



Ελληνική Εταιρεία Γεωγραφικών Μελετών
«Ο Στράβων»

ENERGY COOPERATION IN THE EAST MED

It is a familiar topic from time to time for both actors from the region and players from beyond the Eastern Mediterranean to look for sustainable, in their mind, solutions of the energy scarcity mainly affecting Europe, through joint exploration/exploitation of the putative oil and gas reserves hidden in the EastMed seabed. The underlying belief is that in doing so, protracted maritime delimitation issues could if not resolved, to the least be overcome, sidelined and rendered irrelevant.

In September 2020, the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF) was set up, bringing together Egypt, Greece, Cyprus, Israel, and in the process France, Italy, Jordan and Palestine. Turkey did not want to join. The EMGF attained the status of a regional international organization, based in Cairo. Foundational principle is the compliance with the Law of the Sea, as it has been codified in the UNCLOS (1982).

Any new initiative, in the form of a quadrilateral international scheme to address the issue of energy cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean will be proven unproductive, in case it purports to bypass the well-established EMGF for the sake of ignoring Israel and securing attendance of the secessionist entity in Cyprus's northern area.

Participation of Turkey in the Forum within the bounds of International Law, is really desirable. The presence of the Turkish Cypriot community, in a multilateral conference to be convened by the EMGF, in their quality as constitutive part of the Republic of Cyprus and future partner in a post solution bi-communal federal Republic, should be seriously considered.

Other ways to square the circle just to achieve Ankara's participation on President Erdogan's terms will hardly fly.

***Stravon of Amaseia,
Athens, 03 January, 2025***