



COMMITTEE: ECOSOC

Issue: The Drilling Activities in Eastern Mediterranean Sea Region

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Dear Delegates,

As the chairman of the ECOSOC, It is a pleasure to see all of you in FIMUN 2020. FIMUN helps people to socialize and also academically contribute to the organization of our aim is to have fun and solve the problems in a healthy way. In our committee, our goal is to have fun and solve problems in a healthy way. I believe that we will manage the committee together with my chair mates Sude and Tarık in a way that everyone will be satisfied. Thank you... Last but not least, if you need help for anything do not hesitate to contact me via; [demirduzendali@gmail.com](mailto:demirduzendali@gmail.com)

Wish to see you all in FIMUN'20!

## **Introduction**

The Eastern Mediterranean Sea, due to ongoing geopolitical and geo-economic competition among various actors, both at the national and regional-strategic levels, has become a region of potential conflicts rather than one of cooperation. Recently Turkey, with one of the longest coasts in the Mediterranean Sea, together with the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), is facing not only military-naval challenges to its survival but also the recently launched U.S.-based alignments that aim to prevent the TRNC and Ankara from exercising their legal rights in the Mediterranean Sea. The Mediterranean Sea is now hosting navies from about 44 different countries. This new, alarming militarization of the region not only involves the navies of various states but also includes various Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) capacities of external powers. Hence Turkey, in this challenging environment in the Mediterranean area, while trying to be active diplomatically, also feels obliged to uphold its legal rights by carrying out hydro-carbon energy exploration through newly acquired seismic drilling vessels – usually under the protection of its upgraded naval fleet. This analysis seeks to explain why U.S./Western behavior is building a new confrontational alignment aimed at excluding Turkey and the TRNC from the Mediterranean basin, and why U.S. President Trump's newly-launched Mediterranean strategy is doomed to fail and is likely to sow seeds of more conflict in the Mediterranean region rather than peace.

The present geo-political and geo-economic rivalry between the Russian Federation and Western forces that are evolving in the Mediterranean can be explained by the rise of a new cold war between Moscow and the Euro-Atlantic world. More alarming, Washington's attempts to form new alliances in the Mediterranean basin may well exacerbate this current strategic rivalry. What is going on at the strategic level between Moscow and Washington is undoubtedly affecting the Eastern Mediterranean as the shatter belt of the Middle East. Hence, Turkey, along with other coastal states in the Mediterranean, is finding itself responding to the emerging side effects of these geopolitical and geo-economic developments. Therefore, to refresh our memories, it is necessary to summarize the current and recent issues that have made the Mediterranean region today a more complex and riskier place.

## Russia's Increasing Presence

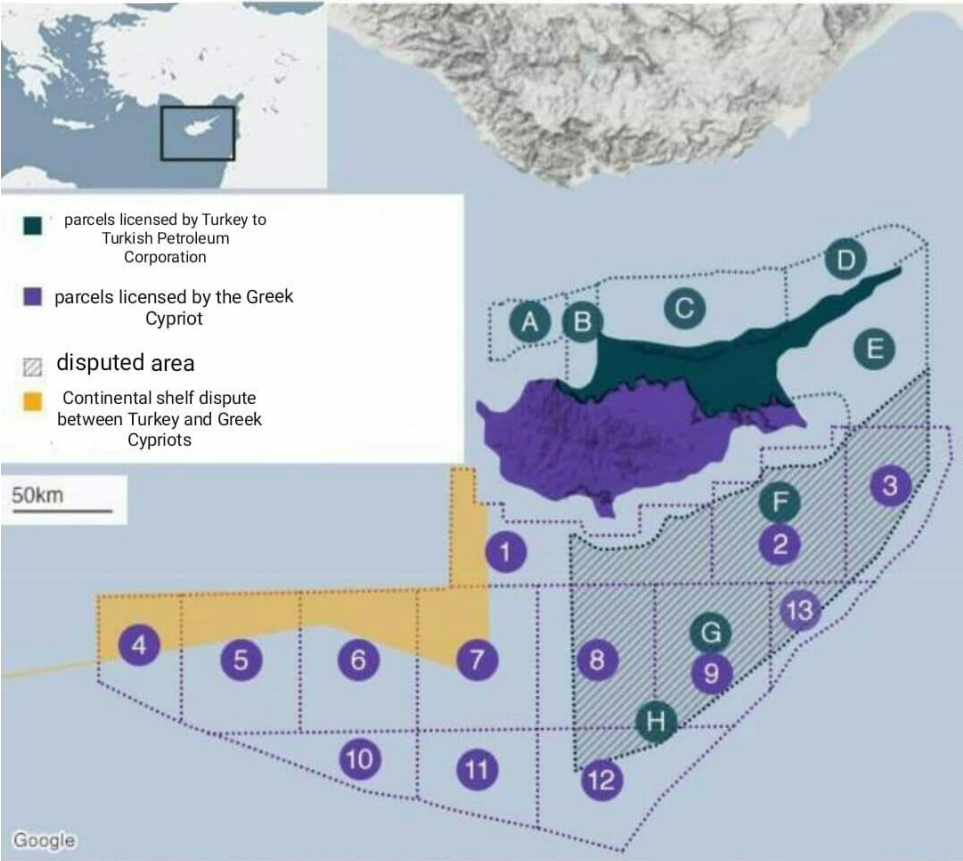
The history of recent American involvement in the Middle East in general, and particularly the Obama administration's uncertain strategy in Syria, have played a great role in the creation of today's volatile conditions. In this regard, the Obama administration's leading-from-behind strategy surely created a great window of opportunity for Moscow. Russia skillfully judged the situation and decided to come in and fill the power gap – to take a stand with the Assad regime in Syria where Moscow thought it necessary to strengthen its position in the newly developing Eastern Mediterranean power nexus. In Russia's view, the U.S., under the Obama administration and later with President Trump, is planning to create a new Middle East via the creation of new Middle Eastern alignments and is certainly aiming to sideline Moscow, both in terms of energy calculations as well as in the creation of a U.S.-based zone of influence in the region. Of course, this new alignment also affects the other members of the Astana trio (Turkey, Russia, and Iran). The main turning point that brought Russia back to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region was when the Assad regime, in 2015, called on Moscow to help in its fight against the opposition. Since then, Moscow has strengthened its military presence via its A2/AD capability in the Eastern Mediterranean to a point that alarmed NATO and the U.S., prompting them to increase their naval presence in the area. This ongoing rivalry between the West and Russia, coupled with increased naval presence and repeated naval military exercises in the Mediterranean basin in the last decade, is naturally increasing the tension in the region both among littoral as well as external powers.

## Aftershocks of the Arab Spring

Another factor bringing the military might of coastal and external powers to the Eastern Mediterranean is the effects of the Arab Spring, which continue to be felt in the MENA region. Since 2011, the Middle East and North Africa have entered a state of uncertainty, especially with the rise of many conflicts (e.g. in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya) that have resulted in long-lasting civil and proxy wars. This situation then gave rise to the existence of failed/failing states in the region; neighboring and external powers have found it easy to intervene in the domestic matters of these fractured states. Some of these states in the MENA region, such as Libya, Egypt, and Syria, have become battlegrounds for either civil or proxy wars

managed by external powers, and this situation has turned the Mediterranean basin into an area of constant volatility. This instability, in turn, has encouraged the emergence of radical terrorist groups to fill the power gaps left by failing states, thereby creating a more chaotic environment where outside states have found a convenient excuse to intervene on the pretext of fighting against terrorism.

### disputed parcels in the eastern Mediterranean



What is the main policy of the parties?

Cyprus is seeking to turn its natural gas resources into economic wealth over the past 10 years. The Cypriot government, which says the Turkish side will benefit from the revenues and a fund will be created for it, aims to ease pressure from the international community, especially the UN. In parallel with this policy, the Cypriot government aims to extend the negotiation process under UN supervision to an open-ended process. Turkey, on the other hand, continues its actions against the unilateral policy of Cyprus.

Turkey, trying to frustrate policies that would only squeeze itself into the Gulf of Antalya in the Eastern Mediterranean, is mobilizing its means to protect the rights of both it and the Turkish Cypriots.

### Hydrocarbon Discoveries

Furthermore, the discovery of hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean, first by Israel in 2009, followed by others near the southern part of the island of Cyprus, have caught the attention of various international oil/gas companies and brought them to the region. It is well-known that the two parts of Cyprus have equal rights by law over the use of the hydrocarbon resources around the island. The Greek Cypriots However, after establishing their own so-called Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in 2004, without the consent of the Turkish Cypriots, started to establish bilateral agreements with Egypt in 2003, Lebanon in 2007 and Israel in 2010, and invited international companies to make explorations around the island; hence, a new dispute came into being in the Eastern Mediterranean.

### How much energy is in the area?

In the last 10 years, Israel announced that it had found 320 billion cubic meters of natural gas in the Tamar bed, 600 billion cubic meters in Leviathan, 130 billion cubic meters in Aphrodite and 200 billion cubic meters in Calypso. The region's largest source of natural gas was Egypt's Zohr region, with reserves of 800 billion cubic meters.

However, the small amount of natural gas found on a global scale raises questions about how its resources will be operated and marketed.

The cost of building an LNG terminal in Cyprus will be 5 billion euros, while the Cyprus-Greece-Italy natural gas line will be built at a cost of 6 billion euros.

The most appropriate formula for Israel and Cyprus is to use Egypt's existing LNG export terminals when it is calculated that a natural gas line through Turkey cannot be built for political reasons.

### How has energy tension changed the regional equation?

The discovery of hydrocarbon reserve deposits in the eastern Mediterranean has led to the establishment of both new areas of cooperation and alliances among riparian countries. These countries, united in their goal of extracting natural gas reserves from Israel's Tamar and Leviathan, Egypt's Zohr and Cyprus' Aphrodite deposits and transporting them to the European market through pipelines, have started to create new regional cooperation platforms with the participation of Greece. Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Palestine and Egypt, who met in Cairo in January, declared that they had established the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum. The forum aims to cooperate in the production, consumption, and marketing of regional resources and to transform the Eastern Mediterranean into a new energy base. In parallel with this process, Cyprus, along with Greece, established separate tripartite cooperation formations with Egypt, Israel, and Jordan, and received the strong support of both the United States and the EU. These developments resulted in the isolation of Turkey, one of the leading countries in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Turkish Cypriots, part of the island of Cyprus. Turkey, which does not already recognize Cyprus as a sovereign state and whose relations with Egypt and Israel are extremely strained, has turned to a policy of being more visible to protect its economic and political rights. The fact that Greece, Cyprus, and Italy are members of the EU and the fact that the big companies of countries such as the United States, Qatar, and France are located in the Eastern Mediterranean caused Turkey to become even more isolated. For this reason, Turkey demands that the UN, the sole authority for the solution of the Cyprus problem, be more vocal in this process.

## Major Parties Involved and Their Views

**Cyprus:** Cyprus is seeking to turn its natural gas resources into economic wealth over the past 10 years. The Cyprus government, which has stated that the Turkish side will benefit from the revenues and a fund will be created for it, aiming to reduce pressure from the international community, especially the UN. In parallel with this policy, the Cypriot government aims to extend the negotiation process under UN supervision to an open-ended process.

**Egypt:** in 2013, Cyprus reached an agreement on natural gas deposits in the Mediterranean, but Turkey said it did not recognize the agreement and declared it to have no international validity. Egypt currently opposes Turkey's drilling activities in the Mediterranean and accuses Turkey of defying international law and increasing tensions through its unilateral efforts in the region.

**France:** the Western European country France, on the other hand, says they are in solidarity with the Greek Cypriot Administration and agree with Egypt that Turkey is disrespecting international law.

**Greece:** The New Democracy party came to power with early elections in Greece on July 7th. The country's new Foreign Minister, Nikos Dendias, has made statements against Turkey in his first week in office.

**Palestine:** It is a member of the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum.

**Israel:** It follows the pro-US policy. It is a member of the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum. It gets strong support from the United States and the EU.

**USA:** USA State Department spokesman Margan Ortagus said: "The USA is deeply concerned that Turkey has announced its intention to conduct drilling activities in the area defined as the exclusive economic zone of the Republic of Cyprus. This step is highly provocative and risks increasing blood pressure in the region. We call on the Turkish authorities to stop these activities and to calm all parties."



**Turkey:** Turkey, on the other hand, continues its moves against Cyprus ' unilateral policy. Turkey, trying to frustrate policies that would only squeeze itself into the Gulf of Antalya in the Eastern Mediterranean, is mobilizing its means to protect the rights of both it and the Turkish Cypriots. Turkey said that drilling work started in line with the permits received, and announced that there would be no deceleration. "It is unacceptable for third parties to try to determine where their maritime borders will cross by putting themselves in the place of an international court," he said. He also said Turkey would not end the work because of external pressures.

## Definition of Key Terms:

**Drilling:** Drilling is a process whereby a hole is bored using a drill bit to create a well for oil and natural gas production. There are various kinds of oil wells with different functions:

**Exploration wells (or wildcat wells)** are drilled for exploration purposes in new areas. The location of the exploration well is determined by geologists.

**Appraisal wells** are those drilled to assess the characteristics of a proven petroleum reserve such as flow rate.

**Development or production wells** are drilled for the production of oil or gas in fields of proven economic and recoverable oil or gas reserves.

Relief wells are drilled to stop the flow from a reservoir when a production well has experienced a blowout.

**Injection wells** are drilled to enable petroleum engineers to inject steam, carbon dioxide, and other substances into an oil-producing unit to maintain reservoir pressure or to lower the viscosity of the oil, allowing it to flow into a nearby well.

### **The process of drilling oil and natural gas production well involves several important steps:**

**Boring** - a drill bit and pipe are used to create a hole vertically into the ground. Sometimes, drilling operations cannot be completed directly above an oil or gas reservoir, for example, when reserves are situated under residential areas. Fortunately, a process called directional drilling can be done to bore a well at an angle. This process is done by boring a vertical well and then angling it towards the reservoir.

**Circulation** - drilling mud is circulated into the hole and back to the surface for various functions including the removal of rock cuttings from the hole and the maintenance of working temperatures and pressures.

**Casing** - once the hole is at the desired depth, the well requires a cement casing to prevent collapse.

**Completion** - after a well has been cased, it needs to be readied for production. Small holes called perforations are made in the portion of the

casing which passed through the production zone, to provide a path for the oil or gas to flow.

**Production** - this is the phase of the well's life where it produces oil and/or gas.

**Abandonment** - when a well has reached the end of its useful life (this is usually determined by economics), it is plugged and abandoned to protect the surrounding environment.



**Mediterranean Sea**: the Mediterranean Sea is an intercontinental sea that stretches from the Atlantic Ocean on the west to Asia on the east and separates Europe from Africa. It has often been called the incubator of Western civilization. This ancient “sea between the lands” occupies a deep, elongated, and almost landlocked irregular depression lying between latitudes 30° and 46° N and longitudes 5°50′ W and 36° E. Its west-east extend—from the Strait of Gibraltar between Spain and Morocco to the shores of the Gulf of Iskenderun on the southwestern coast of Turkey—is approximately 2,500 miles (4,000 km), and its average north-south extent, between Croatia’s southernmost shores and Libya, is

about 500 miles (800 km). The Mediterranean Sea, including the Sea of Marmara, occupies an area of approximately 970,000 square miles (2,510,000 square km).



**Balance of power:** Balance of power, in international relations, is the posture and policy of a nation or group of nations protecting itself against another nation or group of nations by matching its power against the power of the other side. States can pursue a policy of balance of power in two ways: by increasing their power, as when engaging in an armaments race or the competitive acquisition of territory; or by adding to their power that of other states, as when embarking upon a policy of alliances.

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