental shelf that defines the midpoint between the shore of Northern Africa (Egypt and Libya) and Turkey.

According to the map, the red line essentially demonstrates Turkey's claims as its EEZ midpoint to North Africa. Contrary to Turkey's stance that clashes with RoC's claims on Cyprus energy resources, the EU and the international community consider Cyprus a sovereign state that should have the same kind of maritime delimitation as other member states. Therefore, both the coastal water issue with Greece and Cyprus maritime delimitation issues have a direct impact on the formation of the EU's Eastern Mediterranean policy. At present, the position of both sides is irreconcilable and there are no negotiations going on between the parties which hold differing geopolitical interpretations. Additionally, there does not seem to be a common understanding of problems among parties that would serve as a basis for negotiation.

4.3 Maximalist Positions of the EU and Turkey

The discussion in the Eastern Mediterranean between Cyprus and the EU on one hand and Turkey, on the other, mostly stems from several EEZ Restriction Agreements signed by the RoC with Egypt on February 17, 2003, Lebanon on January 17, 2007, and Israel on February 3, 2011. These agreements were signed by the Nicosia Government on behalf of the RoC as the sovereign authority, but which does not represent the whole island. Only the EEZ delimitation agreements with Egypt and Israel have been put into force but these are not recognized by Turkey and TRNC neither of which consider these agreements to be valid. The approval process of the agreement with Lebanon has not yet been concluded due to Turkey's diplomatic efforts to block it. Besides, with the laws published in its *Official Journal* on 5 April 2004, the RoC adopted a 24-mile contiguous zone and a 200-mile exclusive economic zone. This decision follows the EEZ delimitation agreement with Egypt – it is effectively increasing tensions in the region.

Then, calls were made by the Nicosia Government for application for licenses in blocks determined by the RoC, and contracts were signed with various companies for drilling activities. The licensing processes regarding the exploration and operation of hydrocarbon resources in its EEZ were announced by the RoC and prepared in accordance with EU legislation (*Official Journal of the EU* 2007). The RoC has continued to implement its policy of determining the extent of its EEZ in the East-

ern Mediterranean despite the negotiations and disputes between the community representatives in Cyprus. It also made bilateral agreements with the coastal states between 2003 and 2009, when it completed its technical examinations and established its internal legislation. Hence, research and drilling stations opened in these licensed areas. These regulations were included in EU legislation and published in the *Official Journal* of the EU (Official Journal of the EU 2007).

The EU's approach to the delimitation of maritime areas in the Eastern Mediterranean is a political, rather than legal debate. Since both Greece and the RoC are members of the EU, it is much easier to form a policy for them in the Eastern Mediterranean by putting their national interest before all else. As Turkey is not a member of the EU and cannot be involved in decision-making procedures, it has to either accept or reject the decision is taken by the EU. The EU follows a collective policy in line with the RoC in restricting maritime jurisdictions and takes a stance that supports the position of the RoC. For countries that are in the process of becoming a member, such as Turkey, the solution of border problems is essential in order to avoid disputes with the EU. This ongoing debate adversely affects bilateral relations since both sides stands in direct opposition to one another. The European Commission argues that Turkey's offshore drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean are illegal and has proceeded put sanctions on Turkey in 2019. The EU's sanctions, which mostly stem from sovereignty disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean regarding Turkey's rejection of RoC's exclusive rights and Turkey's ongoing drilling activities in the region, are likely to continue. Moreover, the decisions strain bilateral relations (Scazzieri 2020).

The main motivation of states in the Eastern Mediterranean, like any other region, is to pursue their national interests. Turkey's aim in the region, as noted, is first to protect its sovereignty rights on the continental shelf. In other words, Turkey wants to continue drilling activities to benefit from the existing hydrocarbon resources. Second, the Turkish government wants to protect the TRNC's exclusive rights to have an EEZ, giving licenses to companies to search for hydrocarbon reserves in the areas where the Turkish community has equal sovereign rights as the Greek community. Turkey perceives a threat to its sovereign rights in the region because of the opposition to its arguments by many actors in the region, including supranational organization, states, and multinational companies. Turkey resists any threats against its rights and the potential of finding energy sources. Hence, Turkey plays an active role in the region by prioritizing its national interest. The problem of restricting the EEZ is a controversial issue in the Eastern Mediterranean for Turkey since it is not a party to UNCLOS. While Turkey does not declare an EEZ in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey's drilling activities in the west of the island stems

from Turkey's continental shelf rights in the region. In the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey has a delimitation agreement for continental shelf with the TRNC signed on 21 September 2011.

4.4 Essential Difference: Sovereign or Divided Cyprus

Tensions have increased in the Eastern Mediterranean due to legitimacy issues and historical disputes between states. Historically, the ongoing problems between Turkey and the RoC set the stage for exacerbating the situation in the region. It should be noted that Turkish Cypriots have sovereign equality and co-ownership on the island even if RoC is recognized as a single sovereign unit within the framework of the UN system. Hence, Greek Cypriots' policies of incessantly ignoring Turkish Cypriots' sovereign rights on the island constitutes the crux of this problem. Under these circumstances, it is time to ask whether Cyprus is a sovereign state or divided island. The issue at hand is the main factor for concerned parties to take an action regarding their policy implications both on the island and in the Eastern Mediterranean.

As discussed in Chapter I, the Turkish Republic does not recognize the Republic of Cyprus as a legitimate state because of the 1960 constitution which was suspended and because the RoC was established outside the framework of that constitution. Turkey argues that the island's sovereign rights encompass maritime law and the island's EEZ belongs to the two parties equally. In other words, one side should not benefit more from the another. On that basis, Turkey argues that the TRNC's rights have been violated.

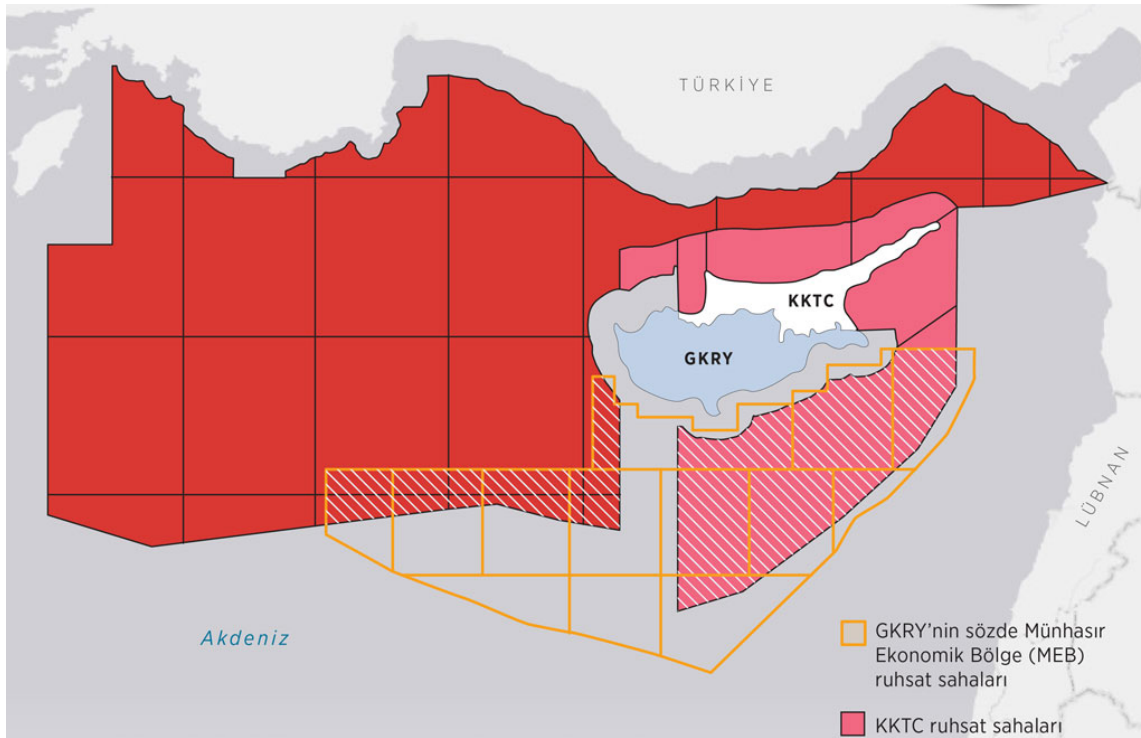
However, because TRNC is not internationally recognized Turkey's actions on behalf of TRNC are seen as illegal. Also rejected in Turkey's argument that since Cyprus is an island it does not have a continental shelf, and therefore, it cannot have an EEZ beyond its coastal waters. Hence, Turkey puts forward the argument that as islands both Cyprus and Crete cannot restrict Turkey's EEZ based on its continental shelf claim (Seufert 2020). Turkey's position is reflected in its rejection to sign the UNCLOS, which does not give legitimacy to its arguments as far as the EU is concerned.

4.5 The EU's and Turkey's Activities in the Region

After the discovery of potential offshore hydrocarbon resources in the Eastern Mediterranean, both global and regional actors invested in extracting and transporting these resources. This desire to explore more resources paved the way for determining the EEZ and continental shelf for the Eastern Mediterranean coastal states, especially the RoC and Turkey. Initially, these new resources were considered to offer a potential for conflict resolution among the disputing parties. However, the current situation points in the opposite direction.

From the Turkish point of view, the RoC acts unilaterally by conducting drilling activities to explore hydrocarbon reserves in its EEZ. Since the agreements RoC signed with third parties to delimit its EEZ was based on UNCLOS and ignored the TRNC, Turkey began drilling activities on its self-claimed continental shelf. As guarantor of the TRNC, it has become active in the region to protect the rights of Turkish Cypriots. In 2007, Turkey gave license to Turkish Petroleum Corporation for drilling activities around the Cyprus island. The licenses covered the overlapping zones between Cyprus and Turkey as well due to its delimitation agreement in 2003 (Başeren 2011). In 2011, afore mentioned licenses were extended and in 2012, new licenses were added by Turkey into existing licenses in order to extent the scope of drilling activities in the offshore Cyprus. Turkey's involvement, particularly the Turkish Petroleum Corporation's intentions to drill in the RoC's EEZ, has escalated tensions in the region.

Figure 4.2 Drilling Blocks and Claimed EEZs in The Eastern Mediterranean



Source: Anadolu Agency

The Figure 4.2 above shows the Eastern Mediterranean Sea and the maritime areas between Turkey and the Republic of Cyprus. The red solid areas are Turkey's continental shelf, the yellow areas show the EEZ claimed by the RoC. The red-and-white striped areas on the left side are the overlapping maritime areas between Turkey and the RoC show the disputed maritime areas. In addition, the pink areas are the fields that the TRNC government gave license' to Turkey's energy company, the Turkish Petroleum Corporation. The striped areas on the right show the disputed areas between the two parties of Cyprus.

Since the EU supports the RoC, it acts as the sole representative of the island through bilateral agreements with third-party countries such as Egypt, Israel and Lebanon to delimit its EEZ. Subsequently, it offered licenses to global petroleum companies for drilling activities. The situation drew the attention of both Turkey and the TRNC, resulting in one of Turkey's warships blocking an Italian ENI gas drilling ship which had been given license by the RoC in February 2018 (Kambas 2018). In response to the attempts made by the RoC, Turkey sent a seismic research ship, and two drilling ships to the region to which the RoC, Greece and then the EU responded by making a joint declaration.

In the light of these developments, the MED7 group consisting of France, the RoC, Greece, Italy Malta, Portugal, Spain held a summit in Valetta, Malta, in June 2019. They published a notice and emphasized that they supported the RoC's sovereign rights to explore, take advantage of and develop its natural resources within its EEZ, in line with the EU and international law. This summit declaration emphasized that Turkey should fulfill its obligations in the framework of good neighborly relations (Summit of the Southern European Union Countries 2019). Furthermore, they suggested Turkey should act in good faith, cease and desist "illegal drilling activities" in the EEZ of the RoC, otherwise the EU would respond accordingly. The quote from the declaration is as follows.

"We reiterate our full support and solidarity with the Republic of Cyprus in exercising its sovereign rights to explore, exploit and develop its natural resources within its EEZ, in line with EU and international law. In line with previous Council and European Council Conclusions, we recall Turkey's obligation to respect international law and good neighbourly relations. We express our deep regret that Turkey has not responded to the European Union's repeated calls condemning Turkey's illegal continued actions in the Eastern Mediterranean and Aegean Sea and express serious concern over actual or potential drilling activities within Cyprus' EEZ. We ask the European Union to remain seized on the matter and, in case Turkey does not cease its illegal activities, to consider appropriate measures in full solidarity with Cyprus." ³

4.6 Specific Actions of the EU and Turkey

The first reaction concerning Turkey's drilling activities in the EEZ claimed by the RoC came on 15 July 2019 from the EU High Representative Federica Mogherini, who was responsible for the EU's foreign and security affairs and European External Action Service (EEAS). She stated that the EU fully supported the RoC against Turkey's drilling activities in the RoC's EEZ. Additionally, she emphasized that Turkey should immediately halt drilling activities in the RoC's EEZ and respect the RoC's exclusive rights in its Exclusive Economic Zone. ⁴ The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejected the statements made by the HR, affirming that Turkey would

³Valletta Declaration, 14.06.2019, retrieved from <https://primeminister.gr/en/2019/06/14/21631>, accessed on 4.06.2020.

⁴Turkish drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean: Council adopts conclusions, 15 July 2019, retrieved from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/07/15/turkish-drilling-activities-in-the-eastern-mediterranean-council-adopts-conclusions/>, accessed 26.04.2020.

continue its exploration activities in the region in compliance with international law. The Ministry emphasized that since Turkey had the longest coast in the region it preserved its own rights and interests in its continental shelf and thus of the TRNC in its Exclusive Economic Zone around Cyprus. The remarkable dimension of the speech pointed to a lack of common understanding of seeking a peaceful solution for Cyprus. Turkey accuses the RoC of endangering Eastern Mediterranean security and stability by excluding the TRNC and Turkey from the energy equation.⁵

At the European Council summit, which was held on 29 June 2019, leaders made parallel statements with that of High Representative Mogherini, reiterating that the EU fully supported the Republic of Cyprus. In case Turkey refused to take the EU's statements into consideration, the European Council said it would impose sanctions on Turkey.⁶ In the following month, the EU Foreign Affairs Council imposed sanctions on Turkey after it started a second drilling operation in northwest Cyprus. Since the EU considers Turkey's ongoing operations within the territorial waters of the RoC illegal, the EU's decisions were as follows.

"In light of Turkey's continued and new illegal drilling activities, the Council decides to suspend negotiations on the Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement and agrees not to hold the Association Council and further meetings of the EU-Turkey high-level dialogues for the time being. It also endorsed the Commission's proposal to reduce the pre-accession assistance to Turkey for 2020 and invites the European Investment Bank to review its lending activities in Turkey, notably with regard to sovereign-backed lending."⁷

Firstly, the EU decided to suspend negotiations on institutional and high-level political dialogue about economic and commercial relations and the Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement. Second, the European Council approved the Commission's proposal to decrease pre-accession funds to Turkey for 2020. Additionally, the Council summoned the European Investment Bank to reconsider its lending activities to Turkey. Even though the EU has not implemented these sanctions, they have been on the table since they were proposed. While the Council indicates that the EU monitors developments closely, the EU repeats that Turkey's ongoing activities

⁵No: 206, 16 July 2019, Press Release Regarding the Conclusions Adopted by the EU Foreign Affairs Council, retrieved from http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_206_-ab-disiliskiler-konseyi-nin-aldigi-kararlar-hk.en.mfa, accessed on 26.04.2020.

⁶European Council conclusions, 20 June 2019, retrieved from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/39922/20-21-euco-final-conclusions-en.pdf>, accessed on 26.04.2020.

⁷Turkish drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean: Council adopts conclusions, 15 July 2019, retrieved from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/07/15/turkish-drilling-activities-in-the-eastern-mediterranean-council-adopts-conclusions/>, accessed 26.04.2020.

have negative effects on bilateral relations. The EU declared full support for a proposal to resolve the EEZ and continental shelf problem between the RoC and Turkey through negotiations within the framework of international law. Therefore, the EU calls for Turkey to respect the sovereignty of the RoC, to refrain from violating the RoC's EEZ and to act according to good neighbor relations. Further, in November 2019, the European Council agreed on a framework comprising freezing financial assets, banning the entry into the EU or transportation activities of companies or individuals who were involved in the drilling activities.⁸

Turkey responded to the EU sanctions harshly – stating that Turkey's stance would not change regarding the policies adopted by the European Commission. Further, Turkey would continue to carry on drilling in the Eastern Mediterranean in its continental shelf and areas licensed by the TRNC to preserve Turkish Cypriots' EEZ rights over the island. Turkey declared that it will not start negotiations with the RoC over limiting maritime territory, pointing out that the TRNC should be party to any negotiations. Furthermore, Turkey emphasized that the EU cannot make any constructive contribution to the Cyprus issue without recognizing Turkish Cypriots as a co-trustee of the Island.

“...the EU, on the contrary having lost a long time ago its credibility to stand as an impartial actor that could contribute to a solution in Cyprus, will never be able to take a constructive and helpful attitude in the Eastern Mediterranean... It is a vain expectation for those who think that Turkey will bow to threats and back down on its rights in the Eastern Mediterranean. No one should doubt that we will continue our exploration and drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean.”⁹

Two weeks later, Turkey signed an agreement with Libya on 27 November 2019 on the delimitation of the two countries' continental shelves in the region (Seufert 2020). Subsequently, Turkey signed the agreement to strengthen its hand in the region to overcome its perception of being diplomatically isolated. Turkey views Libya as a neighboring state willing enter into a delimitation agreement with Turkey. The agreement enhanced Turkey's position in the region against the EU's diplomatic blockade (Seufert 2020). This agreement provides a framework for Turkey's increasingly important role in the region, and towards Cyprus and Greece in particular (Seufert 2020). Strategically speaking, Turkey aims to persuade countries to accept

⁸Council of the EU Press Release, 11 November 2019, retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/yaakghm5>, accessed on 26.04.2020.

⁹Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, No: 329, 11 November 2019, Press Release Regarding The Conclusions Adopted By The Eu Foreign Affairs Council, retrieved from <http://brussels.emb.mfa.gov.tr/Mission/ShowAnnouncement/365537>, accessed on 26.04.2020.

its perspective and delimit maritime areas accordingly, Turkey denies the island's current EEZ as determined by third parties. Instead, the agreement with Libya enables Turkey and its partner(s) to mutually expand their EEZ in the region. As discussed in Chapter II, Turkey's decisive and active role in the region has furthered its policy objectives as exemplified by the Maritime Delimitation Agreement with Libya.

The EU's diplomatic relations with Turkey grew even more tense – as a result of the political impasse in the Eastern Mediterranean. The recent sanction decisions, which were announced in January 2020, are examples of this gridlock between the EU and Turkey. The EU's current HR, Joseph Borrell, made a statement expressing that Turkey's drilling activities are unauthorized and illegal and they should be countered by restrictive measures, such as freezing assets and travel bans, that should be placed on Turkey.¹⁰

Following these exchanges, when Greece and Turkey had sent military vessels to the disputed sea borders and declared NAVTEX¹¹ mutually, tensions rose in the region again. Turkey's announcement on 15 July 2020 of sending a seismic research ship to the contested waters between the Kastellorizo (Meis) and Rhodes islands led to Greece's allegation regarding the violation of its continental shelf (Göksedef 2020). As the seismic research ship was sent with military vessels to the disputed region by Turkey, it caused a further the increase of tensions to the highest point. Hence, the NAVTEX announcements set the stage for a power struggle between the two parties and escalate the strains among the EU, Greece, and Turkey. Even if Turkey calls back its ships from the region in August, it is ready to send those ships again to the contested waters in October. Following these developments, there might be a possibility that sanctions decisions on Turkey are on the table at the European Council once again according to the statements of Von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, in October 2020. She stated that if Turkey continued to act unilaterally in the Eastern Mediterranean and did not negotiate the Cyprus issue, then the EU would use all the options that it possesses. These options range from financial sanctions to embargoes.

¹⁰European Council, Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain third countries concerning restrictive measures in view of Turkey's unauthorised drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean, 31 January 2020, retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/vsemr5f>, accessed on 04.05.2020.

¹¹Navigational Text Messages (NAVTEX) is an international communication system designed to instantly transmit marine navigational warnings, meteorological forecasts and warnings, search and rescue to ships. NAVTEX announcements refers to notification made on this device.

“We want a positive and constructive relationship with Turkey, and this would also be very much in Ankara’s interest. But it will only work if the provocations and pressures stop. We, therefore, expect that Turkey from now on abstains from unilateral actions. In case of such renewed actions by Ankara, the EU will use all its instruments and options available. We have a toolbox that we can apply immediately.”¹²

As the tensions have risen with a whole range of unresolved issues, there is no solution in sight and the deadlock seems to continue in the region.

4.7 Possible Effects of the Statements and Sanctions Over Bilateral Relations

When looking through bilateral relations, it is clear that existing problems particularly that of unification, its membership set the stage for new issues that emerged between the EU and Turkey in general, and between Greek and Turkish Cypriots in particular. As Turkey does not recognize the RoC, it rejects opening its airports and harbors to the RoC to ships and aircraft and does not to apply the Customs Union (CU) for the new member state. On this basis, Olli Rehn clearly stated that Turkey’s accession to the Union is not possible unless Turkey fulfills its commitment and abides the terms of the Ankara Agreement¹³ and Additional Protocol ¹⁴ (Watt 2006). Consequently, the European Commission suspended eight chapters of the negotiation process for Turkey. Furthermore, the RoC unilaterally blocked opening six of Turkey’s accession chapters since 2008, including the energy chapter (Gürel Ayla 2014). The aftermath of the RoC’s EU accession in 2004 had an adverse effect on the bilateral relationship.

In this atmosphere, how can such a situation be resolved within a peaceful way? The EU’s interpretations of Turkey’s actions and Turkey’s activities in the region cause instability and conflicts in the Eastern Mediterranean. In essence, the legal and political dispute between the two sides increases tensions in the region. From the EU’s point of view, new policies need to be developed in response to Turkey’s aggressive

¹²EU threatens Turkey with sanctions over East Mediterranean dispute, retrieved from <https://www.dw.com/en/eu-threatens-turkey-with-sanctions-over-east-mediterranean-dispute/a-55128289>, accessed on 21.10.2020.

¹³Ankara Agreement is a partnership agreement that was signed between the European Economic Community (EEC) and Turkey in 12 September 1963 to guarantee Turkey’s full membership to the EEC by creating a process towards the Customs Union.

¹⁴In addition to Ankara Agreement, Additional Protocol was signed between the European Economic Community (EEC) and Turkey in 13 November 1970 and entered into force in 1973.

and expansionist policies in the Eastern Mediterranean. As a response to Turkey's stance, the EU began planning to put economic sanctions into force so as to limit Turkey's activities in the region. At this point it would be logical to ask whether EU sanctions are efficient tools to influence Turkey's actions in the region. Admittedly, economic sanctions inherently have an impact on its economy as a whole. Yet, in this case, economic means are intended for political and economic outcomes. One could claim that the EU instrumentalizes economic sanctions as a punitive means so that Turkey aligns with the EU's position on the Eastern Mediterranean policy. From my point of view, it's futile to employ economic tools to push Turkey to halt its activities in the region. It is inappropriate to use economic tools for political gain; they are not an effective means to reach the desired ends. Therefore, it can be stated that political relations between the EU and Turkey will further deteriorate.

Due to Turkey's determined stance in the Eastern Mediterranean, it is unlikely that Turkey will retreat from the region. Since the issue is not solely about energy, but related to political motivations and historical disputes, Turkey will likely to deepen and extend its foreign policy reach into the region. Seufert suggests that Brussels should find a way to mediate gas issues in the Eastern Mediterranean and cooperate with Turkey, such as modernizing the Customs Union (Seufert 2020). As long as Turkey continues to show presence in the region, tensions will escalate, and it seems that Turkey has not too much hesitation in this regard.

4.8 Conclusion

The Eastern Mediterranean region has become a hot-button issue with its potential natural gas reserves, attracting the attention of the coastal states. The rising interest of states towards the region set the stage for the creation of new conflicts and problems over the region. The main problem in the Eastern Mediterranean revolves around the sovereign rights of Turkey, the RoC and the EU in the region. Overlapping sovereign areas are not a new issue in the region. The preexisting continental shelf dispute between Greece and Turkey in the Aegean Sea is a case in point. When Greece and the RoC became a member of the EU, the latter entered this dispute – adding to these tensions. Turkey's aspiration for EU membership is directly affected by the EU's and RoC's policies in the region. When Cyprus became a full member of the EU, the process became much more complicated for Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean, since Cyprus has an ongoing unresolved dispute within.

The contest over hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean stems from the respective sovereignty and legitimacy claims of the EU and Turkey, and the divided actors licensing different firms for conducting drilling activities in overlapping maritime zones in particular. For Turkish authorities, with the intention of protecting the Turkish community's rights, Turkey supports the TRNC and conducts drilling activities both in the EEZ of the TRNC and its continental shelf. However, the EU considers Turkey's activities illegal and put sanctions on Turkey to support its members in the region. Hence, sovereignty has become a problem with political motives rather than legal motivations of the states and has an adverse effect on Turkish-EU relations.

From a rational perspective, one could say that it is better for the EU and Turkey to use soft power tools first, such as diplomacy and negotiations. Considering the recent developments in the Eastern Mediterranean, statements and sanctions did not have much of an effect on Turkey to keep it out of the region. To be frank, the problems could not be solved with the sanctions and statements which led to escalating tensions in the region. Instead, the statements made by both sides had no positive effect but led to the further deterioration of EU- Cyprus- Turkey relations. After all, it has to be kept in mind that Turkey is a strategic partner for the EU in the Eastern Mediterranean with regard to energy. From this point on, the next chapter will discuss the paradox of the resource conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean by considering Cyprus, the EU and Turkey.

5. PARADOX OF THE RESOURCE CONFLICT

5.1 Introduction

Energy, specifically natural gas, plays a pivotal role in our increasingly interdependent world. In this context, the European Union has provided a unique example of a large consumer market dependent on exported energy sources, especially on Russia. Hence, the EU seeks to find alternative energy supplies and to guarantee its energy security by diversifying its energy suppliers. In this sense, the Eastern Mediterranean, where new hydrocarbon reserves have been found, was perceived as a huge opportunity by the EU. The Eastern Mediterranean provided a chance to diversify the EU's energy supplies and create a new equilibrium since these reserves have been presented as an alternative to Russian domination in the European energy market. The EU turned to the Eastern Mediterranean's new resources, those of Israel and particularly of the Republic of Cyprus, and to as many of the possible benefits that these new discoveries presented. However, there is a crucial point missed by those who are in search of gas. Is the volume of recoverable gas in the region whether enough or not to meet the states' expectations?

This chapter investigates the paradoxes of the Eastern Mediterranean hydrocarbon reserves while assessing the gap between expectation and capacity. The discussion focuses on the context of Europe since these reserves have been presented as an alternative to Russian domination in the European energy market. The proven reserves in the region are not sufficient as discussed in the Chapter II, to respond the EU's energy demand in any meaningful way. In the light of the existing regional situation, I discuss why the Eastern Mediterranean is full of *hard realities and hyped expectations* for the European Union. This topic is examined in three parts. First, I assess the origins and development of EU energy policies and energy strategies that focus on the EU's energy supply security in the context of its energy balance. It is important to note that though Russia exercises near monopolistic control of

gas supply to the EU's energy market, changing energy priorities of the EU need to be considered. Second, I consider the price of gas and projected gas demand in the EU exacerbated by the effect of Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, I analyze how significant current reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean are as compared with regional consumption of volumes. Third, I define the East-Med pipeline project by considering the geopolitical importance and rising interest of regional states. While examining several different parameters, I explore whether the Eastern Mediterranean is a game changer or not in the sense of altering regional relations as has been hoped for. Finally, the chapter provides insight on whether the amount of recoverable gas in the Eastern Mediterranean affirmatively or adversely affects EU-Turkey energy relations in the current atmosphere.

5.2 The EU Energy Strategy

The fall of Berlin Wall symbolized the triumph of Western countries over the Soviet Union of the end of the Cold War. Thereafter, European countries established economic ties with the Russian Federation, signaling their interdependence, especially in terms of energy issues. Nevertheless, Europe relied heavily on natural gas imported from Russia due to two factors (Westphal and Mitrova. 2017) . One was the agreement with the Soviet Union of Central European state, notably was Germany and Austria to purchase natural gas. These agreements helped to USSR to import the technology and built pipelines from its Western Siberia reserves across Eastern Europe to Central Europe and West Germany. The USSR thus emerged as the energy source for the Eastern Europe and all the Warsaw Pact countries. Second, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia inherited the Soviet energy export infrastructure and energy markets. Most of the Eastern European countries shared a desire to join the European Community (EC) after 1989. The EC, soon to become the EU made plans for its Eastern enlargement because admitting these countries with the Union would stabilize them instead of resulting in an unstable situation in the EU's eastern neighborhood.

Two questions dominated the EU's energy policy in its first years: First, what would happen with the disorder that resulted from fall of the Soviet Union which was a powerful center? Who could make energy export distribution and supply instead of the Soviet Union? Russia's emergence posed an uncertainty to the EU in terms of energy flow since it was surrounded by former Warsaw Pact countries and other communist states east of the Berlin Wall. For instance, Ukraine was the part of the Soviet Union but after the collapse of the USSR it became independent. The Warsaw Pact countries which had already announced their independence from the communist bloc, wanted to join the EU. Since all gas pumped through Eastern Europe to Western Europe via pipelines, there was growing concern about the stability of the Soviet Union's former satellite countries' energy flow (Evin 2016) . What would the EU do in terms of the energy flow's disruption? Since Western Europe was dependent on the energy coming from Russia mainly via two pipelines, Friendship Pipeline and Yamal Pipeline¹, the security, safety, as well as proper maintenance of pipelines had utmost importance. Thus, if these pipelines would not be working properly, Europe would be deprived of natural gas.

Second, the EU questioned whether to embrace post-communist countries because of security considerations. The EU, as noted, admitted the Warsaw Pact countries to make sure that its Eastern border would be stable, unlike the chaos that reigned in Russia after the USSR collapsed. In 2004, Czechia, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Slovenia, became members of the EU. The eight transit countries had been dependent on the Soviet pipelines and continued to be dependent on Russia (IEA 2020*d*). Integrating these countries into the EU exposed new fault lines between their new relations with the EU and their Russian ties, raising a number of further questions. Integrating countries that were highly dependent on Russian gas made the EU more dependent on Moscow. Consequently, their integration added a dimension of energy security challenges for the EU (Evin 2016).

The EU's energy dependence increased especially after the 2004 enlargement wave which encompassed the Central and Eastern parts of Europe. These states have been completely reliant on Russian energy exports to satisfy their requirements (Evin 2016). Considering the EU's increasing energy needs, Russia was by far the most important supplier in terms of meeting not only the EU's but also the whole of the European continent's energy demand with respect to natural gas. For instance, in 2018, around 40 percent of EU natural gas imports came from Russia (Foy 2018).

¹Friendship (Druzhba Pipeline) carries the natural gas in three branches through Belarus via Poland to Germany; via Ukraine to Central Europe and via Ukraine to Croatia. Yamal Pipeline takes the gas from the North via Belarus and Poland to Germany, and a branch of it via Ukraine to Central Europe, then Austria and Germany.

Also the fact that, since Russian pipelines to Europe had been constructed well before the end of Soviet era, the existing infrastructure did not need additional financing. Thus, Russian gas is the cheapest option for the EU. Similar to Russia, the Caspian region was the other major source that could provide energy to the EU because of its natural gas fields. Aside from these alternative sources, the EU's dependency on Russia for natural gas plays a significant role in its energy policy (Ratner Michael 2012).

Given these facts, the EU sought alternative sources of natural gas to diversify its supply sources. Thus, the EU was in search for non-Russian suppliers. This strategy is driven mainly by geopolitical reasons, rather than market base or commercial ones (Correljé and van der Linde 2006). The initial aim was to weaken or counter Russian influence. In other words, the EU struggles to find alternative suppliers since it openly desires decreased dependence on Russia. It is logical to claim that the EU's main strategy is to diminish its dependency on Russia by creating alternative suppliers to avoid being subjected to geopolitical bargaining. In this manner, the Nabucco Project attempted to bring Caspian natural gas directly Europe. However, the project did not come to fruition because of disadvantageous market conditions and a lack of sources foreseen by the EU. The EU's desire for finding alternative sources intensified after 2006 Ukrainian crisis.

The natural gas crisis between Ukraine and Russia that took place both in 2006 and 2009 induced interruptions in gas flow from Russia to Europe and affected almost all continental Europe, especially South Eastern European countries (Kovacevic 2009). The crisis became a major issue because Ukraine refused to pay the price Russia demanded natural gas and failed to pay its old debts. Since the parties could not agree on the price of natural gas, Russia cut off the gas it sent to Ukraine as of 2009. Russia provides natural gas to both Europe and Ukraine via the same pipeline. At the time of the crisis, Russia did not send the portion of gas intended for Ukraine, but pumped the volume destined for Europe. But Ukraine instead retained it for its domestic use and did not send on the volume of gas destined to Europe. Besides, while Russia wanted to increase the price of the gas it exported to Ukraine, Ukraine demanded higher transit fees for the gas passing through the country. For instance, pipeline projects Nord Stream I being in use, and Nord Stream II which is planned, are results of Germany's willingness to take the gas directly from Russia, as a way avoiding to pay transit charges to Ukraine (Maria Grabar 2019). Thus, the main issue is to prevent disruption of energy flow and ensure the supply security for the EU. Therefore, the search for diversification of energy supply gained speed.

In the wake of the initial Ukrainian crisis, the EU planned to expand its support of the “Southern Gas Corridor” project (Eur-Lex 2008) which was driven by supply security concerns. The Southern Corridor carried natural gas from Azerbaijan’s Shah Deniz II field, taking it through Turkey, Greece and Italy to Europe (Winrow 2013). It is a large corridor made up of several pipelines such as Trans Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline Project (TANAP) and Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) in the sense of making Turkey a bridge between the Azeri gas resources and the EU. However, the project’s main drawback is the length of its pipeline. The EU would not fully contribute to such a project as this one which is not commercially feasible. The European Commission indicated that the EU should contribute financially to this corridor, as it would help diversify gas supply for certain member states but not for others. In particular, Southern European countries such as Greece and Italy benefit far more from this project than any other EU country. To sum up, the EU would like to guarantee the security of natural gas supply so as to leverage Russia’s geopolitical bargaining with alternative natural gas supplies. Even if new pipeline projects could not be efficiently implemented, the EU’s primary goal of developing these projects was to reduce its dependence on Russia in terms of energy (Correljé and van der Linde 2006).

In this respect, the discovery of hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea arouses the EU’s interest with regard to its energy policy. The region is viewed as a new opportunity to diversify the EU’s existing energy routes for reducing dependence on Russian natural gas (Scazzieri 2020). Specifically, natural gas sources in the region are seen as a new source to feed the Southern Gas Corridor, enhancing the EU’s energy supply security strategy. While Brussels is orientated towards the Eastern Mediterranean, there are challenges in the region that threaten energy sources. One of the major problems is about the delimitation of the maritime areas among littoral states to drill and extract the hydrocarbon reserves as previously discussed in Chapter II and III. The second issue is transmitting natural gas from the Eastern Mediterranean to the EU. The transfer route is problematic as the exporters who would prefer to the gas transport through Turkey, since it is the most feasible way of transmitting the gas both from economic and the geographic perspective. However, the Cyprus dispute between Turkey and the EU makes it harder to transfer the gas from the Eastern Mediterranean through Turkey to the EU (Tagliapietra 2020a). The Cyprus issue is also connected to the controversy concerning the ownership of the hydrocarbon reserves among the littoral states in the Eastern Mediterranean. It embraces and sharpens the existing disputes among regional players regarding sovereignty rights in Cyprus, the continental shelf, and exclusive economic (Gafarlı 2019). The EU argues that it has a right to derive benefit from these sources via

pipelines. If the EU takes the gas which is at stake through Turkey, this is affordable, yet the existing disputes do not allow the transfer of gas through Turkey. Therefore, the EU push for alternatives to procure the gas such as the East-Med pipeline which is discussed further.

5.3 Price of gas and projected demand in the EU

As the EU's dependency on Russian natural gas increased, one logical solution was to convert its energy infrastructure into green energy. A common position of the EU regarding energy policy evolved out of the reality that it could control the demand side but could not control the supply side. The EU's energy agenda has emerged from its early days and throughout the years the Union tried to have sustainable energy sources, such as renewables, to mitigate the effect of fossil fuels on the environment. Therefore, boosting energy sufficiency, increasing the share of renewables in its energy mix, sustainability, decreasing the usage of gas and coal are important components of the EU energy policy (European Commission 2020). Since the EU does not have sufficient oil and natural gas sources, it aimed to reduce its consumption of carbon-based energy. To this end, the European Commission published a report was about the Union's new energy policy in 2015 called the "Energy Union Strategy" (European Parliament 2015). One of the crucial points of the report is turning to renewables to reduce carbon emissions in line with the Paris Agreement. Besides, the Environment Action Program to 2020 supports and advances the existing policy and sets targets for 2050. One of the significant targets is to create an environment where "resource-efficient, green, and competitive low-carbon economy"² for the EU. According to Renewable Energy Country Attractiveness Index³, where France, Germany and the Netherlands are in the top 10, renewable energy will preserve its market share in the long run as governments direct their investments and opportunities to this area.

The projections concerning the energy demand of the EU demonstrates that its natural gas consumption will decline until 2050, when the EU will almost meet its energy needs through renewables (Mihnea Cătuți 2019). Considering the EU's ambitions and goals, the need for the natural gas will drastically decline, a point which is discussed further with the table 5.1.

²European Commission on Environment, Environment Action Program to 2020, retrieved from, https://ec.europa.eu/environment/green-growth/index_en.htm, accessed on 03.12.2020.

³Renewable Energy Country Attractiveness Index (RECAI), Ernst and Young, retrieved from https://www.ey.com/en_gl/recai, accessed on 19.11.2020.

Table 5.1 Gas Demand by Region and Scenarios

	Stated Policies						Sustainable Development	
	2000	2018	2025	2030	2035	2040	2030	2040
North America	800	1 067	1 163	1 183	1 195	1 221	1 052	791
United States	669	860	936	947	949	957	870	646
Central and South America	97	172	178	198	224	257	168	169
Brazil	10	36	34	37	46	57	30	40
Europe	606	607	621	593	578	557	519	380
European Union	487	480	477	442	416	386	387	266
Africa	58	158	185	221	265	317	176	200
South Africa	2	5	5	7	8	9	6	8
Middle East	186	535	559	646	739	807	550	507
Eurasia	471	598	628	639	652	674	551	471
Russia	388	485	505	506	506	514	438	363
Asia Pacific	313	815	1 071	1 218	1 374	1 522	1 234	1 322
China	28	282	454	533	598	655	508	497
India	28	62	103	131	166	196	199	303
Japan	81	120	102	90	90	89	92	62
Southeast Asia	89	163	203	231	264	295	212	240
International bunkers	-	0	11	21	34	50	14	15
World natural gas	2 530	3 952	4 415	4 720	5 060	5 404	4 264	3 854
World low-carbon gases	-	4	27	53	72	90	138	269
World total gases	2 530	3 956	4 442	4 773	5 132	5 494	4 402	4 123

Source: World Energy Outlook 2019

The table above demonstrates natural gas demands by region. The EU's current energy policy illustrates transformation from coal and oil to natural gas consumption. *The World Energy Outlook* figures show that the EU's gas demand goes from 480 billion cubic meters (bcm) per year to 442 bcm in a period of ten years. The demand for gas declining follows a parallel path to demand in oil. There is a similar pattern between reduced demand and decline of the local production of natural gas in the EU. It is important to emphasize that the EU's domestic supply of natural gas is going to diminish over the same period. The reason for diminishing domestic supply stems from maturing gas wells. For instance, one of the region's gas producers, the Netherlands, is stopping production altogether since gas production has caused landslides and earthquakes. However, that does not reduce the EU's energy demand. In fact, the EU is likely to import more natural gas in the medium term to make up for the declining domestic production. The EU's dependence on natural gas imports will increase for a short period despite its total consumption decreasing rapidly from 480 bcm in 2018 and to a projected 386 bcm in 2040. In other words, their gas supply is decreasing faster than their needs. That is why the EU started

importing more natural gas outside of the continent. Said simply, the EU's gas fields are not enough to meet its demand.

Natural gas demand of Russia remains constant, which will allow Russia to export more gas. Russia has the opportunity to produce more natural gas its extensive natural gas fields in the Yamal peninsula and Eastern Siberia. Consequently, Russia has more capacity to produce and has an infrastructure in place to export gas at a cheaper price than competitors. Meanwhile, both China's and India's demands are expected to increase rapidly. Developing countries in Asia rely on net imports, and China in particular (BP 2019). It is important to add that although North America produces more natural gas, it is the largest consumer of gas in the world given that has plenty of natural gas to meets its domestic demand and still have volumes for export. Accordingly, as long as gas demand increases the production increases as well.

Given these facts, there are also key transformations for global energy markets that needed to be taken into consideration. Since the oil prices decreased sharply following the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)-Russian disagreement and the Covid-19 crisis, natural gas prices decreased as well. Even before the Covid-19 breakout, global natural gas consumption decreased by more than 3 percent in the first quarter of 2020 (IEA 2020*c*). Both the new gas resources and the supply of sources from places such as US shale gas have had an effect of oversupplying a contracting market. On top of this, the ongoing COVID-19 crisis has had an additional impact and pressure, it set the stage for a decline in energy investments in the world. The energy market was deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic due to the lockdown in developed economies and thus it triggered pressure on natural gas prices in American energy market. While the natural gas price for a Million British Thermal Units (MMBtu) was 2.70 US dollar on 4 November 2019, after the pandemic hit, the natural gas price for a MMBtu significantly dropped to 1.62 on 30 March 2020 ⁴. Specifically, European natural gas consumption decreased by 7 percent from January to May, due to falling demand in industrial and power generation sector (IEA 2020*a*). In parallel with this sharp decline, it is also a fact that the COVID-19 is still spreading and creating uncertainties. In such a volatile environment, it still hard to predict whether natural gas prices will increase or not. According to IEA Gas 2020 report, demand for natural gas will start to recover in 2021 however, natural gas demand will not reach the pre-COVID period until 2025 (IEA 2020*a*). Due to Covid-19 and its ongoing effect on the energy market, Exxon Mobil declared in April 2020 that it will delay its drilling activities in the

⁴Retrieved from <https://www.tradingview.com/symbols/CURRENCYCOM-NATURALGAS/>, accessed on 10.11.2020.

region until 2021, and it was followed by Italian ENI and French TOTAL in the next month (Bowlus 2020). Furthermore, the EU's investment in green energy will reduce the EU's dependence on natural gas, leading to decreased natural gas imports. Besides, the use of renewables has increased during the COVID-19 crisis (IEA 2020b). Consequentially, when the crisis over Europe will still consume less natural gas than it had been prior to the pandemic. Moreover, Europe has a chance to buy gas at a lower price from Russia rather than from the Eastern Mediterranean.

5.4 How significant are the current reserves?

As it was previously discussed in Chapter II, the US Geological Surveys forecast that there are potentially large hydrocarbon reserves in the Levant basin which encompasses coastal waters of Cyprus, Israel, the Palestine Territories, Lebanon and Syria. The estimations reveal that there is approximately 3455 bcm gas and is still undiscovered deep down in the region⁵. From this point on, littoral states are accelerating their search for gas discoveries. However, up until now, proven reserves show us that the reality cannot satisfy the expectations.

Table 5.2 Eastern Mediterranean Gas Reserves

Country	Discovery year	Name	Estimated size (trillion cubic feet)
Cyprus	2019	Glaucus-1	5.00-8.00
	2018	Calypso	4.55
	2011	Aphrodite	5.00
Israel	1999	Noa	0.04
	2000	Mari-B	1.50
	2009	Dalit	0.70
	2009	Tamar	10.00
	2010	Leviathan	19.00
	2011	Dolphin	0.08
	2012	Shimshon	0.3
	2012	Tanin	1.20
	2013	Karish	1.80
	2014	Royee	3.20
Palestinian Territories	2000	Gaza Marine	1.00

1 trillion cubic feet= 28,32 bcm

Source: Greek Energy Forum

⁵ Assessment of Undiscovered Oil and Gas Resources of the Levant Basin Province, Eastern Mediterranean, retrieved from <https://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2010/3014/>, accessed on 18.11.2020.

Significant amount of gas discoveries began in the Eastern Mediterranean when Israel discovered a total of approximately 10 Trillion cubic feet (TcF) of gas at the Tamar field in 2009 and then at 19 Tcf in Leviathan field in 2010 according to the table 5.2. These discoveries were followed by Egypt in the Zohr field by means of Italian ENI and it was extracted 850 bcm of gas (Colombo 2020) in 2015, considered as largest gas find. Then, these discoveries led Cyprus, Greece, Lebanon and Turkey to engage in gas exploration by drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean and gas discoveries took place mostly in the southern cost of the region (Sheppard 2020). As seen from the table above, when we look at the Cyprus discoveries which cause the political dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean, the amount of discoveries is not as pathbreaking as it anticipated. Firstly, in 2011 5 TcF was found in the Aphrodite field, in 2018 4.55 Tcf in the Calypso field, and finally in 2019 approximately around 5-8 Tcf in the Glaucus field. So, the total amount extracted from three gas fields is around 17.55 Tcf at best and all the activities are in offshore Cyprus subject to the ongoing dispute between the parties as discussed in previous chapters. It should be noted that, Turkey has not been able to find any gas where it has conducted drilling activities. The discoveries were made south-east of Cyprus. Considering the internal energy consumption of the regional states, the annual amounts are approximately 57 bcm for Egypt, 10 bcm for Israel and 1 bcm for Cyprus (Colombo 2020). Thus, the discovery of gas is sufficient for those regional states such as Cyprus and Israel, which have limited demand, but it is insufficient for the international energy market or even for Egypt, which has other fields in the Nile delta.

Given the proven reserves in the EEZ of the countries of Israel, Egypt, RoC, decreasing oil and gas prices with the Covid-19, the question arises: Is the Eastern Mediterranean gas a game changer in the region? My own perspective is that due to the fact that the volume of gas reserves is inadequate to alter the energy market, it is not likely to change for the better. The Eastern Mediterranean's new yet limited reserves and relatively higher cost of production and transportation compared with other countries like Russia, Qatar and the US makes the region even less appetizing (Bassam 2109). Debates about the management of gas resources in the Eastern Mediterranean set the stage for uncertainty and delayed investment (Tagliapietra 2020*b*). Even though at the beginning the gas reserves in the RoC's EEZ were considered to be potentially helpful to improve the country's financial situation, the subsequent fall in gas prices limits their potential (Tagliapietra 2020*b*).

However, it is not possible to say that the Eastern Mediterranean potential gas reserves are not important at all. By looking at the regional use of gas rather than at the international level, it can be seen that the Eastern Mediterranean gas would be beneficial for the littoral states in the region. As for Israel, it is estimated

that Israeli dependency on carbon-based resources would dramatically decrease in the near future (Sheppard 2020). Discoveries in the Leviathan and Tamar field will eventually enhance Israel's hand on energy politics (Bowlus 2020) and thus its dependency on energy imports will subsequently decrease. As discussed in Chapter II, Egypt can meet its own energy needs with the significant amount of discovered gas in Zohr field in addition to its multiple fields and could use the remaining amount for trade (Tagliapietra 2020*b*). In addition to all these, the amount of gas from the region that could be transmitted especially to Southern Europe would make a difference and boost gas trade in the region. Given these facts, there should be a transitway for conveying natural gas from the region to Europe. In this manner, the "East-Med" pipeline project is one of the most popular ones for those who are in search of diversifying their energy routes. The next section discusses the project with pros and cons and sets forth what is international and financial challenges for conveying the gas from the region to Europe.

5.5 International and Financial Challenges to Export of East-Med Gas to the EU

The East-Med pipeline is an initiative led by Israel, Italy, Greece and the Republic of Cyprus. The main goal of the project is taking the natural gas from the Leviathan field of Israel as well as Aphrodite field and then transferring the gas via pipelines through Cyprus and Crete to Greece, bypassing Turkey. The East-Med is a proposed 1,900 km (1,180 miles) pipeline that will carry between 9 and 12 billion cubic meters of gas through the previously mentioned route (Koutantou 2019). Since the East-Med pipeline is a project of common interest for the EU, some of its member states give precedence to this project to diversify the EU's energy supply security. Israel, Greece and the Republic of Cyprus signed the pipeline agreement on 2 January 2020. The Italian government abstained from signing, as it was concerned about the project's implementation economically and environmentally (Tagliapietra 2020*b*). However, the project could be called a 'pipe dream' instead of a project.

The projected pipeline has a capacity to transmit 10 billion cubic meters to Greece and Italy per year (Tagliapietra 2020*b*). Since the project diversifies energy routes and sources for the EU, it is thought to enhance Europe's energy security and ensure interconnectedness to natural gas reserves. The project would make Cyprus a key point of buying and selling natural gas, improving gas trading in Southeastern Europe, integrating Cyprus into the European gas system. However, the East-Med

project would cost 6 billion Euros. If the East-Med project is launched, it is expected to be completed in 2023 (Akyener 2017).

I assert that the East-Med project is unlikely to be implemented because the price of East-Med gas in EU's domestic market will be higher with the added burdens of transportation cost, taxes, insurance, and production costs. Firstly, depressed energy prices will not permit the financing of such an expensive pipeline. In addition, the projected EU demand does not fully justify another connection to the EU which has more gas than needed. Secondly, natural gas appears to be a transitional fuel for the EU. Due to the shift in the EU's energy policy towards green energy, its overall natural gas consumption will decrease in the medium term despite current natural gas usage policies. In the light of switching to green energy, the EU's gas need will increase in the short run before reducing carbon-based energy consumption. Even if the project were politically successful, global gas market trends suggest transferring gas to Europe would be cost-prohibitive. The EU's turn towards renewables and decreased oil and gas prices suggest the East-Med is an untenable project (Ellinas 2020).

Second, any gas coming into the European energy market could not be as cheap as Russian gas. The EU – and Europe more broadly – can buy the Russian gas at a very cheap price. It is more profitable for European countries to buy Russian gas considering the cheaper price and geographical proximity. While Russia preserves its market share in the EU market, it is quite hard to see what Eastern Mediterranean gas could do for Europe's energy market (Butler 2020). If the decreased gas and oil prices are taken into consideration, it is obvious that Eastern Mediterranean reserves do not have the potential to compete with Russian gas (Butler 2020). The price of Russian gas has already decreased to a level such that that Eastern Mediterranean gas prices could not match. Constructing a pipeline for transferring the energy from the Eastern Mediterranean Sea to the Europe - investing substantial capital – is irrational. In the meantime, the EU would also prefer LNG import to meet its natural gas demand rather than a new pipeline. The East-Med project would be an improper investment.

Third, natural gas reserves are not bringing states together to cooperate in the region peacefully since the benefits do not balance out the costs. In the region, coastal states are trying to create an energy spot for decreasing the cost for the extraction and transmission. If Israel wants to export the gas in its field via the East-Med pipeline, the Eastern Mediterranean gas infrastructure would need to cover longer distance connections or LNG. However, the volume of gas available in the region is not adequate to have the pipeline project or LNG exported via Egypt

will not be able to compete with LNG from other sources for export from the region to the EU. The main problem is that there is not enough gas to compete in the EU market.

5.6 Analysis of the East-Med Pipeline Project

In light of these arguments, it is important to emphasize the East-Med Project in the context of the EU-Turkey relations. With these reserves, it is thought that cooperation among regional states could occur. However political concerns have outweighed economic concerns (Nakhle 2020). As discussed in the previous chapters, whenever the agenda comes to negotiation, the Cyprus issue becomes an obstacle in the Eastern Mediterranean and has an adverse effect on bilateral relations. On the one hand, Turkey has become more adamant in its objection to the East-Med pipeline since that prospect is mainly intended to bypass Turkey (Shama 2019) while transporting the gas from the Israel's EEZ to Greece and finally to Italy. As a consequence, Turkey has stepped up its presence in the region. Taking the pipeline costs into consideration, the project is a way to transfer energy without using the geographic location of Turkey. That's why the project triggers tensions on bilateral relations in addition to Cyprus issue. In response to this project, we see the reflection of Turkey's decisive and active role in the region, partially as exemplified by the Maritime Delimitation Agreement with Libya as discussed in Chapter III. It aims to prevent constructing any pipeline within the maritime area between Turkey and Libya. So, the main obstacles are geographical and economic factors, not merely political.

On the other hand, it is crucial to analyze the EU's stance on the East-Med project. As seen from the EU's current energy policy, the fact that the EU follows its natural gas supply security policy by reducing demand, it does not mean that the EU does not need Eastern Mediterranean gas. Although the aim of the project is supposed to be more than to diversify the EU's supply sources, it is not economically feasible and despite the fact that it is recommended to be funded as a project of common interest, it provides an example of a project that would rely on public financial support because it would not be able to finance itself. Even though the East-Med pipeline project was on the list for EU projects in 2015, circumstances have changed. With European Green Deal, there is no public support for any fossil fuel-based project (Tagliapietra 2020*b*). Since the project does not indicate any tangible output against Russian supply, it is not possible for the EU to give financial support.

Nevertheless, supporting the project paves the way for the exclusion of Turkey and makes it harder to negotiate in the region, and raises strains on bilateral relations.

In addition to all these factors, the last developments in the energy market due to the COVID-19 pandemic have changed the argument regarding the East- Med pipeline project. There is a decline in demand which, due to falling gas prices, mitigates all arguments for oil and natural gas all over the world. Currently, oil and natural gas prices demonstrate that Eastern Mediterranean gas is difficult market on a global or regional level. A huge quantity of oil and to a lesser extent gas could not be sold all around the world. Even if the flow of energy returns to previous levels, it is quite hard to build export infrastructure for Eastern Mediterranean gas because it is not competitively priced given financial needs for infrastructure and, at present, the EU energy market does not need any more gas. Therefore, Eastern Mediterranean gas does not have the potential to change gas prices (Butler 2020).

5.7 Conclusion

Energy supply security has become a problem for the EU since the Union was established. Because Russia is the major gas supplier to Europe and the EU, the main aim of the EU has been to avoid interruptions in the flow of natural gas by consolidating its energy security. For this purpose, first, the EU took the initiative to enhance its energy security by acquiring new supply alternatives. The initial steps taken by the EU such as Southern Gas Corridor and the linked pipeline connections are driven by considerations of providing supply security. Besides, the EU desires to reduce overdependence on a single supplier. In an effort to diversify its supply routes, the EU saw the Eastern Mediterranean as an opportunity since there are potential hydrocarbon reserves in the seabed of the region. In theory, the region's resources were considered as an opportunity, but when that opportunity was pursued, problems between the littoral states emerged. One issue was the transport of the gas from the region to Europe, and Turkey would be the shortest route. However, the existing dispute, Cyprus, came into the forefront because each littoral state claims its own share of the resources according to their legal rights. So, Turkey's possibility of being an energy corridor seems impossible without reaching an agreement among littoral states. That's why the EU brought the East-Med pipeline project to the forefront of transmitting gas. Then, the feasibility of the project became questionable since the volume of discovered reserves was limited.

The Eastern Mediterranean Sea contains hydrocarbon reserves that arouse the interest of the states in and around the region, but it is not a game changer at the global level. The rising interest of the states stems from both expectations for energy reserves and using the energy for peaceful ends in the region. However, the opposite has happened. The reserves are not adequate to overcome historical differences and reduce the tensions among states. The volume of proven hydrocarbon reserves is not sufficient and, hence, difficult to achieve profitable trade to meet the expectations of the neighboring states and resolve their differences. In the context of the EU, there are three main reasons that why the Union would not benefit from Eastern Mediterranean gas. First, the volume of gas would not meet the significant portion of the EU demand; it would only help regional demand. Since 100 percent could not be extracted from the seabed, recoverable gas is less than what has been the estimated volume according to the geological survey. Therefore, the question at hand is: how can the gas be transmitted to Europe? Secondly, exported gas from the Eastern Mediterranean cannot compete with Russian gas prices. That's why the Eastern Mediterranean cannot penetrate into the EU gas market like Russia's supplies. Third, decarbonizing the EU energy system sets the stage for decreasing natural gas demands and usage. The alternative is building a pipeline for transmitting the gas from the region to Europe that would not be economically feasible, as the EU's natural gas demands decrease. In addition to all these, the East-Med pipeline project adversely affects EU-Turkey relations since not only excludes Turkey from the equation but also triggering tension.

6. CONCLUSION

The Eastern Mediterranean has become center of gravity for both the EU and other littoral states due to its newly found hydrocarbon reserves. Even if the region with its natural gas potential is seen as a means for the promotion of peace and cooperation among the EU region's actors, the reality points to the exact opposite of it. The differences in the region pave the way for increase of tensions among Cyprus, the EU and Turkey since they are the most significant actors in the region. To put it differently, the chance of cooperation turns into regional confrontation among the littoral states especially between the EU and Turkey. The motivations of states regarding the region revolve around not only their energy policy but also their political interest. The Eastern Mediterranean is filled with several geopolitical conflicts which involve both regional and global powers and the main issue derives from the opposing political motivations of several states. While the pursuit of natural gas seems to be the main reason, there is a significant power projection of the states regarding geopolitics, and therefore, the search for hydrocarbon reserves led to a broader geopolitical contestation between regional powers in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea.

The EU energy policy's main priority is to diversify energy sources to ensure its security of supply. Therefore, it aims to reduce the dependence on Russia. In this sense, Eastern Mediterranean and its energy reserves are seen as a chance by Brussels. Thus, the EU has taken actions by backing its members and take a stance against Turkey's drilling activities. Reflection of the EU's reaction could be seen in the EU High Representative's statements and the European Council decisions including sanctions against Turkey. In return, the Turkish Foreign Ministry's severe statements have escalated the tension between two parties. These mutual statements and sanction decisions are the determinant factors in the course of relations negatively.

The conflict stems from three main reasons. First and foremost, the Cyprus issue with its divided status constitutes the backbone of the dispute in the region. It creates both sovereignty and legitimacy problem for the parties. While TRNC is only recognized and supported by Turkey, RoC is the only legitimate party of the island and recognized by the UN and, due to its membership, it is backed by the EU. Accordingly, Cyprus directly has an effect upon the EU- Turkey relations for the political attitude of parties. On the one hand, the EU is accused by Ankara to be a party to this dispute rather than help to solve it. On the other hand, Turkey is blamed by the EU for taking an assertive position in the region due to its drilling activities in offshore Cyprus.

Second, the contest over sovereignty rights among the littoral states triggers the tension. As RoC, TRNC, and Turkey conduct drilling activities in the maritime zones by asserting their exclusive rights in overlapping zones, and it creates further disputes. Since the areas where Turkey carried out its drilling activities clashes RoC's maritime zones, Turkey is criticized by the EU, it heightens the tensions among parties, and adversely affects the EU Turkey relations. While Turkey tries to protect the rights of the Turkish Cypriots as a guarantor state, the EU backs the RoC in its licensed areas for drilling activities. Therefore, the conflict between the EU and Turkey arises from incompatible policies since both parties have different objectives in the region. On top of that, perspective on the issue differs greatly between the countries which are signatories of the UNCLOS or and those which do not.

Third, energy issues and hydrocarbon reserves have crucial importance for both sides and forms the cornerstone of the debate. However, there are three main reasons why the Eastern Mediterranean hydrocarbon reserves are far from meeting the EU's energy diversification goals. First, the number of recoverable reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean is not enough to respond to the EU's energy demand. Even if the existing and recoverable hydrocarbon reserves shows potential in terms of energy supply, it cannot meet the aim of the EU's diversification of energy sources. Second, there is a transformation of the EU's energy policy towards green energy and renewables, and the EU's natural gas demand will decrease in the near future. Third, the transfer of hydrocarbon reserves from the region to the EU is highly costly. Turkey could be included to the Eastern Mediterranean energy issues by offering its pipeline infrastructure as a transit route to the EU, however, Cyprus issue has blocked this option for Turkey. So, the alternative East- Med pipeline project is not feasible economically without Turkey's inclusion into the Eastern Mediterranean energy equation. Moreover, due to the Covid-19 crisis, declining gas prices and a decrease in global demand further complicated the East-Med Pipeline project.

From a broader perspective, even if the Eastern Mediterranean energy sources have potential, the amount of gas is not enough to warrant the expensive transit infrastructure.

As the littoral countries such as Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, and Israel have consolidated their relationship with other littoral states and the EU by excluding Turkey from the energy equation in the Eastern Mediterranean, it raises further concerns for Turkey. Therefore, political polarization paves the way for Turkey to adopt an assertive foreign policy. From my point of view, the Eastern Mediterranean Sea will continue to stay choppy due to the states drilling activities for exploration of hydrocarbon reserves. In my opinion, current affairs have affected the EU-Turkey dialogue adversely and it will get worse with the steps which are being taken by both sides. For instance, in return for the East-Med project, Turkey has signed an Agreement with Libya that the initial aim is to block any pipeline passing through the Mediterranean Sea since Turkey feels politically isolated in the region. What I see in the Eastern Mediterranean is some kind of power projection that both the EU and Turkey set forth as long as tensions between Turkey and the EU and other littoral states continued to increase. Therefore, the newly found reserves are far from being an opportunity for cooperation and a peaceful atmosphere, furthermore, it reveals old disputes and creates new ones among states.

If both sides continue in the current course, tensions are likely to escalate. Thereby, the EU needs to find possible ways of reducing tensions, promoting bilateral relations, and enhancing collaboration with Turkey. Not only Turkey's activities in the Eastern Mediterranean profoundly relevant to the EU, but there are also other fields such as migration and security that the EU and Turkey have common benefits. It should not be forgotten that, according to the cooperation between the EU and Turkey in the migration issue, Turkey hosts almost 4 million refugees ¹.

To conclude, without solving the Cyprus problem or at least being negotiating, it is unlikely that there will be progress in the issue of sovereignty rights in the Eastern Mediterranean. A significant decrease in strains may set the stage for the EU- Turkey relations to handling the discrepancies in the Eastern Mediterranean. If cooperation is strengthened, it eventually leads to an important step for Cyprus talks. If progress is made on the Cyprus issue, it would facilitate deliberations of maritime zones and boundaries in the region. Thus, it could set the stage for reserves to turn into a peaceful means for achieving benefit for any littoral states and the EU. All in all, it is clear that if the Cyprus issue is settled, the negotiation will come

¹United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR Turkey - Fact Sheet, 31 October 2019, accessed on 03.08.2020.

immediately afterward. I would like to end my sentences with the following quote from Mathios Rigas, chief executive of Energean. "Energy can become a solution rather than a problem and that's the way politicians should be looking at this."

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