



Master Thesis Urban, Port and Transport Economics

The EastMed Pipeline - How it is expected to impact the geostrategic position of Cyprus

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The views stated in this thesis are those of the author and not necessarily those of the supervisor, second assessor, Erasmus School of Economics or Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Abstract

The aim of this research paper was to investigate how the East Mediterranean Pipeline is expected to impact the Cypriot geostrategic position and alleviate the country of its dependency on natural gas imports in feeding local production facilities in Vasilikos, Moni and Dhekelia.

The author assesses the risks and opportunities involved in such a major gas infrastructure investment and uses content analysis to deduce scenarios, thus evaluating the pipeline's impact on the geoeconomic and geostrategic position of Cyprus. Conflicts of interest between states involved are evaluated and conclusions are reached regarding the best course of action for the island in response to the effect of the scenarios. In order to increase reliability of results the researcher proceeded with conducting interviews with 5 industry professionals and gained important insight and verified the research findings. It is concluded that the pipeline could both improve the country's geostrategic position but also instead create additional tensions in the region. The author further suggests that the way to allow for the pipeline to alleviate the country geo economically, proper energy diplomacy should be deployed and strategic alliances must be cultivated, in addition to maintaining talks for the Cyprus Dispute resolution active.

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List of abbreviations

FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic product
EastMed	East Mediterranean(often referring to the pipeline)
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
LNG	Liquified Natural Gas
EU	European Union
PCI	Project of Common Interest
EMGF	East Mediterranean Gas Forum
IGB	Gas Interconnector Greece-Bulgaria Pipeline
EAC	Electricity Authority of Cyprus

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

It has been widely accepted that investments in gas and more specifically pipeline infrastructure have been yielding positive outputs for countries involved in the deals (Papadopoulou et al., 2015). Such projects are of high economic and political importance as they affect regional employment, GDP, the environment, geopolitical stability, regional security and trade (Fisk, J.M. 2017; Tziarras, 2019).

The Eastern Mediterranean is a region of global geopolitical interest. Hydrocarbons are the main reason why. Natural gas resources have proven to play a substantial role in forming and reshaping the intergovernmental affairs of the parties involved (Goldthau, Richert and Stetter, 2020).

The discovery of hydrocarbons off the coast of Cyprus, in the Levantine basin, has pierced the interest of a great number of countries and has switched not only regional but also international attention to the new gas findings. Among others the EU, United States and Turkey are interested in exploiting the hydrocarbon reserves. In that framework controllability of gas supply and pricing provides the exploiter with power over the gas flow and therefore enhances their political presence and economic position in the region. The EU seeks to reduce its dependency on Russian gas, the US aims at entering the European gas market and have control over the EU's gas imports, all the while Turkey claims the hydrocarbon discoveries are in its EEZ and therefore rightfully theirs (Tziarras Z., 2019).

The gas findings were discovered by Noble Energy in 2011 within the Aphrodite gas field located in Block-12 in the Cypriot Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), 160 km South of Limassol (Tagliapietra 2013; Oikonomopoulos, Stambolis 2012). The discovery of the Aphrodite gas field was the first of its kind in the Cypriot EEZ in the East Mediterranean waters that received exploitation rights. After the initial finding, gas giants Eni (Italy) and Total (France), Qatar Petroleum and ExxonMobil, have acclaimed drilling rights by the Cypriot government and proceeded to the discovery of additional gas reserves in Calypso and Glaukos in 2018 and 2019 respectively (Kambas and Zawadzki, 2019; Offshore Technology, 2021).



Figure 1: Existing and planned natural gas pipelines in the Mediterranean Sea
Source: Journal of Petroleum Technology

The EastMed pipeline, costing around USD 6 billion, is planned to transport a yearly amount of 10 billion cubic metres of natural gas from extraction points in the Levantine basin via Cyprus to the island of Crete and into the mainland of Greece (Koutantou, 2020). From there natural gas will run through the connecting IGB and Poseidon pipelines to Italy and into other European gas centres where it will be utilised in accommodating energy needs of the broader area. The impacts of such an energy infrastructure investment on natural gas trade, politics and the regional economy will be discussed in detail throughout the report.

1.2 Complications and Problem Definition

According to Eurostat data, Cyprus has had the largest share in oil and petroleum products consumption among European countries amounting to 89.6% of total energy consumption in its energy mix, while renewable energy and biofuels consumption amounted to a share of under 2% for the observed period of 2018 (Eurostat, 2020). That is mainly due to the fact that Cyprus is a relatively small island and has cheaper non-renewable transport fuel use than other European countries in addition to paying one of the highest gas prices in the EU for importing it (European Commission 2016). The pipeline is considered as a PCI (Project of Common Interest) and especially so for the Cypriot government as it could enhance its energy security, enhance its carbon footprint through consuming a less carbon-intensive fuel as well as obtaining access to natural gas and producing domestically.

However it has been characterised by professionals as doubtful that the project indeed is able to compete with Russian and other global gas exporting volume, as it would only be able to cover just above 4% of the total European natural gas market demand continuously on the rise (Tziaras Z., 2019; Honoré 2018). Another aspect would be the net-zero emission plan that the EU is planning on achieving by the year 2050 with carbon neutral operations in consigned countries (European Commission, 2018). The bar has been set very high for the Cypriot government to accomplish, with current levels of energy use being far from the 2021 targets, which only means that there is a very necessary high-jump to make in order to avoid penalties.

In line with environmental and economic concerns is the political stability matter. Turkish and Cypriot governments have a long history together over the prevailing power on the island. Starting with the Turkish invasion in 1974 and subsequent occupation of the northern part of the island, there have been many attempts in solving the Cyprus Problem, however in a span of almost 50 years no solution has been found due to major clashes of interest not only from these 2 parties but also global interest in the geostrategic position Cyprus holds. After the discovery of natural gas in the Levitan basin, where a part belongs in the Republic of Cyprus EEZ, the Turkish government has all but remained neutral to the news, causing major uproars and threatening to invade again.

The islands' continuous negotiations and efforts in resolving the "Cyprus Problem" with Turkey have been yet again postponed after the most recent signing of the agreement about the EastMed pipeline, which excludes Turkey from the deal, as Ankara refuses negotiate and is infringing its military vessels onto Cyprus' EEZ for unauthorised drilling expeditions. That imposes additional threats to the pipeline's stable operation and threatens regional security (Tziaras Z., 2019). The exclusion of Turkey from

exploiting hydrocarbon discoveries, in what it claims as its own EEZ, and subsequent increased conflicts it has been causing in protest, concerns not only the island's integrity but also regional politics and trade.

1.3 Research objectives

The main objective of this research is identifying and analysing the possible futures the EastMed pipeline will bring to the island's economy and how it could affect its geopolitical position and regional natural gas trade. In addition it will focus on the geostrategic position of Cyprus in the area, in order to assess the prospects and dynamic capabilities the island can hold with the use of such a natural gas infrastructure investment. Specifically, the author aims at approaching the subject from a macroeconomic, trade, geostrategic, political and environmental perspective, evaluating complications that might play a substantial role on various aspects that could influence the regional geoeconomics from today and until after the project's completion and operation.

In order to realise the benefits and overcome the risks it is important that a detailed view of the general picture is provided. This is where this research comes into play as it is expected to provide the essential insights on various aspects surrounding the effects the EastMed pipeline's operation will impose. Subsequently that leads us to the main research question to be evaluated throughout this paper:

“How can the EastMed pipeline influence the geostrategic position of Cyprus in terms of regional geoeconomics and natural gas trade?”

In answering that, a number of subsequent questions will be addressed;

1. What is the role of energy in geoeconomics?

Geoeconomics, as a fraction of geopolitics, is a relatively new term, the meaning and magnitude of which was established first by Luttwak in 1990. Researchers have had a great interest in investigating the role and effect energy findings have on geopolitical relations and dominance over both the domestic market, and also the wider region. A geopolitical ambition is what drives nations towards securing themselves in a dynamic fight for the prevailing power. This sub-question will be analysed in chapter 3 of the paper.

2. What could be the implications of Cyprus becoming a regional energy hub and how will the pipeline agreement create regional security?

The cooperation between the involved countries, namely Cyprus, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Italy and Greece, is expected to extend beyond their agreement in putting the EastMed pipeline into effect. The natural gas exports through operation of the pipeline have been characterised by the research community as a way of security from reliance on imports from the politically unstable Middle East (Tziaras, 2019). In addition to that, securing themselves against regional common rivals and asserting dominance through this collaboration, could enhance their relations further and create a stronger regional security, for instance through strategic collaborations and alliances. The author addresses this subquestion in chapters 4 and 5.

3. How will the Cypriot government manage to respond to the European Commission's gas diversification project, when it's far from meeting its renewable energy targets?

The increasing demand for the EU diversifying its energy sources has been on the rise. The need for gas diversification projects in power generation and trade for reaching the EU's environmental goals creates pressure on countries such as Cyprus, that extensively use non-renewable energy sources and mainly rely on oil & petroleum products. Even though the EastMed pipeline has been classified as a Project of Common Interest (PCI) by the EU, as it will enhance the island's energy security, reduce the energy costs and reduce emitting pollutants, in addition to providing natural gas to the EU, it still is promoting fossil fuel use. It is expected that when the pipeline is at full capacity, it could overtake the on-year combined greenhouse emissions of Spain, France and Italy (Global Witness, 2020).

4. What happens if the complementary projects to the pipeline projects are effective, and how will they change the island's energy framework?

Along with the EastMed pipeline there are plans on creating an LNG import, regasification and storage infrastructure in the Vasilikos power plant area. There are already ongoing construction works for the LNG terminal expected to be completed by 2022 (Lakes, 2020; Kathimerini, 2021). There have been and still are however concerns as to the security and viability of the planned investment projects due to high uncertainty and economic costs.

5. What could be the probable scenarios and their implications to the Cypriot geostrategic position with the EastMed pipeline in operation?

The research will attempt to answer this sub question by deducing insights from scenarios through content analyses, which will capture the effect of such an energy infrastructure on the island in a geo economic and geopolitical framework.

1.4 Contribution of research

There is currently limited research done in evaluating the possible benefits and complications of the EastMed pipeline on a geostrategic level. The EastMed pipeline will have not only national scope for Cyprus, but instead it is expected to impact the broader regional energy trade, economy and geopolitics and thus the author believes that a thorough assessment of the alternatives on the future of the region is necessary. The author saw there was limited attention paid to the geostrategic position Cyprus holds with this regard and thus initiated this paper. Additionally there is scarce knowledge on the island's long-term alignment with the EU's decarbonisation targets and the opportunity the pipeline presents for reducing Cyprus' dependence on carbon-intensive fossil fuels.

Upon completion of this research the author is hoping it provides both the academic and research community with insights on regional geoeconomics in relation to energy diplomacy and assists researchers in realising the effect the EastMed will have on the island and the broader region. Evaluating scenarios, the author argues, could be beneficial on a country level as it can provide it with the strategic flexibility and enhance its dynamic capabilities against prominent threats.

1.5 Thesis Structure

The thesis will be designed in answering the main research question. The research will deduce scenarios using content analysis through a combination of media, intuitive, interview and narrative methods. In the following chapter the methodology applied will be presented and defended as to why it had been chosen, describing the procedure of data collection and types of reasoning.

The third chapter will focus on the theoretical assessment of energy trade and geoeconomics as a means of regional security. The author introduces the importance of gas infrastructures as an element of changing the course of regional geopolitics and stability. Additionally, the author will give a summary of the related research performed previously on geopolitics, geoeconomics and their interrelation with energy trade.

The fourth part of the thesis will concentrate on introducing the focal question of this research and giving an overview of the geopolitical situation of Cyprus and the important geostrategic position it holds, referencing historical and more recent political events that shape it. In addition the chapter will provide information on the economy, employment, including the island's energy profile, and facilities that could accommodate the planned projects, along with the relations the island has with other states.

Next will follow the introduction of the observed themes in the landscape of European and Eastern Mediterranean geopolitics and trade, in the context of opportunities and threats the EastMed pipeline will impose on the island. The reason for that is the evaluation of their complexity, in an effort to foresee how the interrelationships between states will interact with time and what scenarios are deduced through the analysis. It will be designed in a way that presents the implications of certain narratives as well as recommended state action for coping with each one of the 4 scenarios. Then the key findings, relations to previous research and limitations of this research will be presented in the final chapter. Appendices with interview questions, overview table of content analyses and interview transcripts are presented at the very end.

2. Methodology

In this short chapter the author presents the methodology applied in conducting this paper in an attempt to answer the main research question. In order to explore how the EastMed pipeline could enhance the geostrategic position of Cyprus, a qualitative research method was deployed.

The formal definition of qualitative research is “the study of the nature of phenomena, including their quality, different manifestations, the context in which they appear or the perspectives from which they can be perceived”, but excluding “their range, frequency and place in an objectively determined chain of cause and effect” (Philipsen, H., & Vernooij-Dassen, M., 2007; Busetto, L., Wick, W. & Gumbinger, C., 2020). It differs from quantitative research, that focuses on collection of numeric data through statistical softwares that aims on measuring, ranking, testing correlation and making generalisations on causal relationships, in the sense that qualitative data aims at describing, interpreting, providing in-depth insights on specific concepts and describing them (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). The nature of the

research question is such, that makes qualitative research methodology a better fit for explaining how geopolitical events and relationships between states will impact the geostrategic position of the island and as not to undermine the narrative sequence of events.

The form of methodological reasoning chosen for this paper can be either inductive or deductive (Trochim, 2006). Deductive research approach focuses on building a hypothesis based on previously approved facts or a generally accepted theory, and then testing that hypothesis, therefore going from broad to narrow (Holloway, 1997). On the other hand, inductive research is performed by following the opposite path. It moves from making an observation, collecting the data, allocating a pattern and then creating the hypothesis that will be tested in order to reach a broad generalised conclusion (Creswell, 2007). Based on the nature of the research questions, moving from existing theories towards specific observations, and with the aim of examining if indeed the pipeline enriches the island's geostrategic position, the deductive reasoning was chosen.

More specifically, the paper will address the assumption that the proposed EastMed pipeline strengthens the island's geopolitical position. The author will assess this assumption based upon the pipeline's ability to enrich the island's geostrategic position, create energy trade with the broader region, and allow for further cultivation of economic cooperations with the area. The author wishes to investigate if the EastMed pipeline assists in boosting the island's geopolitical and economic position or instead be the focal reason for increased tensions with the region. For better understanding of such premises, the author will assess the island's relations with other states and position Cyprus in the energy trade axis, thus providing a concise image of its profile, and then later attempt to analyse how the

The type of qualitative research method chosen was content analysis. It was first used in 1920's where researchers focused on identifying words or phrases within a wide range of texts, and measuring the frequency at which they appeared, then "developing scales of meaning against which content can be compared" (Carley K., 1990; Gerbner, G. 1969). Researchers use content analysis through comparing and evaluating what is "contained" in a written or spoken message in journals, newspapers, academic papers, press releases, open-ended interviews, radio or television messages, and depending on the purpose, making inferences about the entity that communicates the message, characteristics of the message itself or how it is received and drawing conclusions about the content (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1976; Weber, 1985; Krippendorff, 1980; Prasad D., 2008; Carley, 1986). As per Lasswell, while conducting a content analysis, a researcher finds himself at that end where the message is being communicated and then asks "who says what to whom and with what effect", therefore dealing with the communicator, the audience and the communicator's effect on the audience and making interpretations of that content (Lasswell et. al., 1965).

In the past, content analysis occurred by counts of certain words within and between written texts and the frequency that they appear, which made it a complex methodology in its nature as it required extensive data preparation, was time consuming and most importantly, due to limited resources for relation of the collected data, results of such a methodology had little reliability (Roberts, 1987; Namenwirth and Weber, 1987). As technology progressed and the theoretical background of content analysis was delimited, this methodology now exceeds word count procedures and entails a more qualitative approach, which allows for a broader range of disciplines; political, sociology, cultural, sociolinguistics, communication,

anthropology, cognitive science, and Artificial Intelligence (Carley, 1990; Roberts, 1987; Carley 1986; Newman, 1989; Lehnert, 1977).

In content analysis there are 3 basic strategies; conceptual analysis, procedural analysis and relational analysis (Carley 1990). Conceptual centres more around gathering concepts that explicitly and implicitly appear in texts, the procedural analysis focuses on the process and “extracts decision sequences and goals” from the actors in the text, and relational analysis is more about “extracting a conceptual network” and seeing the relationships between those concepts (Carley, 1990). Therefore in this paper, the most appropriate strategy would be procedural analysis as it “treats the content of a text as action” and the messages are regarded as “plot and sequences of action and reaction, making the process its main focus (Carley, 1990). A plot is drawn from the messengers and the audience's actions in the spoken, written or text messages, hence helps the researcher determine the meaning behind them and figure out action sequences.

The author decided to manually approach the interpretations of messages without the use of coding and word count, and instead focus on drawing inferences on the meaning of the analysed material, confirming later the findings with industry professionals. The data is derived from think tanks, government publications and whitepapers, legislations, official policy documents of ministries, talks, interviews, opinion articles and papers of the research and professional community, where dominant events and topics were identified.

The author started by looking at the island’s economy, trade profile, its relations with other states, evaluated its geopolitical position, and assessed its geopolitical code. After meticulously analysing the content of the data sources with critical thinking, the author identified themes which formed the 4 scenarios. Specifically, the 4 scenarios were not generated by the author, but instead content analysis was used to deduce insights from each existing scenario. The scenarios have been selected in such fashion that they covered geopolitical, geoeconomic, environmental and commercial considerations, and aimed at answering the main research question.

The reason that the author has chosen to work with scenarios is due to the sensitive and uncertain nature of the subject. The pipeline is a future project and there are many possible outcomes affecting the island’s geostrategic position, thus the author aimed at identifying themes from existing scenarios, through content analyses, and drew inferences and conclusions from evaluating them. Essentially insights were drawn from the scenarios on how the EastMed pipeline will impact the geostrategic position of Cyprus in each scenario. Also, in order to increase the reliability of the findings, as content analysis relies on interpretations the researcher draws from aforementioned messages, thus can be subjective to the author’s perception, the thesis concludes with gathering interviews from experts in the fields of geopolitics, geoeconomics, energy trade, economics and business.

3. Theoretical Background

As aforementioned in the thesis structure appendix, this chapter will focus on the theoretical part of the research underlying the main aspects of geoeconomics as a stream of geopolitics, in appendix 3.1 and as means of regional security in appendix 3.3. There will be a thorough explanation of the geopolitical codes and the interest in them.

3.1 Geopolitics and geoeconomics

3.1.1 Geopolitics

The subject, geopolitics, first defined by Rudol Kjellén in 1899, is the “analysis of the geographic influences on power relationships in international relations” (Deudney, D. H., 2013). It explains international politics based on geography, namely climate, topography, land, and access to sea, oil and other natural resources (Deudney, D. H., 2013). It is how geography affects political relations of states and blocs of states on the global scene and adjusts political relations between them (Luttwak , 1990).

Moreover, geopolitics don't only have to do with physical resources a state's natural geography has to offer, but also human-made resources and elements. For instance that could be infrastructure such as canals, ports, urban complexes and structures, but also how human relations, economics, religion, social norms, and politics vary across different geographies. These concepts show that the international scene of politics and social relations operate influenced by geography.

Geopolitics involves assessing how the actions of governments, played by political leaders and organisations, will affect other governments in terms of trade, pollution, security and economic stability. For instance a trade-related geopolitical issue would be when one state decides to increase oil prices because of supply shortages, which would lead to a more volatile environment between the countries involved in the trade, and assuming they act strategically, they could take advantage of such events and see them as opportunities for their state's prosperity.

Many political geography researchers set ground to geopolitics and applied them to multiple international problems, in the sense that they helped in understanding how world geography and politics interacted with each other. By being aware of and defining how geography can influence political interest, relationships and decisions of states, researchers could manage to assist governments in implementing more proper and viable strategic solutions (Deudney, D. H., 2013). Furthermore, as per Sir Halford J. Mackinder, defending his “heartland” theory about the dominance of power in the Eurasia region, the political power that can control geography, and most importantly control over the heartland of Eurasia, will accomplish dominance over their competitor states (Bassin, M. and Aksenov, K., 2006).

Empirical findings suggest that cultivating relations between states are an important factor changing the shift of power between states and give way for the emergence of new political and diplomatic powers in the international scene. In accomplishing that, states evaluate geopolitical gains from different investment projects of a broad spectrum and accordingly adjust their strategies based on the expected-forecasted outcomes.

3.1.2 Geoeconomics as a Stream of Geopolitics

Geopolitics as mentioned in section 3.1.1, study the effect geography has on forming world politics and international relations. From a similar perspective, geoeconomics has been the emerging “hot-topic” in global geography politics, as it concerns the economic relationships between states based on global geography.

Geoeconomics were first mapped by Luttwak, a security consultant who after the Cold War and the Soviet Union collapse, was persistent on reevaluating the prevailing of military power and instead defended that commerce, technological advancement, innovation and market penetration hold the predominant position in world affairs (Luttwak , 1990). This relatively new stream of geopolitics created a new approach at evaluating how geography can influence the global economy and international relations.

Luttwak argued that instead of World Politics it is now closer to World Business, since only the “world of commerce” would be affecting global relations and hierarchies if military power is disregarded. He suggests that with regard to trade policies, “threats” between states for the international fight for power are now more effective when they are of economic nature, where such consequences are more feared, rather than threats for military consequences.

He bases that on the fact that military solutions would lead to wars between states, and as weapons of mass destruction became more efficient for their purpose, they can’t be used for resolving conflicts, because they “exceeded the culminating point of utility” (Luttwak, 1990). Fear for use of nuclear weapons is what has been keeping states from seeking war as a commercial conflict resolver and instead use geoeconomic competition for such disputes.

He then further supports that a state should invest in securing alliances and promoting strategic cooperations for the purpose of handling commercial tensions. Firzli, on the other hand, argues that in order to attain geoeconomic strength, a state should invest in attaining economic self-sufficiency and attractive diversified infrastructure investments (Firzli, 2017). The author aims at investigating how these theories relate to the research.

Even though from a theoretical perspective acting “geo economically” makes sense, in practice even geoeconomically active states don't have all the power in the world of economics. Instead economics is mainly ruled by private actors who don't always have to interact with states, however political preferences and targets can often go in line with business strategies where mutual benefits and support exist (Luttwak, 1990). The private sector of an economy can act as an agent of the state and have goals in line with political ambitions of the state. For instance for large infrastructure projects, the state will need the private sector for large capital investments and management due to better specialisation, and will gain in terms of geoeconomic and political development (Firzli, 2019, Luttwak , 1990).

As an expansion of Luttwak’s initial article of 1990, he proceeded in 1999 by adding that geoeconomic competition can be accomplished by using political interventions in the form of setting below-market interest rates for state loans, loan guarantees for exporting finances or discounts, and also by issuing taxes and tariffs on imported products. Moreover, states can invest in collecting economic intelligence, research

development and market-penetrating projects and predatory finance with the use of state-guided private funding. The more offensive the measures get, as per Luttwak, the more assertive the state power will become (Luttwak, 1999).

Each strategic move however comes with a reaction of the opposing party or anyone else involved, even an unexpected reaction, thus such matters should be handled with the utmost attention before deciding on a foreign policy (Luttwak, 1978). In this framework, the cooperations and alliances the island has made with the region, with regard to hydrocarbon exploitation, have had a reaction from Turkey, which was excluded from the deal. From maritime delimitation of EEZ with Libya to releasing Turkish military vessels in the island's claimed territorial waters, that Turkey does not recognise, are examples of how Luttwak's theories relate to this research.

Assessing the country's economic state and positioning it in a broader geoeconomic agenda assists in planning, as aforementioned, a proper foreign policy. This relates to the research in the sense that the island bases its policies more on seeking strategic cooperations for exploiting its energy reserves and promoting itself in a regional economic sphere. Those cooperations and alliances could allow for a smoother exploitation of the hydrocarbon discoveries and economic benefits that come with them.

For years, Cyprus has been developing itself as an offshore financial centre, mainly in the banking and shipping sectors, and now aims to expand towards energy politics. By accomplishing that, the island can be more self-reliant, boost its economy, have a cleaner-energy exporting status and compete with existing regional energy players. The state could also have the opportunity to intervene in cases of regional energy-market imbalances through imposing higher/lower tariffs, transit fees and energy import taxes. It is therefore in the country's interest to address economic considerations and promote technological advancement and further market penetration through exploiting this new energy opportunity.

3.2 Geopolitical codes

Geopolitical codes, as per Dijkink, are "intellectual tools for practising statecraft". It is the way states place themselves in the international affairs arena (Flint, 2006). More specifically in defining a state's geopolitical code it has to be aware of its current and potential allies and enemies, considering how it can maintain the allies with whom they have common interests, while at the same time considering how to fight off any potential external enemy threats (Taylor and Flint, 2000). In addition the state should also consider the way its actions in countering the enemies and creating stronger bonds with allies, would affect its people and the global community (Taylor and Flint, 2000). These considerations form the calculations of the state's geopolitical code.

All in all they are "strategic assumptions" about how other states position themselves in the international scene. Using those assumptions, a government can direct how it can interact with the rest of the world (Dijkink, 2018). They hold great importance in formulating a country's expectations of how its general political stance can be affected when implementing geopolitical code calculations into the making of strategic foreign policy (Starr, 1992).

The geopolitical codes can be in a local, regional and global context, and depending on time, one could get ahead of the other (Okunev, 2013). In addition there are certain factors that influence the geopolitical codes of a state and they vary across states and time. For instance the US geopolitical codes before and after the are affected by the Cold War differ within the country and time, but also as compared to French geopolitical codes before and after the Cold War (Norman, 2007). Certain regional and global events make states reexamine their geopolitical codes and readjust their strategic foreign policy framework, as common geopolitical interests, ambitions and threats between states may not remain uniform in the long run.

In the case of Cyprus, its geopolitical codes mainly focus on a regional level, and differ for instance before and after the Turkish invasion, as they do for instance before and after entering the EU, or before and after discovering hydrocarbons. After the discovery of hydrocarbons, for example, the geopolitical scope of the island changed and its policies had been based on the exploitation of the reserves while at the same time strengthening geopolitical ties with Egypt, Israel, Greece, Jordan, and Palestine. These states have common economic and commercial interests to some extent, and seek securitisation as well as a channelling into the European market.

At the same time Cyprus was developing its geopolitical code to cultivate smoother diplomatic and economic relations with the region. It engaged in signing economic projects with regional allies with the promise of a nurturing future collaboration between them, and to some extent securitisation against common threats. Furthermore, regarding territorial waters disputes, Cyprus, Greece, Israel and Egypt delimited their EEZ, excluding Turkey from the accord. The island has had hostile relations with the latter for decades and seems to utilise its presence in the EU and diplomatic ties with the US and the Eastern Mediterranean region to suppress future possible threats from Turkey.

3.3 Energy trade and geopolitics

A good number of articles and research papers addressed the role of energy in regional and global politics as a form of security and regional stability. In this section, the author discusses how energy plays a role in geopolitics and how it affects conflict and regional stability.

It is widely accepted that energy resources of a state can both lead to increased security but also more conflicts between states due to clashes of interests for the utilisation of such resources. Therefore from a geostrategic perspective, assessing the impact of energy resources on the political framework and relationships between states involved is very important.

Natural gas, crude oil and other energy discoveries are almost always perceived as good news for the prosperity of the state. States engage in researching further and acquiring drilling infrastructure in search of more reserves. Exploiting gas reserves to their full potential would not only mean economic prosperity for the state, but could also become the node to strengthen energy cooperations and regional security, provided that there is “stable and cooperative political behaviour” (Adamides C., 2018). The idea is that states within such cooperations will be able to affect regional supply and demand dynamics and thus create economic benefits for themselves. On the other hand however, as will be addressed in this research,

such energy discoveries in complex geopolitical areas such as the Eastern Mediterranean, could instead cultivate more tensions and conflicts.

From an economic point of view, in addition to enhancing employment and feeding local demand, gas discoveries play an important role in getting the interest of local and foreign investors increasing operations and initiating major investments in the region. International oil and gas companies engage in financing infrastructure investments for drilling, extraction and transportation of natural gas reserves to both local and also broader regional markets, depending on volume and demand (European Parliament, 2017). Furthermore the state's attractiveness increases within the context of gas discoveries, not only because of wanting physical exploitation of energy reserves, but also in being the pillar for improved regional and international relations and security, if proper diplomacy is deployed. In practice, oil and hydrocarbon discoveries, in tense areas such as the Eastern Mediterranean, could instead be the cause for deterioration of relations between states and channel further conflict, for instance Cyprus with Turkey.

As the world we live in currently bases itself upon energy resources in powering most energy requiring operations, it is at first perceived that discoveries of energy resources are a promise for economic growth and prosperity. Those ambitions however are a far cry from the reality for most states, as the big players in the market, who control the bigger part of it, will not remain idle after the news of new oil and gas discoveries. Implications take place that can change the political dynamics of the region and instead create instability and insecurity (Tsafos, 2019). Goldthau et al suggest that among the implications is that "energy fundamentally affects regionalization processes". Furthermore he supports that oil and gas reserves play a major role in shaping regional geopolitics and intrastate relations (Goldthau, Richert and Stetter, 2020).

Nevertheless, conflict can arise not only between governments, but from all involved parties that can gain or lose from the energy trading transaction; international oil and energy companies, investors, political leaders, traders and regulating authorities. These actors often have conflicts of interest for the prevailing player that will have power over the control of energy reserves, even when dealing with interstate operations. Here, the author highlights that not only that prevailing power will have control over the gas and oil reserves, but also from a geostrategic perspective, the geographical location of certain regions allow for control over the area and observatory benefits of possible regional enemy states. The source of conflicts can be from competition over oil reserves, routes or natural gas pipelines, limited resources in states, and as will be mentioned in section 3.3.1, oil market domination and energy terrorism (Colgan, 2013).

3.3.1 Examples

This subsection explores the interplay between different states and their involvement in geopolitics led by energy trade as a tool for regional governance. The purpose is aligning previous and ongoing disputes over energy with the hydrocarbons' discovery in the island's territorial waters and showcasing the significance they could hold in affecting Cyprus' security and diplomatic relations. Considering conflicts over energy assists in recognising its role in how the diplomatic decision planning processes are being laid out.

As per Goldthau et. al., energy trade can be a key determinant to the way regional and global geopolitics are played out, as it can increase interest in certain geographical areas, and either bring economic prosperity, or instead, create tensions (Goldthau, Richert and Stetter, 2020). Some examples of such zones of geopolitical interest throughout the years are mentioned below.

The interest in Iran's oil reserves along with the unstable political relationship between Iran and Iraq led to a war between these countries back in 1980. The goal was to extend the Iraqi borders in an attempt for the energy use in Iraq's oil refining centre. The more advanced military power Iran possessed however called for the retreat of Iraqi armed forces, but when Iran later counter-attacked, it led to a more unstable environment in the region, with missile attacks to oil tankers threatening oil reserves in the Persian Gulf. Therefore many countries stationed warships in the Gulf and also financed Iraq's war leading to the earlier rejected Iranian ceasefire (Sterner, 1984).

In later years however after an arms deal between the US and Iran came to light, along with Iraq seemingly winning the war, the US switched to supporting Iraq in what they called "peacemaking operations" in favour of Iraq (Kenneth, 1991). Due to it being the second largest producer of crude oil, the domination of power over Iraq's energy reserves between Iran and the US has preserved the Middle Eastern area for the past 2 decades (US Energy Information Administration, 2021). With poorly planned strategic action, the US only managed to further damage the Iraqi political system after the Iran-Iraq war (CSIS, 2020).

Moreover, China has been one of the major players in the game of geopolitics and energy. As China has been the largest energy consumer with growing energy demand, acquiring fossil fuels has been in the best interest of the state. China has had long disputes with neighbouring states over the probability of small islands in the South China Sea containing large natural gas and oil reserves (Reuters, 2021; CSIS, 2017). The estimated amount would be enough to feed a third of China's fossil fuel demand, diversifying this way its imports from Russia, the Middle East and Africa, to local. China proceeds with drilling expeditions, to which rivals Vietnam and the Philippines are greatly opposed to, leading to great conflicts between them, as they would also benefit from exploitation of such massive energy resources (Reuters, 2021). However the Philippines government, having energy security disputes and "offending" China, decided to instead lift the ban and allow for further Chinese exploration drilling (ABC News, 2020).

Nigeria has also had long conflicts within its sovereignty, with regard to oil reserves and their exploitation by officials. Even though Nigeria is by far the larger oil producer in Africa with oil export prices around 100\$/barrel, the vast amount of corruption within the country doesn't allow for political stability and economic prosperity (Klare, 2014). That only triggers riots and the uprising of the Muslim North with militant extremist groups such as Boko Haram aiming at overthrowing political power in Nigeria (BBC, 2016).

3.5 Literature Review

Energy trade and its relationship and interplay with geo economics is a subject that attracted the attention of numerous researchers throughout the years. This subsection of the research paper will focus on

reviewing previous work done on the various subjects the thesis addresses. The purpose is to identify similar patterns to other research papers and compare to the conclusions reached in this paper.

The first to introduce geoeconomics as a stream of geopolitics, as mentioned in the previous appendices, was Luttwak (1990), in his article “From Geopolitics to Geo-Economics: Logic of Conflict, Grammar of Commerce”. He employed a “logic of commerce” and “world of business” instead of “world of politics”, into making a distinction between geoeconomics and geopolitics, where the actions of economic players and tools determine the competition between states and also form their political strategic framework. He coined that economic consequences are now of greater importance and are taken more seriously than military consequences when forming strategic alliances and employing state action. He created the framework in which many other researchers operate in and allowed for an initial assessment of how economics can influence the balance of power.

In the same context, Goldthau, Rickert and Stetter (2020) have investigated the role of energy in regionalization processes, addressing how energy resources can be the core focus of regional governance. The researchers here focused on the Eastern Mediterranean as an area of conflict and opportunity, investigating the natural gas findings in the area and the pipeline prospects for regional geopolitics and security. They referred to natural gas as their key governance object, which brings great prospects, supporting that energization is as equally important as securitization in the EastMed region. The three authors therefore expanded Luttwak’s theory of economics affecting statecraft, to energy politics, however they don’t agree with previous research that there are other processes as equally as important for regional governance, other than energy.

Similarly to Goldthau et. al., Tziarras (2019) investigated through a qualitative approach how trilateral partnerships play a role in creating regional security. The report, consisting of multiple chapters where each one contained the views of different professors and researchers, addressed the new regional geopolitics in the Eastern Mediterranean region from the perspectives of the respective states involved. The researchers evaluated the challenges, opportunities and implications for Cyprus, Turkey, Egypt, Greece and Israel from the natural gas reserves in the region, concluding that inter-state relationships are the only determinant factor in regional security, and that instead the gas findings and any action to exploit them without regional cooperation, are not likely to lead to peace.

Moran D. & Russel J.A. (2009) however in earlier research discussed energy security as a means of warfare. He concentrated on the strategic dimensions of energy security and how it can give ground to military competition in global politics. He highlights that “while the energy market is self-regulating, it is not self-defending”, thus defending it from potential challenges effectively is essential.

Building on previous research performed, Klare (2008) supports that international intrastate competition for energy resources will be a central focus of international affairs for at least the rest of the century. States as per Klare, when dealing with energy trading, in order to prevent full reliance on the big powers, should seek regional stability through appropriate cooperations between them, in the context of their international relations strategy. Such views were later confirmed by Tziarras (2019), where Klare’s views were applied on the Eastern Mediterranean region and how securitisation and conflict resolution in energy matters can exist through cooperations between states.

Nathanson R. & Levy R. (2012) evaluated the case of hydrocarbon discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean, taking a closer look at the geopolitical tensions they have caused for the region. They assessed if there are increased tensions created from it or if it is an incentive for regional collaboration. They deduced that there are enormous prospects for the region from the gas discoveries, nonetheless, the politics involved are crucial in creating a prosperous framework for their extraction and trade. Therefore they have further expanded knowledge from Klare (2008) and Moran D. & Russel J.A. (2009), which Tziarras (2019) later also confirmed.

A similar research was conducted by Niglia (2015), on protecting energy infrastructure against security challenges, assessed closely the economic impact of the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline on Albania, found that energy infrastructure is very important for a country's economy, as long as there is proper expertise and political stability, and governmental support. He also suggests that it will contribute to the economic growth of transit countries as well as assist the country's procurement of goods and services, direct and indirect employment, GDP through taxation and new skills and expertise.

Mehmet, O. & Yorucu V. (2020), worked on approaching energy in the EastMed from a more realistic point of view, where they didn't just limit it to the idealistic perspective where hydrocarbons enrich a state's dynamic capabilities. They had concluded that regional cooperations in a more sustainable energy framework are essential in realising the goal of utilising energy for economic prosperity, thus going one step further from previous research that did not assess energy sustainability.

Baroudi R., Cagan D., & Toperich S. (2020) investigated ways of resolving maritime disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean, also coining how other disputes around the world could be dealt with. They had concluded that the way forward would be for mutual international collaborations in order to reduce tensions, resolve differences over maritime boundaries and peacefully transition to a conflict-less Eastern Mediterranean. Their views and conclusions were similar to previous research, though they expanded to other regions and provided specific solutions to conflicts around the world.

In addition to previous research, Norouzi N.(2021) focused on the case of Libya and its oil-related geopolitical challenges in the Eastern Mediterranean. He further proposes a course of action for the Libyan government in achieving political stability, involving regional cooperation, however he sees that it is an aspiration that will not be accomplished. They expressed their scepticism regarding the impact of such an infrastructure investment on regional security and geopolitical prosperity, a view which didn't go in hand with other researchers' such as Klare (2008), Moran D. & Russel J.A. (2009), Nathanson R. & Levy R. (2012) and Tziaras (2019).

In the same year, Colombo S. & Soler i Lecha E., (2021) assessed the geopolitical shifts that the Middle East has witnessed in the last decade, assessing their implications for the EU and how it can strategically approach it, while protecting itself. They have concluded that using energy to embark on new diplomatic and economic affiliation with the region, could provide the grounds for preventing any escalation in conflict or instability of those countries "spilling over" to Europe. The authors accepted the views of other researchers, such as Baroudi, R., Cagan, D., & Toperich, S. (2020), Tziaras (2019) and Klare (2009), but

instead positioned the EU in the Middle Eastern region and proposed a course of action for mitigating disputes.

The literature review showcases that pipeline infrastructure for the transportation of natural gas have a significant effect on the country's geostrategic position and if treated properly can cultivate economic growth and regional prosperity. Regional security issues arise from such opportunities however but most researchers conclude that they can be overthrown with regional cooperations and energy diplomacy.

4. Situation Analysis

The fourth chapter of this research will be divided into subsections, drawing a picture of the Cypriot geostrategic position and significance in the Mediterranean. It will explain the geopolitical gravity of the island in the region. Section 4.1 will include an overview of the Cypriot economic position. In 4.2 the geostrategic complexity of the island will be introduced, where a historic background will be thoroughly discussed and furthermore in section 4.3 the author analyses the island's geopolitical relations and foreign affairs. In sub-sections 4.4 and 4.5 the author presents the energy profile of Cyprus and projected EastMed pipeline accordingly.

4.1 Cyprus Economy

This section aims at exhibiting the island's economic position as well as showcasing its preparedness to accommodate a large infrastructure energy investment such as the EastMed Pipeline. In addition it will further position the island in the geoeconomic framework discussed in earlier sections.

The aim is for the island to cooperate with the region on energy projects and satisfy its own energy demand for the purposes of power generation, heating, fuel and supporting its heavy industry. Certain geoeconomic considerations and careful planning is necessary so that the island could welcome natural gas network pipeline infrastructure.

The Cypriot government is on the more prosperous side of the Mediterranean being a high income economy with a year on year GDP growth averaging at 4.0% and inflation rate of 0.3% in 2019 data (World Bank, 2021; Eurostat, 2020). There has been a drawback in the year 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic affected all aspects of economic activity and forced both GDP and inflation to -5.8% and -0.6%, however the forecasted numbers for the year 2021 are 3.2% and 07% respectively (Eurostat, 2020; Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus, 2021). GDP in current market prices stands at €22,287.0 in 2019 and €21,000.3 in 2020, while GDP per capita is €25,270 and €23,576 millions respectively (Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus, 2021).

The main contribution to the GDP in Cyprus is from the service sector amounting to 82.7% of gross value added in 2019, industry amounted to 8%, construction to 7% and agriculture, forestry and fishing to 2.3%. Specifically tourism is the most important value added source in GDP, however financial services and real estate have also been greatly contributing in recent years (Cyprus Profile, 2020).

Cyprus managed to diversify its economic profile by becoming an international business centre. Specifically, Cyprus has been ranked 8th of the globe's 20 top "FDI Superstars" in 2018 for its FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) performance and appeal (Deloitte, 2019). Most of the FDI stock originates from Europe and is invested in the sector of "financial and insurance activities", which shows the island's specialisation in the sector (CENTRAL BANK OF CYPRUS, 2020).

Most of the FDI is channelled from the EU, €307,177.4 in 2018 and €327,652.0 in 2019, while a lesser part comes from the US, namely €41,030.6 and €41,423.6 in 2018 and 2019 respectively (CENTRAL BANK OF CYPRUS, 2020). Other FDI is mainly sourced from the Russian Federation and East Asian countries, namely China, and also to a lesser extent the Middle East. Moreover, the island saw an interest from foreign investors in the 2010's, especially Russian oligarchs, as it was viewed as a "tax haven" due to its low corporate taxing and high interest on bank account deposits, in addition to it giving easier access to European banks (MSNBC, 2013).

Cyprus has regained its credibility by credit rating agencies after surpassing the expectations post the 2013 banking crisis and managed to recapitalize its banks, issuing of government bonds of €5 billion and taking more large-scale projects have improved its FDI appeal (Deloitte, 2019). It can enhance its inward FDI even more by attracting major foreign investors that will develop their industries, place headquarters and expand their businesses within Cyprus.

Furthermore, the island is aiming at transitioning into an energy exporting country, by employing numerous energy action plans for the exploitation of the hydrocarbon discoveries in the Leviathan. With the EU's targets for a decarbonised future, it is essential that significant funds are in place for the transition of a country with heavy reliance on fossil fuels (mainly crude oil) to a less carbon-intensive energy matrix.

The island isn't producing or consuming natural gas, therefore relies on imported energy sources, mainly oil, standing at 84.92% of the total electricity generation, the rest being renewable energy sources, such as hydro and wind (Ritchie H. and Roser M., 2021). In 2020, more than 90% of the gross final energy consumption came from petroleum imports (OEC, 2020). The amount paid for importing petroleum products accounted for around 30% of its total imports and stood at 1.21 billion USD, making the island one of the "most vulnerable countries in the EU" with regard to "energy dependency and security of energy supply" (OEC, 2020; Damianos & Aloupa, 2019). For instance, refined petroleum imports have cost the island USD 1.21 billion in 2020, making it the most imported product for Cyprus that year (OEC, 2020). Its main import partners are Greece (USD 372 mil.), Israel (USD 240 mil.), Italy (USD 114 mil.), Turkey (USD 112 mil.) and China (USD 94.91nmil.) (OEC, 2020). Having to rely on imports for power generation and the monopolistic pricing of the EAC (Electricity Authority of Cyprus), puts a strain on tax-payers and creates an unstable economic environment prone to future trade shocks or imbalances.

The island spends around 8% of its GDP on imports of petroleum for its electricity generation (Cyprus Profile, 2019). Therefore the prospect of exploiting natural gas findings in the island's EEZ, in cooperation with the region, will limit the island's dependency on importing energy sources, satisfy local demand and allow for natural gas trade with the EU, therefore securing further income. Electricity prices

will be lowered, because of local production and also the use of a less carbon-intensive fuel, thus lowering the island's carbon footprint and avoiding further EU charges related to decarbonisation targets. Cyprus can further benefit from tariffs and transaction fees of exporting natural gas to European countries and thus assist its economy.

Moreover, by exploiting the natural gas resources, new opportunities and economic collaborations can be cultivated with the island's energy trade partners. As the author will discuss in section 4.3 and further, Cyprus could instigate diplomatic alliances through energy and benefit both politically and economically from building commercial partners on natural gas trade. Additionally, it would use its advanced financial and banking sectors and seek further investment opportunities through it.

4.2 Cyprus' geostrategic complexity

It has been widely accepted that over the years Cyprus owes its significance and international attention to its geostrategic position. Being an island in the NorthEast Mediterranean and giving easy access to the Middle East, Europe and Eurasia, means that controlling Cyprus and taking advantage of its geostrategic position for trade and regional control has been in the best interest of many countries since ancient ages. The island is also an interconnector of maritime routes to Caspian and Black sea on the one hand and the Middle east and Persian Gulf on the other.

Being at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, Middle East and Africa, Cyprus has been an interest to the West, for transcending into Northern African and Middle Eastern markets. In addition, it gives maritime access from Europe and the Balkans towards the Middle East through the Suez canal, where the Mediterranean connects to the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf and then further to the Indian ocean and Asia. Therefore Cyprus serves as a strategic node, where control over the island means easier observational status of the Middle East, specifically Israel, Jordan, Syria, Turkey and Lebanon.

The geostrategic position of the island thus further allows for transshipment of energy to wider markets. The pipeline will allow for direct shipment of natural gas to Europe, while other complementary projects that will be addressed in this thesis, such as an FSRU or an LNG plant onshore, will enable natural gas trade with a broader area.

4.3 Geopolitical Relations - Foreign Affairs

Throughout history, the island of Cyprus has had the interest of many, changing rulers over the ages. The island's economy and political development has been subject to conflicting interests of regional powers, thus its geopolitical ambitions depend upon power shifts in the area and not vis-a-vis its own targets. The situation intensifies in the case where hydrocarbon discoveries are put into the equation. The region's ambitions of exploiting the natural gas reserves on top of existing regionalisation issues Cyprus is faced with, has created another reason for tensions in the area, affecting economic cooperations.

The island of Cyprus has been engaging in official diplomatic relations with foreign states since its independence from the British in 1960. In this sub question the author will provide an outlook of the political, economic and societal interrelationships of the island with other countries, for the better understanding of their interrelationships and how they play out with regard to section 5 of this thesis.

4.3.1 Cyprus - US Relations

The US government has been involved in diplomatic operations with the Cypriot government shortly after the island's independence (U.S Department of State, 2021). The US feels strongly about the Mediterranean realising the solving of the Cyprus Problem with Turkey and has been supporting efforts and negotiations in favour of finding a solution. The US provides security to the island through mutual cooperations all the while supporting military, trade, logistic, educational, energy, financial and investment operations on the island (U.S Department of State, 2021).

The interest of the American superpower lies within its great interest in controlling the region by having observatory and military rights over both the Middle East and most importantly being able to counterattack the other superpower's influence in the area; Russia (U.S Department of State, 2021). Furthermore the US has been using intelligence from the spy radars on two of British sovereign base areas on the island, namely Royal Airforce (RAF) in Akrotiri and RAF in mount Olympos(highest point, on the Troodos mountain), in monitoring communications in the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern and Mediterranean Europe, the Balkans and Russia (Georgiou, 2012). Cyprus has been serving as a "listening post" of electronic intelligence for both Britain and the US in monitoring the area and adjusting their strategic planning based on real-time patterns, signals for military operations and techniques employed by those states (Georgiou, 2012). Additionally NSA (National Security Agency) reportedly used Crypto AG's backdoor equipment for over 20 years for listening in on "all diplomatic correspondence" of the island up until 1992 when this came out in public (BBC News, 2020; Georgiou, 2012).

In 2020 the US decided to supposedly further support the island's security by providing and funding extensive military training for the Republic of Cyprus, as part of the two states' "expanding security relationship" as per Pompeo, which only angered the US' NATO ally, Turkey (Alarabiya News, 2020). After ending the arms embargo in 2019, the Turkish government sees it unfit for the future cooperation of Northern and Southern Cyprus in search of a solution to the Cyprus problem, that military training is provided by the US since it will only worsen the relationship of the 2 states (Aljazeera, 2020).

4.3.2 Cyprus - UK Relations

The big player in Cyprus however is the UK and not the US. Britain has been using the island's geostrategic position in alleviating its expansive purposes for centuries. It has had a long interest in Cyprus and asserted dominance over it throughout the years. From expanding the British colony to the island, enforcing UK language, education, road and legal system, creating peacemaking operations of the UN, granting the island "independence", and constantly strengthening military presence and diplomatic bonds with Cyprus, Britain keeps ensuring it's control over the island doesn't falter. Having such strong

bases on the island greatly assisted in strategic planning of both the US and UN since the Cold-War, as intelligence gathering was served with a silver spoon, on a golden plate (Katsineris, 1993).

As mentioned in previous appendices, Great Britain has sovereign bases on multiple parts of the island in order to ensure security with Turkey, however they have been mainly used in military and spy operations over the broader area, listening in on corporate, state and regional correspondence, and transmitting it into other EU states such as Germany, Italy France and as the author mentioned above, the US government. Furthermore, the UK's sovereign bases in dhékalia; second largest uk electronic intelligence in Ayios Nikolaos station and one of the largest spying stations worldwide, and Akrotiri's RAF, biggest British base outside of UK, along with RAF radar systems employed in Mount Troodos, enable the UK's permanent military presence, monitoring and control in the broader region (PSEK, n.d.; Georgiou, 2012; UK Parliament, 2008). Therefore Britain's prominent position on the island is expected to remain as such for the years to come.

4.3.3 Cyprus - Russia Relations

Over the years, since the Cypriot independence and establishment of Russian-Cypriot diplomatic relations, the Russian Federation has been involved in economic, culture, trade, tourism, military and financial activities on the island (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2008; BBC News, 1998). Russia saw an opportunity in the island's geostrategic position while Cyprus officials for many years have seen that being under "Russias' wing" would yield security against Turkey and any other probable regional threats (Cyprus Mail, 2021; Krasnov, Oposhnynskaya, Artiukh 2019).

The rather smooth relationship between the two parties developed against the greatest interest of Turkey, the US, the EU and Britain, however Russia's general compliance with UN regulations and constitutions over the island have left little grounds for official conflict (Krasnov, Oposhnynskaya, Artiukh 2019). Needless to say, Russia has also been serving its geopolitical interests by strongly supporting any conflict resolution and attempts for solution of the Cyprus problem, in addition to heavily investing its capital in Cyprus. After all, any foreign interference of either the EU, US or UN for the solution of the Cyprus dispute would most certainly lead to Russia being in an unfavourable position within the region (Artamonova, 2011). Furthermore, being aware of US and UN targets for world domination through domination of the East Mediterranean area by using Cyprus as a geostrategic node for both military and commercial operations, Russian government is persistent on the efforts of "protecting its influence and interests" by maintaining close relationships with the island (Indian Council of World Affairs, 2015).

Also Russia accounts for a big part of FDI in Cyprus as part of their bilateral economic relationship, in addition to the Russian government's supply of oil to the fossil-fuel dependent island (Oposhnynskaya, Artiukh 2019). Cyprus has been used as a tax-haven and therefore a "wealth anchorage of protection" for Russian capital investment firms and oligarchs after the fall of the Soviet Union (Artamonova, 2011, Indian Council of World Affairs, 2015). Cyprus' perfect geostrategic position along with a business-friendly environment for foreign investments, taken from the Russian "shortcomings in the economic system", creates the perfect destination for russian investors (Rajorshi, 2013).

Moreover, the island had opposed sanctions (on weapons, energy and finance) the EU, with support of the US, had placed upon the Russian government in 2014 during the Ukrainian crisis, as it would initially harm the relationship with its long-term ally Russia, but also Cyprus' involvement could harm the island from the side of the US (The Guardian, 2014; Euractiv, 2016). Accounts of common interest from both parties have been evident since the island's independence, however the EU and UN's power over the island's operations. Cyprus' fear of not abiding by the EU thus causing an uproar that could involve the international players to take action, restricts better cooperation with Russia (Indian Council of World Affairs, 2015).

4.3.4 Cyprus - Middle East Relations

The island has had complicated relationships with the Middle East over the years, some faltering while others improving over time. Geopolitical events along with oil and natural gas discoveries and the benefits of cooperations between regional states over the control and exploitation of the natural resources' rich part of the continent, and with promises of regional security with the appropriate cooperation with the big players, have been in the greatest interest of the bigger part of the past few decades. The common enemy, Turkey, has held the states in the region connected.

Starting with the relationship with Egypt, the two states have shared a common interest in exploiting natural gas resources in the Levantine basin and exporting them into both the EU and maybe with further capital resources onto other continents (FinancialMirror, 2009). While in Christofias' presidency, Cyprus had developed fundamental relationships with regional states, Egypt included, in an effort for securing the island from Turkey with stronger bilateral cooperations (Allafrica, 2012; Daily News Egypt, 2014). Cyprus and Egypt, along with ally; Greece, have held summits for mutual trilateral cooperation for matters involving tourism, hydrocarbons exploitation and major energy infrastructure projects that not only economically benefit the summit parties, but also unify them against Turkey (PIO Cyprus, 2017). Furthermore the three states often engage in joint military exercises that concern the air force, naval and special forces training to further promote their trilateral relationship and enhance security (Cyprus Ministry of Defence, 2021).

Seeing the island's relationship from a Palestinian and Israeli perspective, as per Scheindlin, the two and the Cypriot government have more in common that would appear at first(Scheindlin, 2016). They both have had long term ongoing conflicts with neighbouring states, namely Palestine with Israel and Cyprus with Turkey, however similarly to the Cyprus dispute, a resolution will take place when and if both parties want it to and agree upon it (Rice, 2016; Oded, 2002). In Addition to the conflict, both Cyprus and Palestine have had high involvement from the British and other international players, in addition to military operations and British sovereign bases in multiple parts of both states (Scheindlin, 2016, Ronen, 2004).

Like the Greek-Cypriots on the island, Israel appears to have more disincentives rather than incentives in reaching a final agreement through negotiations with Palestine, as unlike Palestine and Turkey, Cyprus and Israel both share in common a more advanced economy and support from the big powers (Scheindlin, 2016). This leads to them hoping for a "better deal" out of negotiations, which only slows down the

process even more, leading to more conflicts with their counterparties and thus more political instability for the region.

Furthermore, the relations between Cyprus and Israel have been getting stronger and stronger especially after their common vision of collaborating in becoming major natural gas exporters. Israel is now Cyprus' closest ally and their relationship is often being referred to as a "brotherhood" bond, as they collaborate in various state matters, namely military, economic, financial, educational, cultural, environmental and political (The National Interest, 2012). Being in the generally unstable region of the Middle Eastern peninsula, it is of great importance for the two states to maintain regional cooperations and allies, thus admittedly the island's relations with its neighbouring states, excluding of course Turkey, are cordial.

As part of its foreign policy, the island has engaged in many bilateral cooperations with its neighbouring states in order to improve stability and security mainly against common enemies such as Turkey. The goal that these states aim to accomplish is obtaining a stronger presence in the region and positioning themselves in the international agenda. With the hydrocarbon discoveries, states in the region saw that strategic cooperation in energy matters and mutual exploitation of the natural gas reserves could promote themselves in a regional economic sphere.

Cyprus has been cultivating allies, especially with regard to energy alliances, also through trilateral agreements to boost regional stability and security. Those include Cyprus-Greece-Jordan, Cyprus-Greece-Israel, Cyprus-Greece-Lebanon, Cyprus-Greece-Palestine and Cyprus-Greece-Egypt, while at the same time there is also great possibility of Cyprus creating additional trilateral partnerships with Greece and Malta, Syria, Italy, and maybe France and the US in the near future (Tziaras et al., 2019; Financial Mirror, 2018).

4.3.5 Cyprus - EU Relations

Cyprus joined the EU in 2004 in an effort to improve its relationship with the continent in addition to seeking further protection and security against Turkey's constant attempts in sabotaging the island's wellbeing. Over the years of Cyprus' membership in the EU, the European Commission has been supportive of Cyprus in terms of economics, education and politics, especially with regard to providing support in the island establishing a proper and peaceful solution to the Cyprus problem (Drevet, Theophanous, 2013). The EU mainly has an observer-status in the negotiations between Cyprus and Turkey over the solution of the long-term dispute, nevertheless it has supported and defended the island.

The EU, like any other entity, doesn't recognize the Northern side of Cyprus as a sovereign state and cannot approve any of Turkey's constant efforts and aspirations to join the EU before Cyprus and Turkey reach a mutual solution, therefore giving Ankara more incentives for cooperation (Reuters, 2021; Reuters, 2020). What shouldn't be overlooked though is the EU's interest in approving Turkey as a member state, mainly for trading purposes, which only stimulates a more complicated situation with Greece and Cyprus. Both countries have requested that the EU imposes sanctions on Turkey, which the commission disapproved of, in addition to it not managing to restrict Turkey's exploratory drills in Cyprus EEZ

(Reuters, 2020). The EU, however, seeks to redirect its natural gas imports away from Russia, therefore hydrocarbon discoveries in the island's EEZ, could be an opportunity for diversification of imports.

4.3.6 Cyprus - Turkey Relations

As it was well analysed in the above appendices, the island has close relationships with its neighbouring states, however Turkey is the one great exception with whom Cyprus has a hostile relationship with.

Any “peace-making” attempts by international organisations in solving the Cyprus dispute, as well as the British sovereign areas and the Green Line, instead of ensuring the two sides will be discouraged to seek conflict, they further divided the people of Cyprus and promoted hatred from both sides, be it Turkish-Cypriots or Greek-Cypriots. Turkish-Cypriots are more inclined in finding a compromising solution to the Cyprus dispute, as they seek independence from Ankara. Moreover, with nearly 3 generations having lived their whole lives on the island, Turkish-Cypriots don't see Turkey as their home, as they have different beliefs, interests and social preferences. The people of the island feel more Cypriot than Turkish, and as evidence has shown over the years, with special attention to the Annan plan in 2004 (64.91% in favour), they anticipate the reunification of the island (Lordos, 2004).

However Greek-Cypriots' nationalist feelings and lack of understanding the political situation they have been in for around 50 years doesn't allow them to compromise for something less-than-ideal, which to them is retaking of the Northern part of Cyprus and removal of all Turkish-Cypriots, along with asserting a uniform Greek-Cypriot ruling, religion, education, legal and financial system. The island had been occupied by the Turks, thus no matter what the solution to the Cyprus problem will be, they won't have full benefits, as they aspire to (Morelli V., 2011).

The discovery of hydrocarbons in 2011 off the coast of Cyprus has created further tensions between the two long-term rivals and led to even more political instability. Turkey constantly threatened the island's security, be it by illegal drilling expeditions in the Cyprus EEZ and also with Turkish on-ground and naval military forces (Tziarras, 2019). Moreover Turkey's foreign policy mainly consists of border, commercial and territory expansions and also defending Muslim states as a “big brother and protector”, in addition to its aspirations in becoming a “little America” (Mufti, 2011; Tziarras, Harchaoul, 2021).

Furthermore, Turkey's geopolitical codes are not only focused on the region, but instead the state aims at expanding at an international level and becoming a global power having economic influence over other states. In defining their geopolitical code, Turkey has to ask who their allies and enemies are, how it can improve relations with the former and how to counter the latter. Cyprus has been a geopolitical enemy of Turkey and limiting each other's influence and tensions could be accomplished by resolving existing conflicts, however with conflicts of interest, such as the hydrocarbon exploitation ambitions, it is doubtful. Within Turkey's geopolitical code, the potential of just Cyprus extracting and benefiting from the natural gas trading and subsequent income, is considered a threat. Not having cultivated strong relationships with the region, while needing to be included in the natural gas exploitation, Turkey has started building economic partnerships with other states.

Also, the Greek-Turkish relationship and geostrategic advantage Greece has by the use of its Aegean islands, increases the leverage Greece has for any surprise attacks on Turkey, thus making Cyprus an important geostrategic “asset” for Turkey to “establish a clear offence superiority over any possible greek advances (Kalin, 2011; Tziarras, 2018). Yet the gas discoveries in the Levantine basin along with Cyprus strengthened ties with the region excluding Ankara from the whole equation, as expected fired up more tension and conflict between the 2 states (Tziarras, 2019).

The disputes between Cyprus and Turkey are not limited to earlier conflicts. Currently Cyprus, Turkey and Greece have conflicting maritime EEZ claims. Greece, Cyprus, Lebanon, Egypt and Israel have signed accords for delimitation of their EEZ, leaving Turkey with very limited EEZ. Since Turkey does not recognise the ROC, it does not recognise its sovereignty and territorial waters claims. It thus proceeded to sign an MoU with Libya on delimitation of its EEZ and the continental shelf between them, which however overlaps with Cypriot and Greek claimed EEZ. The complication however is that the hydrocarbons lay in both Turkish and Cypriot claimed waters, which creates more tensions as to who will exploit them and enhance its geoeconomic position.

4.4 Energy Profile and Vasilikos Port

4.4.1 Cyprus Energy Profile

Cyprus is an electricity isolated and fossil-fuel reliant country. Even though the island has the highest potential for powering its operations using solar power, its reliance and consumption of fossil fuels remains the highest in the EU (Cyprus Profile, 2019). The inability of the island to domestically supply for local energy consumption required for feeding its power plants in Dhekelia, Moni and Vasilios, makes it seek energy imports from other countries, mainly Russia.

There are currently 3 power stations on the island that produce thermal energy, which is then converted into electricity. Vasilikos, Dhekelia and Moni. In 2019 measures, the energy mix of Cyprus consisted of 90.5% of fossil fuels, which are coal, oil and gas oil, while only 9.5% of renewable energy sources were used, which consist of solar, wind, hydro, biomass and biofuel (Electricity Authority Cyprus, 2020). More specifically, apart from oil, which is the main energy source for the island, the other energy consumed are wind, solar and coal, about 10 times less than heavy oil. The chart below illustrates the island’s annual primary energy consumption, measured in terawatt per hour (TWh).

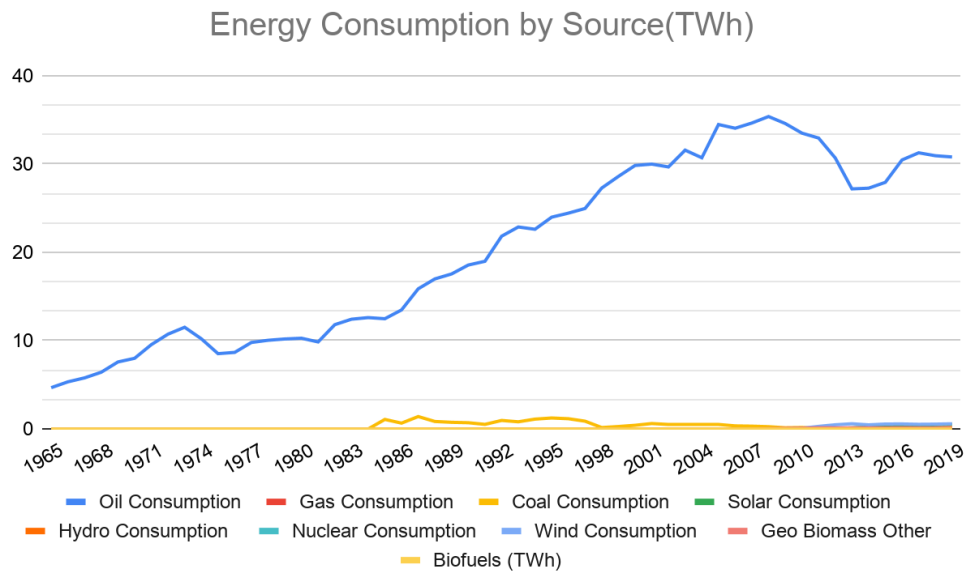


Chart 3: Energy Consumption by Source
Source: OurWorldInData.org, 2020

The island is hoping to exploit the gas reserves found in its EEZ as much as possible, as it is far from complying with the European Commission's plan for the reduction of carbon emissions. So far the government of Cyprus spends around 8% of its GDP to pay for its electricity needs by importing heavy oil and coal (Cyprus Profile, 2019).

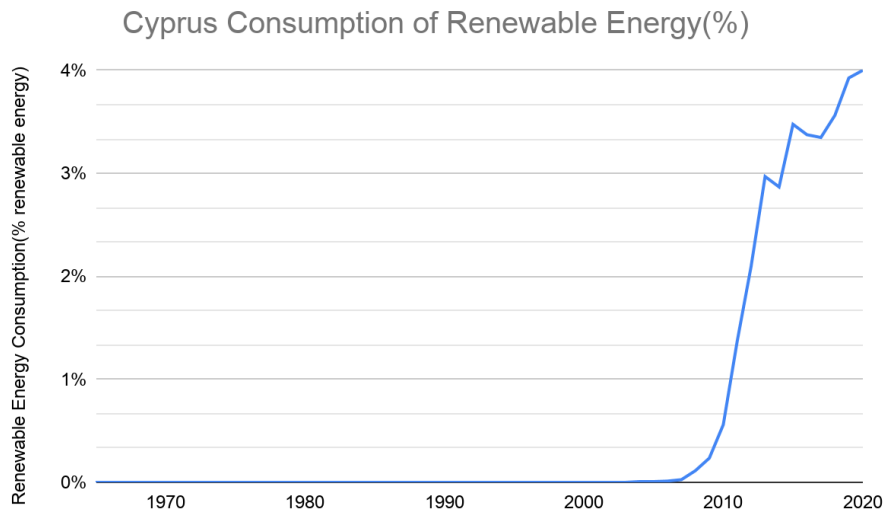


Chart 4: Share of Renewable Energy Consumption in Cyprus, measured in terawatt per hour
Source: OurWorldInData.org, 2020

Chart 4 represents the percentage of renewable energy consumed when combining energy for electricity, transport and heating systems per year. The consumption is measured in terawatt per hour (Our World in Data, 2020). Comparing the year-on-year energy consumption while also minding the energy source, it can be drawn that oil is the main source of energy used, however in the past couple of decades, there has been a rising trend with the use of renewable energy sources, namely wind and solar. While fossil fuels, namely coal and heavy oil consist of the bigger part of the island's energy consumption, their imported volumes are slowly reducing; almost 10% reduction from 2010's 98.62% to 2020's 88.81%, as renewable energy is slowly but steadily increasing (Richie, Roser, 2020). Furthermore, the promise of ending the island's energy isolation by using the EuroAsia and EuroAfrica interconnectors, and exploiting natural gas reserves off the coast of Cyprus, seems to relieve Cyprus of additional costs, and moreover produce additional revenues from exporting it.

The plan of exploiting natural gas reserves, which is the least polluting for the environment energy source, adds to the EU's targets for reduction of emissions. Moreover, in compliance with the EU's targets, the island is working on reusable energy sourcing systems which are expected to satisfy some of the island's electricity needs (Cyprus Mail, 2021). Specifically, as per Pilides, minister of Energy, Commerce and Industry, it is estimated that by 2030 the renewable energy use will reduce current emissions by 40%, where the contribution of solar energy will be around 25%.

4.4.1 Port of Vasilikos

Another factor worth mentioning is the port of Vasilikos and its contribution to the Cypriot economy and also to the plans the island has for it in regional development with the exploitation of hydrocarbons. The port of Vasilikos is an industrial port leased by the Cyprus Port Authority to Vassiliko Cement Works and serves mainly oil and bulk cargo (Kapsis, 2021; Vassiliko Cement, n.d). The port imports mainly coal, chemicals and petcoke and exports cement, wheat, soil, gravel, scrap iron, gypsum and clinker(Shipnext, n.d). Annually the port handles approximately 270 vessels and 435,000 tons of cargo (Shoham Shipping, n.d). Its oil terminal operated by the Cyprus Port Authority is used in feeding the local main Electricity Authority Power Station also situated in Vassilikos with the use of submarine pipelines that unload the cargo of moored vessels (Shoham Shipping, n.d). The 1478 megawatt Vasiliko oil-powered station produces two thirds of the island's energy needs, making it one of the EU's black sheep of energy transition targets (France24, 2021).

The main contribution the port of Vassilikos offers is the VTTV oil terminal, which stimulated the island's geoeconomic position into the European and global agenda (Cyprus Mail, 2020). In the Eastern Mediterranean region, the VTTV is the biggest oil terminal and works as an energy hub for international transshipments of non-renewable energy resources (Gold News, 2019). The transshipment terminal, a member of the Netherlands based VTTI Group Global network, has been in operation since 2014 and has since worked towards becoming a regional fuel hub and serving Asia, Europe and Middle Eastern countries such as Israel and Lebanon by 2023 (Kapsis, 2021). The oil terminal's facilities include 28 tank storages with a capacity of 545,000 cubic metres, road tanker loading facilities and 4 oil terminal jetties that offer deep water access for vessels up to Suezmax (Shoham Shipping, n.d., VTTI, n.d). The services

provided include harbour, coastal and deep sea water towage, salvage, mooring and launch boat services (Vasiliko Terminal, n.d).

The terminal has tanks used for storage of oil products, such as gasoil, diesel oil, gasoline, jet fuel, kerosene, naphthalene and kerosine. Raw materials that need to meet EU's import requirements are processed, resized or blended in the VTTV facility and then exported. Additionally fuel oil from the Black Sea, transported in smaller vessels in order to fit the Bosphorus shallow waters and transported to Vassilikos where at the VTTV "bulk is built" and then shipped through the Suez canal and into other regions such as in Asia (Cyprus Profile, 2020).

For instance, refined petroleum has been the main importing and exporting product handled at the terminal. Exports in 2020 figures reached USD 462 mil. and main destinations were to Libya (USD 182 mil.), Lebanon (USD USD 88.8 mil.), South Korea (USD 63.2 mil.), India (USD 32.4 mil.) and Kenya (USD 27.7 mil.) (OEC, 2020). Imports in the same year were from Greece (USD 372 mil.), Israel (USD 240 mil.), Italy (USD 114mil.), Turkey (USD 112 mil.) and China (USD 94.91nmil.), making refined petroleum the most imported product for the island that year (OEC, 2020). By expanding and diversifying to natural gas markets, through exploiting its hydrocarbons reserves, Cyprus could further promote itself as a regional energy player.

Moreover the facility's geostrategic location in Cyprus offers connectivity with the Black Sea and markets in Europe, the Middle East and Asia, therefore allowing for prospects of the island to become an energy exporter to the region, and as per the local government, provide security in the natural gas industry in the East Mediterranean (Cyprus Mail, 2020). In addition there are talks over the expansion of the oil and gas activities of the Vasilikos port to the main cargo and leisure port of Limassol (Kapsis, 2021). Moreover, with the island's geographic location, there is also the opportunity to exploit natural gas reserves through building LNG facilities for expanding by vessels to broader energy markets, thus working like the VTTV transshipment terminal, but for gas products instead.

4.5 The EastMed Pipeline

4.5.1 Hydrocarbon Discoveries

The initial discoveries of hydrocarbons in the East Mediterranean, in Tamar, Zohr, and Levantine basins between 2003 and 2019, have accumulated great interest in this up and coming region. The region previously not investigated for oil and natural gas resources, due to lack of funds and the general political instability it has, had suddenly gained international interest. The initial enthusiasm took an even wider turn when natural gas reserves were discovered in 2009 by Noble Energy, a US-based oil company, in Tamar field, off the coast of Israel, altering the dynamics of the area due to its 280 billion cubic metres of natural gas reserves, biggest discovery in the region at the time, buried 1700 metres deep (Tziarras, 2019).

What followed was an eager wave of drillings in search of more hydrocarbon reserves in the region, which led to the 2010 massive discovery of the Leviathan gas field with a capacity of 620 billion cubic

metres in natural gas, and therefore estimations of the reserve capacity in Tamar to 305 billion cubic metres (Hafner, 2016; Derek Drilling, 2020; Graeber, 2017). Later, in 2015, Zohr gas field in the Egyptian Economic Zone, owned by Eni and having around 850 billion cubic metres of natural gas, making it the biggest one in capacity within the region, further spiked global interest (Eni, 2015).

Henceforth inspired by the probable promise of fossil fuel import independence, the Cypriot government proceeded with exploratory drillings of it's own and came across the discovery of Aphrodite gas field in its EEZ in 2011, containing 140 billion cubic metres of natural gas reserves (Oikonomopoulos, Stambolis 2012, Tagliapietra 2013). The discovery was made by Noble Energy and Delek Group in Block 12. Consequently after the Cypriot government allowed further exploration rights to Eni, Total, Qatar Petroleum International, Kogas, Delek Group, Shell and ExxonMobil, what it led to was Eni's discovery of Calypso 1 in 2019 and later the Glaucus gas field by Qatar Petroleum and ExxonMobil, characterised as a "game-changer discovery" for Cyprus, containing approximately 226.5 and 142 to 277 billion cubic metres accordingly (ExxonMobil, 2019; Eni, 2018; Xinhua, 2018).

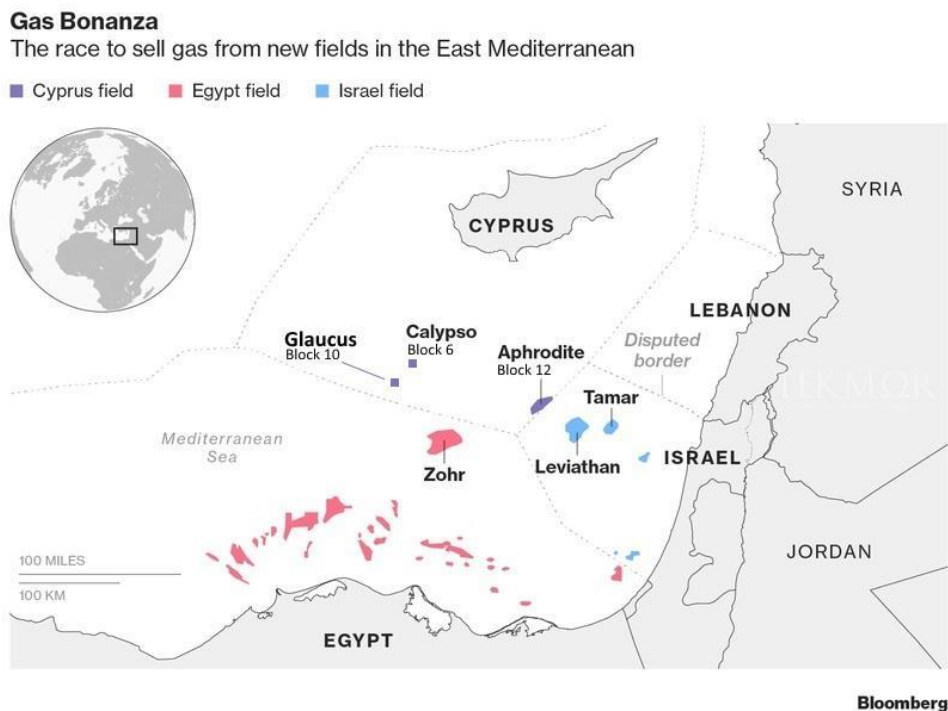


Figure 2: Natural Gas Fields in the Eastern Mediterranean
Source: Bloomberg, 2018; later edited by TEKMOR MONITOR Cyprus, 2019

4.5.2 EastMed Pipeline

The EastMed pipeline is of great regional and international interest, as it is expected to export natural gas from the Cyprus EEZ Aphrodite reservoir into the EU through an underwater pipeline (Financial Mirror, 2018). The plan is for natural gas reserves to be transported from the gas field through the Greek island of Crete, into the mainland of Greece, from there to Italy and then feeding European countries. It is a

designated Project of Common Interest by the European Commission, as it is expected to “lower the administrative costs” and “accelerate the planning and permit granting”(European Commission, n.d).The EU shows its support for the project, as it can provide the ability to divert dependency on Russian, Algerian and Nigerian imports of natural gas in addition to create “stability and prosperity in the Middle East” (Tziarras, 2019; Stamouli 2018; TEKMOR MONITOR Cyprus, 2019).

The technical feasibility and economic viability of the project have been approved by the European Commission, therefore after the final funding decision planned for 2022 is made, the pipeline is expected to be completed by 2025(European Parliament, 2017; IGI Poseidon, 2021). The expected cost of the pipeline is estimated to be around 6 to 7 billion USD (Reuters, 2020). As per IGI Poseidon, the 1900 km pipeline, 700 km onshore and 1200 km offshore, reaching 3 km depth with the capacity of 10 billion cubic metres per year, consists of the following parts;

- ❖ Compressor stations in Cyprus and the greek island of Crete
- ❖ A 200 km offshore pipeline from the gas field to Cyprus
- ❖ A 700 km offshore pipeline from Cyprus to Grete
- ❖ A 400 km pipeline from Crete to the mainland of Greece in Peloponnese and there onto West Greece

From then onwards the plan is for the pipeline to be interconnected with the offshore Poseidon pipeline then connecting to the IGB pipeline (IGI Poseidon, 2014; Edison, n.d). Key consumers in this situation would be the consigned countries, where they will be able to feed local production, along of course with other European states, where the pipeline will be able to feed around 4% of annual EU consumption (CER, 2020).



Figure 3: Pipeline Projects in the Mediterranean
Source: Edison

With a promise of economic prosperity, energy security and stability simulated states in the region to seek neighbouring cooperations and alliances. Cyprus, Egypt, Palestine, Israel, Greece, Italy, Jordan 's common goal of the exploitation of the natural gas reserves in a smooth manner and as part of their mutual cooperation for the pipeline development and beyond, managed to establish the EastMed Gas Forum in 2018, headquartered in Cairo and hosted in Cyprus in 2022 (Winter and Lindenstrauss 2019). It is however not a stand-alone intention of collaborating on energy, but to also strengthen their ties in order to accomplish common geostrategic goals, such as securitisation in the region (Winter O. & Lindenstrauss G., 2019). With this shared socioeconomic interest, the consigned states have an ambition of forming the basis for mutual economic, social and political prosperity.

The intrastate collaboration between regional states along with the immense support from both the EU and the US forge a path for the improvement of how the international eye looks at the Middle East as a place of general instability. Henceforth the bilateral, trilateral and regional energy-involving partnerships pave the path of opportunity for increased future collaborations and create a regional long-term conflict resolution framework.

From a Cypriot and Greek perspective, this collaboration could also mean a more dynamic cooperation in matters of securitisation in the region against common rivals (Tziarras et al., 2019). The control Turkey has had over the Northern part of the island along with its attempts for unrestrained geostrategic action in the region and constant attempts of sabotaging national operations, are all assumed by the Cypriot government to diminish over time with the strengthening of Cyprus' new energy and security aimed partnerships (Savvides, 2015). In addition, for Israel, the participation in the forum could very well become a benchmark the "end of its regional isolation", while for Palestine and Egypt, this initiative can be a great start for overcoming it's internal conflicts, in addition to securing funds in a process to end their financial crises and internal imbalances (Winter O. & Lindenstrauss G., 2019). Furthermore this creates an opportunity for Israel and Egypt's relationship to peacefully transition to economic and political collaboration through the gas export from Israel to Egypt, which is now still idle (TEKMOR MONITOR Cyprus, 2019).

5 Scenario Generation through Content Analysis

In this chapter of the research the author works on assessing content from think tanks, government publications, opinions from the academic and research cycles, and then deducing narratives based on a critical assessment of how external events to the EastMed pipeline are expected to eventually influence the geostrategic position of Cyprus, if they indeed do. The author will address the implications of each preexisting scenario and therefore suggest strategic recommendations.

The main events that will be addressed in this section revolve around multiple topics. Firstly, tensions and consecutive war between Russia and Ukraine could create a window of opportunity for the EU to redirect its natural gas imports through the EastMed pipeline. A change in the course of geostrategic balance, will be evaluated. The second scenario revolves around the European Union's attempt to lower greenhouse gas emissions and achieve carbon neutrality by the year 2050. A sustainable way the island could tackle

adapting to it could be by employing blue hydrogen through processing of natural gas and its transportation in the pipeline. In addition, the probability of the pipeline increasing tensions with regard to the delimitation of EEZ between Turkey and Greek island Kastellorizo, situated 580km from the Greek mainland, could change the regional geopolitical framework, therefore the author addresses this case as well. The fourth scenario evaluates the prospects of an LNG plant being developed on the island of Cyprus, in the existing Vasilikos port and terminals, taking into account the current infrastructure developments undergoing in the plant.

5.1 Scenario 1: EU sees EastMed pipeline as means for redirecting natural gas imports from Russia amidst war

Russia is Europe's main natural gas supplier. Tensions however with its bordering state have created an unstable energy trading environment for Europe, which seeks to diversify its imports. The EastMed pipeline would thus seem a more promising alternative. The need of the EU to feed the constantly rising natural gas demand, would then incentivize the promotion of the EastMed pipeline, with the European Commission actively collaborating with the consignees of the EastMed Gas Forum, and providing more funds in order to see its earliest completion (Eurostat, 2020). In this scenario the author will evaluate how the pipeline could affect the island's geostrategic position in the framework of utilising hydrocarbon resources and providing the EU an alternative solution to natural gas imports.

Geopolitical tensions can create major international disputes and change the course the world is shaped. A war for instance between one of the major geopolitical powers with another state, could as well disturb the global balance of power and reshape regional stability and energy trade. That is the case of the Russian and Ukrainian dispute. After the fall of the Soviet Union and separation of Ukraine from Russia, there have been tensions over multiple subjects, as seemingly insignificant as Ukraine's name in Russia being "Украина", literally translated as "on the side", meaning over the border of Russia (American Foreign Service Association, 2021; translation: author).

As mentioned in appendix 3.3.1, 150,000 Russian troops had been stationed on the borders of Russian and Ukrainian soil in order to be prepared and react to any unprecedented or impulsive action from Ukraine (Reuters, 2022; American Foreign Service Association, 2021). Ukraine has had its hopes up and heavily bets on US support to the Ukrainian government, maintaining optimism that it will be in the American superpower's greatest interest that Ukraine gets justice, therefore the Ukrainian president had been openly stating that the US understands Ukraine better than anyone, and whom will therefore successfully and permanently end the "occupation in Ukrainian territory" (Brookings, 2021). While the US is indeed interested in using Ukraine as a stepping stone to transition into the EU market and maintain a political presence in the area, however even in a war situation, it is doubtful that the US takes an assertive stance in the whole situation and supports Ukraine unconditionally.

In a similar context, the EU is playing an unfavourable card to Russia as it has been keen on looking for an opportunity to diversify its natural gas supply for many years in an effort to reduce reliance on Russian gas imports, along with wanting to align some of its interests with the opposing super power; the US.

Furthermore, NATO's "freedom of movement" getting weaker the more Russia explores its military power in the eastern Mediterranean became a credible threat to the members and especially the US power over the area (Carnegie, 2021). Sanctions on Russia could be a blessing in disguise however, since it could show Russia that NATO, the EU and US can diversify and don't rely on Russia as much as it hopes, but it could also be the cause for more severe tensions on the part of Russia towards the EU. Russia could as well "switch" the handle on the piped gas to Europe "off", leaving the EU out in the cold, therefore, the EU has been careful in taking action, as not to further robust its relations with Russia but also risk gas imports, which it still relies on (Chatham House, 2021; Deutsche Welle, 2021).

Given that Russia is the EU's main natural gas supplier, along with NATO members ganging up on Russia and the EU applying sanctions, already had disrupted its gas supplies, leaving the EU in a vulnerable position of seeking imports from elsewhere. The initial fears the EU has had after the 2014 Russian-Ukrainian crisis where member states were bound by their dependency on solely Russian gas and the "monopolistic pricing" Gazprom (Russian gas giant, supplying 1/3 of EU's natural gas) sets, can be diverted to what the the Eastern Mediterranean has to offer (New York Times, 2016).

Following the effect of "non-paper", with the US withdrawing support for the EastMed pipeline, many researchers support that the US couldn't have chosen a worse strategic move in addressing the Russian-Ukrainian dispute. Cohen A., a political scientist, has characterised it as "a disastrous decision that imperils European security and opens the door for further Russian energy hegemony in European gas markets" (The Hill, 2022). He emphasises that it doesn't align with EU security concerns but instead may further cause tensions in the EastMed region, by supporting Turkey and its tactics. He therefore insists that it is crucial that the Biden administration "reinstates support" for the EastMed pipeline, and supports regional cooperations for the project's safe and timely completion.

Coman A., an Israeli economic specialist, strongly supports the idea that the EU must utilise the EastMed pipeline for natural gas imports, through taking advantage of a bad situation and turning it around. He suggests that in the medium term what the pipeline could offer the EU is "a phenomenal option/solution" as it will allow bypassing dependency on Russian gas. In addition he pointed out that the benefits from the pipeline could provide "a lifeline" to the participating parties (EMFG), implying economic advancement and overall state attractiveness in the global outlook (The Medialine, 2022). He characterised it as "a brilliant opportunity for Israel" to turn the attention to the pipeline. Adding to that Israeli politician Yuval Steinitz, commented "In this time of dramatic rise in energy prices worldwide, and of severe shortages of natural gas in Europe, it is of immense importance to promote Israel's ability to export gas directly to Europe through pipelines that cross the Mediterranean", inferring the urgency of construction of the pipeline (The Jerusalem Post, 2022).

The EU is looking for alternatives to redirect from Russian gas supply and supports increasing imports from Italy through various routes but underlines among others the EastMed pipeline as a solution (Euronews, 2022). Bloch A. and Saber I., research assistants at Brookings, a DC based think tank, propose that the way forward would be for the EU and US jointly work on de-escalating tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean and actively participate in the EMFG. That way they can accomplish a safer environment for energy trading in the region and also reduce the risk of Russian-Turkish relations strengthening which will only enrich Russia's dominance in the area (Lawfare, 2021). They further

support that the EU should more closely support and oversee the pipeline's completion in order to assure economic benefits, while simultaneously "push for diplomacy" for the proper operation of the pipeline.

In reality, the gain Russia receives from succeeding in eroding Ukraine's sovereignty might as well be the first step in the integration of European states and reformation of the weakened transatlantic alliance. Due to the former US presidency as well as the lengthy and controversial conflict between the US and Germany over the operation of Nord Stream II pipeline, Russia would now have leverage in the instability caused, therefore having the upper hand in reshaping ties with neighbouring European states (Reuters, 2021).

Furthermore, US officials have previously believed that removing Russian influence from the island or at least minimising it would have been impossible, however with the current instability in Russia, the US can opt to become the island's partner of choice. Bryen, senior director at the Jewish Policy Centre, explains that it is of great importance that the US works with the EMGF on the EastMed pipeline which will allow for diversification of Russian gas for the EU (Newsweek, 2022). In contrast, she pointed out that as both Russia and Turkey had been excluded from the pipeline deal in the first place, they might each on their own act upon disrupting security in the Eastern Mediterranean further, through increasing military intervention in the region.

Scazzieri argues that a window of opportunity for Cyprus to safely operate the pipeline and export natural gas without a Turkish threat, could be the escalation of tensions between Russia and Turkey over the war in Syria, which could incentivize Turkey to decrease its presence in the region as a result of being hesitant to anger the superpower even more (CER, 2020). In the same context it could lead to further issues with Russia, from which Turkey depends mainly in terms of energy imports and tourism. Moreover he adds that what the island could wish for is that following the COVID-19 pandemic, Turkey will be in an unfavourable economic situation which will not allow it to demonstrate its military power or intervene, and given that it lacks trustworthy allies, therefore will have limited support.

On the other hand, Zarunas, Secretary in the Council for Geostrategic Studies in Cyprus, suggests that Turkey is opting to act as a mediator in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, by aiding Ukraine with weapons, with the ultimate goal of partnering closely with the US and increasing its geostrategic importance in the area (Reporter, 2022). This view has also been supported by European think tank Carnegie, where researchers envision that Turkey is deteriorating its relationship with Russia in order to participate more actively in NATO activities (Carnegie Europe, 2022). Such an unprecedented move from the part of Turkey however will surely come with consequences imposed by Russia. NATO, the EU and the US haven't secured Ukraine enough to scare off Russia from progressing its troops into Ukraine which gave rise to war, so Turkey should really tread lightly (Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2022).

Moreover, an article Kluth, a Bloomberg columnist published, suggested that if Russia does invade Ukraine, all remaining 6 countries, Sweden, Austria, Ireland, Cyprus and Malta should join NATO (Bloomberg Opinion, 2022). The EU can see this as an opportunity to gain more power in international affairs through supporting hydrocarbon exploitation in the East Med through the proposed pipeline. Consequently, on the assumption that the island does join NATO, it receives a form of security from regional foes, but also might act as a stepping stone for the Cyprus dispute resolution. Responding to

Russian aggression in such a fashion would alleviate the country's security, economy, allow for natural gas to become the source for economic development and a smoother transition to a stabilised conflict resolution, through an alliance of mutual defence.

The implication for the EU of a war combined with increasing tensions in the region, would be that gas supply from Russia to Europe gradually becomes even more unstable. The plans for Nord Stream II pipeline connecting Russia and Germany and directly supplying the latter with Russian natural gas, is by some seen as a way for Russia to dominate over the area and terminate further gas transit through Ukraine, restricting the latter's geo economic power even more (Reuters, 2021).

Even though the natural gas from the EastMed pipeline will have to compete with piped gas from Russia and LNG from Algeria, the US, Egypt and other exporters, it will allow for direct shipment of gas into the EU, without having to rely on the unstable situation in Russia. In addition, because the gas is piped directly towards the EU, it reduces any delays that may arise from shipped gas from LNG exporters.

The EU can diversify its natural gas imports and reduce reliance on Russian gas, by turning to the EastMed for alternative sources of energy in the medium to long term, as the pipeline has yet to be constructed. What Europe has to earn from this deal is trifold. Firstly, as mentioned before is the diversification of natural gas imports away from Russia's unpredictable geopolitical tactics and a form of avoiding major collateral damage to the EU. The natural gas supplies from the EastMed pipeline will not directly compete with Russian imports, due to pricing and volume, therefore the probability of conflicting interests from the pipeline's operation per say with Russia's natural gas trade are unconvincing.

Moreover, the capacity of the pipeline along with the availability of natural gas in the Leviathan field is far less than the enormous amounts of natural gas being produced and traded in Russia, therefore competition in trading volume is unlikely to disrupt the rather close ties it has with Cyprus. Catak and Iledare however support that it will enhance the security of natural gas supply for European countries and make the transit countries more competitive with each other (Catak E. & Iledare O., 2004). Additionally the relationship between Cyprus and Russia has not fluctuated much amidst this situation due to their long-established economic relationship where aside from tourism and major shares in real estate, Russian businessmen find protection in the EU laws Cyprus provides their investments with, along with favourable taxation and investor protection agreements (Press and Information Office, 2021; Indian Council of World Affairs, 2015).

As for the second benefit the EU has from the deal, would be the increased weight of geoeconomic considerations to the area as a geopolitical hotspot, which gives access to both the Eastern Mediterranean and later the Middle Eastern economies and trade. Consignees in the forum along with members of the European Union could both benefit from the economic security energy trade activities such as the presented one can yield for all parties involved. Moreover, it has been argued that there are major financing cost constraints for the completion and operation of the pipeline, along with regional disputes, however the deep economic interests states have in promoting themselves in this up and coming energy bloc, and also backed by EU funding, allows for the pipeline's feasibility and also mutual prosperity (Winter O. & Lindenstrauss G., 2019).

The likelihood however of the EU forming new regional alliances and collaborating through the island's pipeline deal with Middle Eastern gas giants (in terms of capacity in cubic metres of natural gas reserves), such as Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia and UAE (United Arab Emirates), may provide strong drivers for geopolitical resolutions. The game Russia is playing can offset the stability in Arab countries, as any disruption in the regional maritime supply chain, such as Russia dominating the Suez canal or the Gulf and removing Ukraine, China and the Baltic from being the main food suppliers for the middle east can destabilise the supply in Western and Arab countries (Widdershoven, 2022). Indeed the Middle East is by far an unstable geopolitical territory, whom Europe over the years has been hesitant to increase interactions with in terms of trade, research development, economic and diplomatic affairs, due to the instability in the region, a fact that became more acute by the aspiration of global powers to prevail in the area for exploitation of natural resources (Brown, 1984; Hasbun W., 2018).

Talukdar, Research Fellow at the Indian Council of World Affairs, strongly suggests that since 2014, and amidst tensions between Russia and the EU, Cyprus is at an advantage in terms of facilitating itself as an important energy supplier to Europe. She however fears that in this environment, energy exploitation could deem the island a number of geopolitical threats and make it a “flashpoint of conflict between the West and the East”. The “Cyprus route” for Russian expansion to West Asia and Africa is crucial, she supports, therefore Cyprus diplomacy should be such that both satisfies the EU's diversification plans, but also cooperates with Russia on energy. She quotes “maintaining an appeasing relationship with Russia is beneficial for Cyprus, without annoying the West” (Indian Council of World Affairs, 2015).

The course of action on the Cypriot part will greatly affect how the outcome plays out for the island's future. It may not have the power to greatly influence or affect major regional geopolitical decisions at a first glance, but maintaining the existing ties and developing new regional allies, promotes the island's security and importance in future projects. Finally, the primary focus of Cyprus should be on its desire to assess its dynamic regional competencies by seizing opportunities presented by the hydrocarbons prospects through establishing itself a strong economic and political ally to regional states.

5.2 Scenario 2: Responding to the EU energy diversification plans through employing blue hydrogen

This section covers the geoeconomic and environmental aspect of the analysis, where European countries favour blue hydrogen as means for the slow transition to a fossil-fuel free era. Stakeholders with very diverse backgrounds cooperate together in order to accomplish a common goal that is mitigating the climate change effects. However having this multi-state coaction ambition, where at the bottom line the mindset of “each is for their own” prevails, it gives rise to geopolitical, economic and trade considerations. The cypriot government is examining the probability of utilising its natural gas and employing the pipeline to produce blue hydrogen, and satisfy a part of local and regional demand (Republic of Cyprus Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021).

Over the last few decades, researchers and governments have been keen on mitigating the effects of global warming, where removing fossil fuels from the picture has long been one of the main concerns.

Even though in theory it looks feasible, in practice there are more in play; from still high demand for the oil and petroleum industries, to geopolitical power games between countries that export carbon-intensive fuel. Satisfying them while acting environmentally friendly is a challenge for states.

Ever since the Paris Agreement in 2015, where nearly 200 of the participating countries agreed upon their mutual efforts in reducing global temperature from 2C degrees to 1.5C degrees and financing the process of the adaptation and transition processes, they had to report their climate action every 5 years (COP26, 2021). That involves pledges for emission reductions, net zero target dates, termination of deforestation and coal phasing out by 2050. The COP26 summit in 2021 in Glasgow also stressed the importance of abiding by the agreed upon clauses in the 2015 Paris Agreement, with the new climate pact mainly focusing on coal and fossil fuels, however instead of “phasing out” coal use, many states insisted on changing the clause to “phasing it down”, as the transition from a full oil and gas based economy will have to completely transition to a costly renewable energy “utopia” (Aljazeera, 2021).

Cyprus pledged all 4 aforementioned notions by 2050, however the progress it is making so far doesn't seem to yield promising results. The island was fined €40 million by the European Commission for not only being unable to reduce emissions and achieve some level of the set renewable energy goals, but instead increasing the greenhouse gas emissions reduction target for 2030 from 40% to 55% as compared to 1990 levels (Cyprus Mail, 2021). That not being the first fine Cyprus receives for lack of efforts regarding EU's environmental resilience goals, calls for new NECP (National Energy and Climate Plan) as the 2030 climate and energy targets, taken the country's current state, the 24% target for greenhouse gas emissions reduction by 2030, are practically unreachable (Cyprus NECP, 2020). While the challenge to cut back on emissions will keep getting harder with every passing year where if no real action is taken, penalties from the EU for non compliance with the set net zero plan will keep increasing in value.

There are however solutions that will help in transitioning to a fossil-fuel free era, such as employing blue hydrogen for the production of electricity while in the transitional phase in order to catch up to demand. Having been examined and extensively discussed in the past few years, blue hydrogen might be the medium-term answer for the island to Europe's environmental concerns.

Blue hydrogen is a still fossil fuel-based energy source that doesn't emit CO₂ in the production phase but instead stores it using a process called “carbon capture, utilisation and storage”(CCUS), where it is permanently stored underground(ATKO, n.d). The hydrogen is produced by reforming steam methane(SMR), a process during which natural gas is heated and then subdivided into hydrogen and CO₂ (CNBC, 2022). The downside which concerns many researchers and governments, is that blue hydrogen does not remove the danger of methane leakages to the atmosphere from methane production and transportation in addition to the current inability of a 100% successful storage of CO₂, resulting in only a “98% maximum practical carbon capture” (Agora Energiewende, 2021; Rechargenews, 2021).

Although it is not like green hydrogen, which is considered to be one of the ultimate energy-generating sources of the EU in reaching carbon neutrality and its produced by splitting water with the use of nuclear or renewable power, blue hydrogen seems to be the most cost-effective prominent solution(Agora Energiewende, 2021, Guidehouse, 2019). After all, it's a cost-efficient solution for decarbonizing the “transport sector, heating and cooling, and energy intensive industries”, and it being easily transportable

to long distances and stored in large quantities in existing or planned gas infrastructure (ie. pipelines and gas storage facilities), offers a quick and less capital intensive transition to decarbonization in the EU (Europa, 2019). Think tanks reports in Guidehouse and Agora Energiewende as well as independent researchers suggest that although in need of governmental support and higher taxes in order for blue hydrogen to be properly utilised and considered cost-competitive in the coming years, it is an economically viable option for the transitional phase towards carbon neutrality (Widdershoven, 2021; Wijk, 2019; Agora Energiewende, 2021; Guidehouse, 2021).

The country's energy minister, Natasa Pilides, proposed the EastMed pipeline could become the transportational unit of blue hydrogen along with the inland natural gas infrastructure, in a first phase towards carbon neutrality, where hydrogen will be transported to Europe in addition to feeding local demand (Stockwatch, 2021; Eastern Mediterranean Conference & Exhibition, 2021). In the same conference, President of Cyprus Hydrocarbon Company, stressed that the demand for natural gas in the coming 15 years is expected to "remain strong", confirming that it will keep being the prominent energy-transition to carbon neutrality (Stockwatch, 2021).

Moreover, the Energy Minister of Israel, being one of the main players in the East Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMFG), well understands that in order for Eastern Mediterranean countries to enter the EU market, a more sophisticated geopolitics of energy approach is essential. The best bet therefore, the latter along with the Energy Minister of Jordan promoted, is for regional cooperation in the fields of gas and cleaner energy generation for the purpose of a transition towards a sustainable future, regional energy security (Eastern Mediterranean Conference & Exhibition, 2021). Nonetheless the country has not yet submitted any official reports on a roadmap to employing hydrogen for reaching its sustainability targets for 2030.

In a 2019 report, Widdershoven coined that states can approach energy security in the sense where proper cooperation between states on renewables and EU subsidies are used for mitigation of climate change, therefore being a step closer in lowering instability in the broader Eastern Mediterranean and Middle Eastern areas (Wijk, 2019). The logic is for the EU to make use of energy diplomacy in mitigating not only carbonization and accomplishing its long term energy transition goals but also improving securitization. Rationally, the benefits include capturing 98% of CO₂ emissions and improving the carbon footprint while choosing a more cost-efficient hydrogen strategy. In addition, that would entail creating more constructive relationships between states cooperating on the transition, and opening new pathways for natural gas and hydrogen exports, thus somewhat reducing reliance on imports from outside of the EU.

As per Widdershoven, the benefits would not be limited to utilising the EastMed gas reserves and meeting the EU energy demand for the transitional phase to carbon neutrality, but also an incentive to procreate. Taking the Middle East's and North Africa's need for "energy transition and economic diversification", blue hydrogen can act as an energy cooperation strategy and work as a stepping stone for their stability and economic and technological transformation (Wijk, 2019).

Rationally, the implementation of hydrogen technologies on the island and seizing opportunities from the gas fields in the Cypriot EEZ as well as the hypothesis that the pipeline deal doesn't fall through, the

island has a technical potential of hydrogen electricity production. Although there is no infrastructure already in place or in use that could accommodate the production of hydrogen or storage of CO₂ underground, nonetheless the Vasiliko terminal facilities as well as the projected infrastructure developments can be further adjusted to welcome blue hydrogen generation. By the time the pipeline is constructed, the government could exploit unused land around the Vasiliko terminal to build appropriate infrastructure necessary for blue hydrogen generation, transportation and CO₂ storage, through public or private financing. T

The heavy road transport, aviation and shipping sectors as well as the supply of high-temperature process heat industry will be the main hydrogen end users on the island (FCH 2 JU, 2020). The shipping sector is technically most feasible to decarbonize among the aforementioned sectors, as demand in maritime services make up for approximately 37% of the energy needs of the island and deducting it from the equation of heavy fossil-fuel based industries will be one step closer to a 40% less emissions by 2030 (EC, 2019).

Moreover, in order to reduce the island's oil import dependence as well as fossil-fuel importing charges, it can shift to blue hydrogen using its own future infrastructure. In spite of him being pro-natural gas as an energy source, Mitrou, Lloyd's Register's global gas segment manager, trusts that it is possible for Cyprus to eventually remodel its facilities at Vassiliko port in order to accommodate the production, storage and transportation of blue and eventually green hydrogen (Lloyds Register, 2021). He suggested the projected natural gas infrastructure on the island could be utilised for the "separation of carbon and hydrogen atoms, enabling the use of hydrogen as a carbon-zero fuel" (Lloyds Register, 2021).

The island therefore should more actively participate in EU hydrogen research projects and assess how to implement it in its roadmap to decarbonization. A specific action plan has not yet been formally presented, nonetheless the hydrogen generation option is being examined.

In the "Climate Change in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East", Christodoulides, Minister of Foreign Affairs, emphasised the importance of transitioning to decarbonization with the use of regional trilateral partnerships already in place in the framework of hydrocarbons as well as in Eurasia and Euroafrica interconnectors (Republic of Cyprus, 2021). He suggests that the Eastern Mediterranean has much to offer and also gain from regional cooperations on sustainable energy in addition to natural gas exploitation. Of course if that is the case, there are many economic and diplomatic interests. To that Tylliros adds that natural gas will still be in use "far beyond 2050" and will especially be used in heavy road and in maritime industries as it still is a much greener fuel, therefore the EU's "gradual decarbonization" will not disrupt the island's natural gas plans (Cyprus Mail, 2021).

Avoiding technicalities which this paper does not aim at examining due to lack of knowledge and relevance, and assuming that blue hydrogen is indeed implemented and locally generated and exported using the EastMed pipeline and Vasiliko infrastructure (modified existing and planned), the author assesses the cases made in this scenario.

The core of geopolitics lies in regional cooperations between states with the purpose of mitigating regional threats, and that also applies to the environmental aspect, especially when the matter relies on

energy diplomacy. By building the foundation of a decarbonized regional economy where the state approaches securitization through agile interstate energy alliances, in this case, by jointly utilising natural gas deposits through pipelines and inland infrastructure that will also accommodate blue hydrogen generation and export, it is more likely to reduce regional imminent threats.

To be more specific, having Cyprus-Jordan-Greece, Cyprus-Greece-Egypt and Cyprus-Greece-Israel cooperate not only in political diplomacy in order to reduce constant Turkish intervention in the island's EEZ and threats of another invasion on Greek islands or Cyprus, but also in environment preservation matters that have a more active EU participation, may as well be a promising idea. Having the EU partly fund projects aiming at transitioning to a fossil-fuel free 2050, as they also support energy-related projects already in place, should give great incentives for a more active approach at the renewable energy cooperation.

Moreover, investing in reformation of natural gas into blue hydrogen and making the island a regional hydrogen transport hub will create jobs related to production, transportation, innovation technologies regarding research and conversion from oil to hydrogen-based processes in addition to regular technician jobs, ergo reducing unemployment. Not only does such a regional cooperative investment create prospects for economic development, it will also attract local and foreign investors interested in accessing the Middle Eastern, North African and European markets with the pretext of investing in decarbonisation.

Investing in trading a 98% environmentally friendly fuel while backed up by strong multistate support, can deem Cyprus to become a regional sustainable energy hotspot that will work as a passageway for Eastern Mediterranean countries that seek alternatives for entering the EU market. Accordingly the EU could use it as a bridge for Middle Eastern and North African energy sources before China. Nonetheless, just like in the first scenario, joint multi-country cooperation is essential in realising regional stability and economic prosperity goals, but in this case the stakes are higher as transition to an eco-friendly energy framework especially in a region of intra-state disputes, could de-escalate conflicts and improve access to energy sources.

Aside from the benefits of generating blue hydrogen on the island and the promise of security, economic prosperity and innovation, it remains an expensive project that needs to be treated with the utmost caution. The island could secure private or EU funding for the initiation of transporting blue hydrogen through the EastMed pipeline. In the case where the politics of it do not work out as they should, the country's regional evident enemy may seem even more interested in abusing what they believe is rightfully theirs and exploit the resources as an opportunity to dominate the area.

5.3 Scenario 3: Pipeline increases tensions over delimitation of EEZ between Turkey and Kastelorizo

Collectively, it is believed that the hydrocarbon discoveries in the Cypriot EEZ in this scenario only became an obstacle for regional security and gave grounds for more tensions in the area, decreased the island's integrity, made way for Turkish regional aggression and incentivize its regional trade domination. In conclusion, if Cyprus is not able to respond to the diplomatic challenges this scenario poses, and manages to form regional allies to prevent the Turkish government from undermining the island further from the instability the pipeline deal, which excluded Turkey had encouraged, recovery seems inauspicious.

The EastMed pipeline is an energy project that excludes Turkey, who claims the hydrocarbon discoveries fall within its own EEZ. Countries in the area form alliances and pursue exploitation of the natural gas reserves, build roadmaps for further infrastructure projects in order to be more energy self-sufficient and become a natural gas exporter, thus also boosting their economies, at Turkey's expense. Since the hydrocarbon discoveries in the Leviathan, natural gas exploitation and the subsequent projected pipeline has been used as a geopolitical scheme that regional states have employed for tightening their relations in addition to disrupting Turkey's plans of authority and dominance over the area. In practice however, that only increased tensions as from Turkey's point of view the hydrocarbon discoveries lie in waters that overlap with self-proclaimed TRNC's licenced blocks or that they are in a Turkish continental shelf and therefore Turkey's belongings (TRNC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021; Geopolitical Cyprus, 2020).

The assertive role Turkey is playing in an effort to become the predominant power in the area has been widely researched, commented on and discussed by academics, governments, international organisations and geopolitical thinkers. Since the hydrocarbon discoveries, Turkey has been redefining its geopolitical code, seeing natural gas as an opportunity for economic and political prosperity. Beginning from disputes with the Republic of Cyprus regarding natural gas drillings and exploitation, denial of accepting the concept of islands having an EEZ, and ending with unwillingness to comply to many international conventions regardless of the country constantly trying to join the NATO and the EU, Turkish diplomacy does not seem to aim at creating regional cooperations. Instead, Erdogan's assertive geopolitical policy making hasn't yielded trustworthy allies.

On the other hand, the country has recently opted to improve relations with the EU, Syria, Libya and the US (Geopolitical Cyprus, 2021). In a Cypriot think tank Ioannou, a geopolitical researcher and thinker, stresses that in US-Turkish relations over energy, it should be anticipated that an interesting geopolitical plot is unfolding (Geopolitical Cyprus, 2021).

In an article in The Washington post, a suggested solution to ending the disputes Turkey has with the broader Eastern Mediterranean region, especially Greece and Cyprus over energy, would be giving Turkey exploration, drilling rights and access to the EMGF, under the joint support and supervision of NATO and the EU (The Washington Post, 2020). The EU would act as a mediator and directly involved party, while NATO's challenge would be "preventing confrontation" (The Washington Post, 2020). Since

such a solution will not be accepted by the Republic of Cyprus nor by Greece for geopolitical, security, trading and geoeconomic reasons, the question of what happens next remains.

Unlike the dissatisfaction however of such a solution, Turkey could comply with UNCLOS (1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea), and own exclusive maritime rights of up to 200 nautical miles from the mainland, thus creating new risks for the area but also opportunities for the EU and US as it gives access to natural resources in addition to geoeconomic considerations (Atlantic Council, 2020). Moreover, according to Turkey's "Blue Homeland" naval doctrine, depicted in Figure 4, as part of its strategy for regional dominance, it dictates that Turkey should reclaim the maritime grounds and power attained by the Ottomans (Euractiv, 2021).

Adopted as an official policy of the Turkish government in 2013, the ultimate goal became acclaiming sovereignty over Greek islands in close vicinity with Turkey for the purposes of exploitation of any available hydrocarbons, therefore becoming a regional hub for EastMed gas processing, storage and transit to Europe (Catak E. & Iledare O., 2004). If international organisations realise that Turkey is a catalyst to the successful regional cooperation on gas trade, given that it has the longest coastline in the region, growing energy demand, then deeming them to accept the Turkey's claims of owning maritime blocks in the area is the most rational strategy, as per Anadolu Agency (Anadolu Agency, 2019). Regional possible partners to Turkey will also see economic benefits by being involved in such a deal, ergo regional geoeconomic balance may shift in favour of Turkey instead (Berka I. and Schulte S., 2017).



Figure 4: Delimitation of EEZ based on Turkish "Blue Homeland" naval doctrine
Source: TRT WORLD

Turkey's response for the pipeline construction deal, such as random drillings, official threats of war, or military interventions in the Cypriot EEZ agreed under UNCLOS, struck major concern of the US, NATO and the EU, resulting in the "non-paper" issued by the US State Department. Seemingly a "leaked document" from the US government withdrawing support for the EastMed pipeline, for environmental reasons, for creating tensions in the region and also reasons of economic and commercial validity, shaped a reason for further concern as it seems to create an opening for "Turkish participation in Eastern Mediterranean diplomatic initiatives", as per Zemenides (KNEWS, 2022).

The termination of backing for the pipeline deal by the US is not a standalone occurrence and as the US claims, they haven't withdrawn all support for the project, nor have they stopped examining possible scenarios for its operation, though observers are keen on believing that the US has an increased interest in siding with Turkey for the exploitation of hydrocarbons. Bekdil wrote in BESA, an Israeli think tank, that “Turkey feels it is a prisoner of geography” in matters revolving around energy exploitation in the region, thus a fair resolution has to be made in delimitation of EEZ between Turkish and Kastellorizo (BESA, 2020). It all comes in play when a scenario such as that of Kastellorizo claimed EEZ is denied by international organisations as it is 580 km away from the mainland and overlaps with Turkish EEZ, therefore making the 11.58km² long island that is situated just 2.8 km away from Turkey’s West coast, getting a smaller EEZ than the one Greeks want.

On one hand, has Turkey signed UNCLOS and acknowledged the concept of an EEZ, the UN will have to restrict some of the Greek “unjustified assertions” on Kastellorizo EEZ, as characterised by Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hami Aksoi, and instead provide Turkey with an EEZ that extends for up to 200 nautical miles as per Article 57 in UNCLOS (UNCLOS, 1982; Anadolu Agency, 2020). Kastellorizo in such a scenario may have to accept an area that extends much less than to its “territorial sea”, which does not exceed 12 nautical miles, but instead settle for a more limited area (UNCLOS, 1982). Figure 5, below, clearly illustrates the naval territory Greece claims as its own, including its islands having an EEZ that extends far beyond where the Turkish government claims as its own territory, under the “Blue Homeland” doctrine in figure 4. As can be seen in this figure, Turkey has a significantly limited exclusive economic zone, regardless of owning a coastline as large as 8,333 km long, only supporting Turkey’s frustration (TRT WORLD, 2020).



Figure 5: Greek claims on delimitation of EEZ in the Eastern Mediterranean
Source: TRT WORLD

The dispute over maritime rights around Kastellorizo had created a focal point for international attention, and as per Greek prime minister the Greece-Crete-Kastellorizo territorial waters are intertwined, therefore are entitled an EEZ that belongs to Greece, however a resolution does not only depend on the definition of the island’s EEZ (Atlantic Council, 2020). With Turkey signing the delimitation accord with Libya, it had hoped that a “diagonal line” (Figure 6), between the two of them would allow for the “demarcation of their maritime zones”, thus ignoring any sovereign maritime rights of the Greek islands that fall within

those lines. Many academics attempted to delimit the rights for EEZ for the islands and Turkey, yet they all arrived at the conclusion that a solution shouldn't come unilaterally (Rozakis C., 2020).

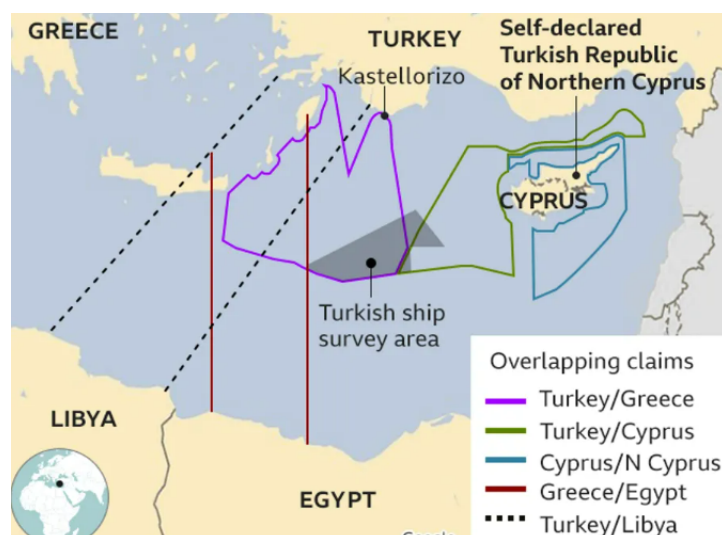


Figure 6: Overlapping Maritime Zones

Source: EJIL: Talk!, 2020

Following the events of Greece signing a bilateral agreement with Egypt on establishing the EEZ between them in response to Turkey and Libya signing a “maritime boundary delimitation accord”, as shown in Figure 6 (black dashed lines), even though Greece had just announced to resume talks over demarcation of maritime zones with Turkey, the conflict over whether or not the Greek islands such as Kastellorizo, Crete, Karpathos and Rhodes have the EEZ Greece desires, remains. Since the exploration of hydrocarbons and initiation of the EMGF, Turkey had felt left out and increased its military and “naval capabilities”, to claim what is theirs (Global Security, 2020). Dulgarian, an independent analyst on security, economics and politics, supports that since the US isn't a consigne in UNCLOS, it will have no grounds to oppose Turkey's claim for the Kastellorizo EEZ (Global Security, 2020). Greece may have to realise that Kastellorizo EEZ claims will have to be a sacrifice worth making in order to assure that Crete and Rhodes have a bigger EEZ instead, which will thus assure that natural gas reserves in the area can be properly utilised in addition to economic benefits connected to their trade (Reuters, 2019, Reuters, 2020).

On the other hand, supposing that scenario takes place, it implies that Turkey accepts that Cyprus also has an EEZ in which Turkey has no place exploring and utilising natural resources without proper permission from the Cypriot government. That however hasn't been the case so far with Turkish foreign policy in the area, despite international conventions prohibiting it. Moreover, since Turkey will be able to control the nautical space in that area, it will also have more control and leverage over the EastMed pipeline's operation, thus disorienting Cyprus' authority even more. International organisations accepting and recognizing that the hydrocarbons in the now “Turkish EEZ” should be co-owned by Turkey will create questions of how to share revenue, price pipeline transit fees, and exploit other energy-related opportunities in the region.

Tsafos, a geopolitical thinker and chairman of CSIS, stresses that for now the pipeline hasn't even been initiated, however the talks, and only, regarding future revenues were enough to cause further tensions in the area (CSIS, 2020). Furthermore, he suggests that the only way tensions in this matter can be diffused to one extent is by including Turkey to participate in the EMGF, however it is unlikely that Turkey won't see this as an opportunity to be assertive in the pipeline deal and secure whatever income there is or employ military threats (CSIS, 2020). Likewise, given Turkey's unstable economic situation, aside from the aforementioned political uncertainties, there is no promise that it will refrain from seizing the opportunity, in this scenario, to revive its economy by employing military vessels in its waters and insisting the pipeline transit fees should solely go to Turkey. Even if Cyprus and the Greek islands are a part of the EU, they see little support in security matters, making Turkey act as it pleases in the area, ergo the US having limited constraints in seeking to collaborate with it in satisfying its own geopolitical interests in the broader area.

Backed by an apathetic EU, in addition to a US interest in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle Eastern gas and oil markets, along with ambition to become a gas exporter to the EU, Turkey might as well see this as an opportunity to redirect international attention and foreign investors from Cyprus, towards itself. Moreover, the state could support its existing pipelines with more infrastructure, while making deals with states such as the UAE, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, as well as aiming at playing a mediation role between Russia and the West starting 2022, ergo securing geopolitical allies and financing in expense of Cyprus (Daily Sabah, 2022; Al Jazeera, 2022). In addition, current Cypriot foreign minister, Kasoulides, stresses that the pipeline was a tool for butchering securitization on the island and for deteriorating from solving Greece-Turkey EEZ issues and also to the Cyprus dispute with Turkey (Philenews, 2022). Therefore the discovery of natural gas and efforts for its exploitation in this scenario increase, rather than becoming a tool for resolving tensions.

5.4 Scenario 4: Cyprus becomes a regional energy hub

Ever since the hydrocarbon discoveries in the area, states have been wildly interested in exploiting any opportunity for becoming an energy interconnecting node in the region and expanding to the global market. The island of Cyprus has had ambitions for becoming a significant player and promoting this new found industry for foreign investment and economic prosperity. In that context, it has planned several energy projects that promise to end the island's energy dependence, increase regional stability through the cooperation on the energy trade and become the key to the island's economic growth. This scenario revolves around Cyprus achieving one of its main goals, thanks to the hydrocarbon discoveries and the projected EastMed pipeline, and becoming a regional energy hub through deployment of an LNG plant in Vasilikos.

Cyprus, Israel and Egypt all have individual and unified prospects for each of their state's economic prosperity and role in regional and global geopolitics. All three are dangerously eyeing the potential of LNG plants in their respective states along with other extraction projects for the full exploitation of the reserves found so far (Bruegel, 2020). Cyprus pursues a more geo economically active profile in the global framework through a few proposed regional energy projects for the purposes of redefining its geopolitical code. Baroudi et. al, support that the island is the perfect choice since it combines low land prices, a perfect geostrategic location for energy trade and mostly prosperous relations with the region

(Brookings, 2020). Therefore, it is natural that the EastMed pipeline is not the only planned energy project for the region, however it seems to have created the baseline for scenarios of future development. Additionally they support that due to its strategic location and proximity to the Suez Canal it can act as a connecting node to the markets in East Africa and South Asia, while also offering less travel time to “the Mediterranean’s Western exit at Gibraltar” as compared to the latter two states (Brookings, 2020).

The Cypriot government had announced in 2019 the prospects of an LNG import terminal in Vasilikos with gas deliveries available by July, 2023 (Financial Mirror, 2022). The Cypriot public natural gas company DEFA has announced the infrastructure would involve;

- ❖ FSRU (Floating Storage and Regasification Unit),
- ❖ Jetty for FSRU berthing and mooring equipment
- ❖ Jetty borne gas pipeline
- ❖ Onshore gas pipeline
- ❖ Shore side above ground installation (AGI), pressure reduction and metering station (PRMS)
- ❖ Pipeline storage array for natural gas (DEFA, 2019)

The infrastructure is said to be funded by a Chinese (China Petroleum Pipeline Engineering Co Ltd.) led consortium with which the government had signed the deal for €300mil., as it was the winning and only bidder for the LNG terminal, as well as by €101mil. subsidy from the EU’s financing program “Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)”, accomplished by CYnergy and CyprusGas2EU (Cyprus Mail, 2022; Lloyds Register, 2018). In the scenario of an LNG plant being developed on the island, president of DEFA and the energy minister characterised it to be the “single largest energy project” undertaken in Cyprus. As per Lloyd's Register, it is said to involve a conversion of a 137,000m³ Galea ship to an FSRU with the purpose of becoming an agile unit for transforming the island’s economic and business outlook, significantly lowering electricity costs, reducing exposure to fluctuations in energy prices and working as a means for attracting additional finance (Lloyds Register, 2021). Additionally Mitrou, LR’s global gas segment manager, supports that the FSRU can be “a quick and cost-effective way of providing the infrastructure that is required” for responding to the growing need of states for “channelling” natural gas into markets (Lloyds Register, 2021).

In a joint paper of Brookings, PRIO and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Lomas emphasised that even though the construction of such an advanced and complex energy transportation network on the island pertains to the threats of economic viability and needs meticulous strategic planning for all stages of construction and operation, he envisioned that the scenario of an LNG plant can still be realised (Faustmann, H., Gurel, A., & Tzimitras, H., 2014). Even before the discoveries in the Glaucus field in 2019, he had suggested that the island could achieve the LNG import terminal goal with the use of fix rate contracts for gas prices, ie. 5 year contracts, along with appropriate diplomacy with countries of the North Sea for the transportation of LNG and pipelines from the “limitless” fields in the Persian Gulf area, through an LNG plant in Cyprus (Faustmann, H., Gurel, A., & Tzimitras, H., 2014).

Such an infrastructure investment will “fuel the economy of Cyprus”, which in its turn will create more jobs in the sectors of energy storage, extraction, regasification, liquefaction and transportation both on the island as well as in the gas fields. Unemployment in Cyprus therefore will drop, especially in young adults, and a new sophisticated “knowledge economy” will be created (Faustmann, H., Gurel, A., &

Tzimitras, H., 2014). In addition, Tagliapietra in the same paper, supports that in order to support the EU's rising gas deficiency, it must realise the Eastern Mediterranean as a solution to the problem and greatly consider the LNG import option from Iraq, Iran, Turkmenistan through either Turkey or Cyprus. While further assessment and constructive diplomacy will be needed in order to achieve such a "far-fetched" goal, an opportunity of that magnitude seems to be very attractive on a broader scale.

From another perspective, the EastMed gas could be brought from the offshore Israeli and Cypriot gas fields through the pipeline to the liquefaction plant in Vassilikos and then shipped in the form of LNG to Europe and other markets. Also in evaluating different LNG plant options, constructing an Israeli LNG plant instead of having it in Cyprus seems unlikely, as there have been concerns from the Israeli government as for the water depth for LNG tankers to pass through, in addition to ongoing crises with Palestine (Tagliapietra, S., 2013; BBC News, 2021). Tagliapietra further supports that an LNG plant in Vassilikos would be favourable in terms of proximity of the plant to the Aphrodite gas field, in addition to enabling Israel "benefiting from preferential terms" from this cooperation that could result in importing to the EU and securing subsidies (Tagliapietra, S., 2013).

A study by Karbuz, director of the Institute of Energy in the Mediterranean has also suggested that a strong viable, yet costly, export option for Eastern Mediterranean gas could be through an LNG plant in Vassilikos (IEMed, 2012). The lack however of strong allies, absence of diplomatic relations between RoC and TRNC and nearly 5 year halt on the resolution of the Cyprus dispute, only make any unilateral action on energy exploitation, such as the pipeline, LNG plant or FSRU projects, a reason for conflict in the region.

Aligning with the US and EU goals of diversifying EU's natural gas imports from Russia and instead importing LNG from the US, Azerbaijan and Qatar, or Turkmenistan from fields of the Caspian Sea, and in accordance to the EU's dire need for energy infrastructure and LNG storage, the Vasiliko LNG plant could be the solution (Gulf International Forum, 2022). The benefits lie in the prospects of the island building stronger cooperations with global energy giants, such as the UAE, Kuwait, Gulf and broader Middle Eastern region, as well as China (Litsas, S.N., & Tziampiris, A., 2015; Tziaras Z., 2019; Republic of Cyprus Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022). The EastMed pipeline will have to compete with gas piped from Russia but also LNG from Algeria, Egypt the US and other origins, however with the use of a cost-effective FSRU in the first stages, Cyprus could provide lower pricing.

As noted in section 4.3.4, the island has had and aimed for constructive relationships with these states and further collaboration on energy, economic and diplomatic matters is more likely to create security in the region and deny Turkey of its provocative behaviour and demands in the region. Therefore Cyprus becoming a node in LNG transportation for the Gulf region, namely Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain can be a gamechanger for regional energy trade and boost its geoeconomic position. Redefining its geopolitical code to exploit this potential can position Cyprus in a broader energy trading circle.

For instance, Baroudi et. all provide an interesting insight where Cyprus establishes diplomatic relations with Qatar which could become the financial means for the transportation of Eastern Mediterranean natural gas to global markets "in a timely fashion" (Brookings, 2020). Cyprus can establish itself as a regional energy hub, where other states engage in gas trade or secure pipeline transit fees, therefore

further enrich the island's geoeconomic agenda, increase stability and earn in terms of private or public investment with the purpose to "restore its financial strength" (Brookings, 2020).

Germanos, the founder and director for Cynergy (investment group that promotes East Med into an energy hub), had expressed keen commercial and geopolitical interest in cooperating with the island for the acquisition of capital from interested parties in UAE and the Gulf with a goal of developing an LNG plant on the island and "bringing East Med and Middle Eastern assets together through Cyprus" (The National News, 2019). Adding to that, in 2021 "Philia Forum" brought in UAE, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain to the trilateral Cyprus-Greece-Egypt cooperation, as a part of mutual goals of the Middle East with Europe, to conjointly set "a positive agenda" for their partnership (Arab News, 2021). The joint military drills that the states had a few months earlier, along with France in the Aegean Sea, coined future military collaboration between them (Forbes, 2021). Inevitably, mutual participation in the forum could create alliances on energy trade, where LNG could be shipped through the island's Vasilikos plant and satisfy local, European and also global demand. Moreover, collaboration on energy will attract new foreign investors, enrich the economy, improve employment opportunities and ultimately create prospects of regional stability.

As per Tylliros, senior economist in the Ministry of Finance, the benefits from such collaborations put the island on a broader energy politics scale, and accompanied by constant and growing global LNG demand, allows for LNG trade in markets all over the world, where demand and prices are more favourable (Cyprus Mail, 2021). He also agrees that the energy projects the island is undertaking are bound to create "thousands of high value-added jobs", diversify the economy, increase the island's GDP and create "inter-sectoral synergies, multiplier effects and economies of scale" (Cyprus Mail, 2021).

Moreover he supports that combined with LNG bunkering on the island, the LNG terminal will boost the economy but also help address regional security issues, however only through proper energy diplomacy, for securing geoeconomic and strategic interests through the EMGF. Finally, he promoted the idea that Cyprus becoming a regional energy hub will give it leverage, add to its status as "an established maritime hub and shipping centre" and increase its dynamic capabilities. He also coined that it will contribute to a "viable solution to the Cyprus problem" (Cyprus Mail, 2021). Through proper synergies and strategic planning on the part of the Cypriot government, it can identify that it has the potential to turn this into an opportunity that could lead to resolution of conflict.

Lastly, with the hydrocarbons being currently "the only bargaining chip at the government's disposal" for resolving the Cyprus dispute, anything regarding energy diplomacy in the region should be treated with the utmost seriousness. From that it can be concluded that Cypriot policies should be more involved in planning strategic energy and economic cooperations with the area, in order to utilise the hydrocarbons to their best extent and also achieve securitisation against Turkish threats and possibly allow for gradual resolution of the dispute. Political support and stability can ensure the energy projects run smoothly and are completed on time, therefore it is of great importance to promptly address and resolve the energy disputes in order to address a solution of the Cyprus problem.

5.5 Opinion Analysis from Industry Experts

This short section will serve for the purpose of verifying the 4 scenarios that were deduced through content analysis in the previous 4 sub sections. The author conducted semi-structured open-ended interviews with experts in the fields of geopolitics, geoeconomics, hydrocarbons, energy trade and specialists in financial and logistics services. Questions were mainly categorised into 4 categories for each respective scenario, but since they can also be intertwined with one another, some questions covered more than one scenario.

The interview participant's answers were transcribed and then categorised into themes which then were pieced together forming an effective representation of their collective opinions on each subject. Since their fields of expertise varied, some questions were either left unanswered or varied in context. In addition some questions were such as to get a better understanding of the dynamics at place in the region.

5.5.1 Opinion Analysis

Collectively all the interviewees agreed that the EastMed pipeline created prospects for alleviating the Cypriot economy but at the expense of further tensions with Turkey. Therefore the common conclusion they all arrived at was that the projected pipeline, if not properly managed, will cause more conflict and tensions with Turkey. Moreover, for almost every scenario the concluding remarks of the interviewed participants were that in order for the pipeline to increase regional security and to allow for geoeconomic prosperity for the island, it should lead to the solution of the Cyprus Dispute. As Mr. Charles Ellinas quoted, *"The only solution to it all is the resolution of the Cyprus Dispute. Solution there will lead to a solution in a secure energy trade and non aggression from Turkey"*, and for the pipeline to cause something other than tensions in the region. *"Natural gas"*, in his opinion, *"could only be meaningful in the case where it contributes to solving the Cyprus Problem"*. Furthermore, Mr. Tziarras supports that *"Turkey could play a more assertive role in the region in the case where an LNG facility is developed on the island, had the island not included it in its natural gas trade"*. Thus the strategic recommendation for this would be resolving the main matters the island has with Turkey and transition into a future of geoeconomic prosperity. Mr Kleanthous further quoted *"Cyprus will definitely benefit if the pipeline and other energy projects happen with Middle Eastern support. Cyprus could give lower transition fees and give Middle Eastern countries EU benefits"*.

Cypriot officials and the Ministry of Foreign affairs had used the EMFG and trilateral partnerships that excluded Turkey, as means to put more pressure on it, only managed to increase tensions and put the island in an even more unfavourable position. Most Eastern Mediterranean countries aspire to have economic relations with Turkey instead of fighting it, due to having something to gain from it, namely a transition into the EU's energy politics. Cyprus should realise it and find a way to transform its regional alliances into powerful energy

In the case of diversification of natural gas imports for the EU, the interviewees agreed that the pipeline could indeed be used and is expected to create economic benefits for the island, but only if it is treated with proper diplomacy and strategic planning. When asked about this, participants all noted that even

though the amounts of natural gas will have little impact on the EU will see little diversification from Russian natural gas imports, however for the island it would help in terms of employment, value-added jobs, attracting new investors in different fields of the economy, create demand for new specialised jobs and stabilise economic relationships in the region. On the other hand however, Mr. Tsouknidis suspected that *“it would make things more complex geo economically”* as they will require attention and strategic planning, where Mr. Tziarras supported that *“Our gas will of course not be a gamechanger for the EU but will create big geoeconomic benefits for us. We should know how to price it competitively though”*. Also answering concerns about the Russian-Cypriot relationship with current sanctions on the part of the EU, Mr. Tsouknidis quoted *“It will be very difficult for Cyprus to maintain equal distances from the EU and Russia at the same time”*. In this context Mrs Polykarpou also believes that *“with the current conditions, if we don’t change our strategic planning that has to do with energy diplomacy, the situation in Russia and our former good relations will fluctuate tremendously. Russia has been an important ally for us but we decided to go with the US and support its ambitions, endangering our relationship, our economy, trade and tourism”*. In addition, Kleanthous supports that *“Russia would have been opposed but maybe it will be in favour eventually because it could benefit it. Geopolitics always dictate the outcome”*. Therefore, he supports that Cyprus needs to still maintain a *“solid relationship with Russia”* in handling energy matters, while not losing support from the EU or US.

When asked about a scenario where blue hydrogen is deployed and transported to the EU through the pipeline, Mr. Kleanthous suggests that even though the EU supports decarbonization by 2050, natural gas will still be traded long after then. He quoted *“Germany will still need natural gas and doesn't seem to rush into complete decarbonization, so here blue hydrogen makes sense”*, to which Mr. Ellinas added *“It is a probable scenario but the island should develop proper strategic action in order for us to be able to price it competitively and export blue hydrogen onto the EU”*.

Regarding the delimitation of EEZ the interviewees had different views, but concluded that it makes a lot of sense that Turkey receives a big part of the EEZ in that region and Kastelorizo’s EEZ is much less than the Greeks are claiming. They also agreed that the pipeline acted like a pressure instrument that only angered Turkey and its energy ambitions in the region. Mr Kleanthous quoted *“The EastMed acted like a pressure handle to alleviate Cyprus in energy and instead managed to only anger Turkey”*, to which Mr. Ellinas later added *“became assertive in the area and saw the pipeline as a threat”*, referring to Turkish aggression after the EMGF was initiated, excluding Turkey.

Concluding the interviews, the interviewees had been asked about the general picture that the EastMed pipeline seems to be creating with regard to the island’s geoeconomic position. All in all, what can be expressed is that they see it as a means for economic prosperity, attraction of FDI, value-added jobs, and benefits from energy sufficiency, but also as a catalyst for tensions with Turkey. Mr. Ellinas suggested it will enhance the economy under a condition; *“It will if we move strategically. For now it is causing more tensions and endangers our geoeconomic position”*. He then continued *“It all depends on how our diplomacy plays out, which so far hasn't been great. It is making it more dangerous for the island’s wellbeing”*. Mrs Polykarpou also stressed *“It will mean a lot for us, but so far Cyprus is weak in diplomacy. We should strengthen our ties with the region so as to not fear imminent threats from Turkey”*. Lastly Mr Tziarras supported that *“If it doesn't ruin our economy,”* and *“if the deals we get for exporting it are favourable to us, then yes it will assist our economy greatly.”*

5.6 Concluding remarks

Before moving to the key findings and conclusion from the analysis of this thesis the author presents the concluding remarks from both the content analysis and the expert interviews. It can be concluded that the research question has been answered. The EastMed pipeline will indeed impact the geostrategic position of Cyprus. There are some constraints that keep this costly project from supporting the island's economy and improving its geopolitical standing. All 4 scenarios as well as the interviews showcase that the pipeline could both create opportunities but also increase instability and tensions with Turkey. Surely in the case of employing proper diplomatic relations with regional energy players in addition to resolving the Cyprus Dispute will not only allow for the pipeline to become a factor of geoeconomic advancement, but it will also help in improving regional energy security and reliance of the island on heavy fossil fuels.

It should be noted that the interviewees come from different professional and academic backgrounds therefore their views on certain aspects either varied or were not expressed due to lack of time, however they greatly assisted in confirming the research findings. The scenarios were inferred from existing views of the professional, research and academic community and were selected based on initial assessment of geopolitical, environmental, economic and energy patterns of the area. The insights deduced from all 4 scenarios through content analyses helped answer the main research question and in all 4 scenarios it can be concluded that the pipeline has a significant impact on the island in terms of stability and geoeconomics.

To summarise, in the first scenario the pipeline can be seen as an opportunity to alleviate the country from economic downfall, increase relations with the Eastern Mediterranean and promote itself as an exporting natural gas country into the EU, therefore creating security and assisting employment. In the second scenario, the island can benefit from trading blue hydrogen, therefore entering the renewable energy era while still creating synergies for energy innovations and attracting FDI. In the third scenario it is unlikely that the pipeline promotes regional security, where in fact it was the final blow for Turkish aggression in the area and illegal drills in Cypriot and Greek EEZ. Lastly in the fourth scenario there is great potential created for the island's geoeconomic and geostrategic position as an LNG hub would not only create synergies for multi-state energy cooperations but would not limit the island for just the European energy market and instead promote it to the global market.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Key Findings

The main research objectives were to investigate the different futures the EastMed pipeline creates for the geostrategic position of Cyprus. The aim was to evaluate to what extent the pipeline will impact the island's economy, geostrategic position, security and if it will be able to become a key player in regional energy trade. In order to achieve that, the author proceeded with analysing content from various media sources, think tanks, whitepapers of governments, opinion articles from the research community, academic papers and followed current events, and managed to get an extensive understanding of concepts and themes and make inferences about their nature.

The author then deduced 4 scenarios through certain patterns in the written or media messages inferred from content analysis and then proceeded to assess them. The generated scenarios managed to answer the main research question, and were later verified through exploratory interviews with 5 professionals in the fields of geopolitics, natural gas and LNG trade, logistics, finance and economics. Since each individual came from a different professional background, thus having had different experiences in their respective fields, the author managed to form a broader picture of how the future will play out. It served the purposes of this research in a sense that it provided better processing and generation of knowledge.

The author validated the research findings through the interviews, therefore it can be concluded that the research objective has been met and the scenarios generated are verified. More specifically:

- Results from the analysis collectively indicate a tendency for the project to worsen the island's geostrategic position, in contrast to the author's views on the topic before initiation of this research. In all 4 scenarios the EastMed pipeline seems to be the reason for increased tensions with Turkey.
- The EastMed pipeline is expected to have a significant impact on the geoeconomic sector of the island if scenarios such as Cyprus developing an LNG plant and becoming a regional energy player take place. In this scenario the benefits lie in lower electricity rates, less reliance on carbon intensive fuels, exports of natural gas and revenues from trading, therefore economic growth, value-added employment, attraction of additional FDI, contribution to the economic growth of transit countries and generation of GDP through taxation.
- In the scenario where the pipeline works as a first step for the island's transition into a regional energy hub, it isn't limited to the EU but also expands to other international markets in the Middle East and Asia. Through proper diplomatic relations and synergies, Cyprus can use the pipeline to strengthen its ties with existing partners as well as cultivate new relations that will improve its security in the region. Engaging in proper energy diplomacy and maintaining strong allies in the region is the key to accomplishing security of exports. The more international alliances in energy, military, politics and financing the island secures, the less Turkey's presence and threats in the area.
- Nurtured by a stronger EU presence and governance support, Cypriot diplomatic ties can promote Cyprus in further economic developments, for instance through attracting additional FDI and

more financial and capital intensive operations in the island, alleviating therefore its geoeconomic position in the region. That is also the best way to approach the ambitions of using the pipeline for transportation of blue hydrogen, thus increasing the island's reliability in alignment with EU green targets.

- In scenario 3, the pipeline only became an obstacle for regional security and is the reason for increased tensions in the area, decreasing the island's integrity and making way for Turkish regional domination. The solution, as concluded through content analysis and later confirmed through the interviews, is for Cyprus to keep the peace talks for the Cyprus Dispute resolution open. That way energy will only cultivate a prosperous environment for energy trade with European states and beyond.
- It is foreseen that the EastMed pipeline creates prospects of increased tensions and conflict in the area, specifically heightened in scenario 3. The EU seems unable to control Turkey's aggression and supports that the only reasonable solution for secure energy trade would be resolution of the Cyprus Dispute. That way there is proper delimitation of EEZ, to which both parties agreed upon, both states are under UNCLOS principles and have settled their maritime disputes, thus avoiding violence.
- The war between Ukraine and Russia is expected to work as a catalyst for boosting the significance of the pipeline for the EU. It creates an environment for EU's diversification of imports, however it should not come as a threat for Cyprus-Russia relations. Cyprus still heavily relies on Russian capital and expertise. Diplomacy is key.
- If treated strategically, the pipeline will alleviate the country geo economically. Such energy investments could generate credibility, improve the country's efficiency, productivity and competitiveness. In this framework it can operate as a sustainable, mutually beneficial and constructive conflict resolution tool.
- Energy transformation, in this case for transportation of blue hydrogen through the EastMed pipeline can be a major challenge. However, using energy diplomacy for the mitigation of transitioning into a decarbonised future will allow for new constructive relationships with the region and also become an incentive for innovation and procreation. Blue hydrogen could be used by Cyprus as an energy cooperation incentive and boost its economic and technological transformation.

In conclusion, Cyprus is small with big prospects. Hydrocarbon discoveries and the subsequent projected EastMed pipeline with the EMGF, are creating prospects for a transition of the island into a new era. Regardless of the scenario that plays out, there ought to be proper energy diplomacy, strong regional partnerships, political stability and support, and resolution of the Cyprus problem. Needless to say that as long as talks for solving the Cyprus problem are kept active and bilateral-trilateral partnerships between Cyprus and regional allies are strong, Turkey will not pose an imminent threat.

6.2 Relating findings to previous research

The findings of this research confirm the findings of previous similar international research on regional energy geopolitics. The results suggest that the EastMed pipeline will indeed have a significant impact on the island's geostrategic position, the economy and regional security, therefore confirming previous researchers that had distilled similar conclusions regarding energy infrastructure (Colombo S. & Soler i Lecha E., 2021; Baroudi, R., Cagan, D., & Toperich, S., 2020; Goldthau, Rickert and Stetter, 2020; Tziarras, 2019; Moran D. & Russel J.A., 2009; Klare, 2008; Nathanson R. & Levy R. (2012); Niglia, 2015;).

Additionally, the findings of this research confirm that indeed the geoeconomic interests of states are important in determining their geostrategic significance in the international framework and have a great effect on how political decisions can be influenced by them, as shown by Luttwak (1990). Nevertheless this research rejects the findings of other previous studies such as by Goldthau, Rickert and Stetter (2020), that suggest that energisation in the EastMed region on its own brought securitisation and prosperity, though the author concludes that it only gave rise to more conflict and undermined the island in terms of regional security.

Instead they confirm the findings by Tziarras (2019), that supporting energy in the EastMed increases tensions, and the author further extends knowledge to the case of Cyprus and that it will most likely affect its security against Turkey's dominance ambitions in a negative way. Moran D. & Russel J.A. (2009) is extended in this research, and it can be explicitly seen in scenario 1, where indeed energy should be defended from potential challenges but here the author exhibits it also can be used as a tool to overcome them. It further accepts conclusions by Mehmet O., & Yorucu V. (2020) that in order to diffuse tensions in the EastMed it is essential that proper energy diplomacy and regional cooperations are employed, and also that a way to do it is if states in the region aim at working together for a more sustainable energy future.

Moreover this study confirms earlier findings by Baroudi, R., Cagan, D., & Toperich, S. (2020), about ways for solving maritime disputes through mutual international collaborations, and further enriches it by suggesting that energy can be used as an incentive for strengthening regional bonds. This study however rejects findings by Norouzi N.(2021) that regional cooperations couldnt be the solution to overcoming geopolitical security issues, and instead confirms Klare (2008) that states should strengthen ties through energy collaborations so as not to completely rely on the big powers' games. Lastly, throughout this research and from the expert interviews the author concludes that even though the EastMed pipeline creates more tension in the region, it can be used as a key to unlocking regional collaborations for the purposes of securitisation.

6.3 Limitations and Further Research

The author approaches the impact of the EastMed pipeline on regional geopolitics geoeconomics from a qualitative perspective using scenarios and narratives. A considerable limitation of this research is that the author assumes that the EastMed pipeline indeed comes through, even though the economic viability assessment has yet to be concluded and there are fears that suggest since the US has withdrawn support for the pipeline it will not exist. All scenarios assume that the pipeline is constructed and operates. It has however been extensively used as a tool for states' geopolitical interests in the past decade and the author believes it will keep being that way. It is also essential to point out that at the time of writing this thesis, the Russian-Ukrainian tensions, that later led to war, were still developing and by the time of completion of this research paper, the invasion had happened. This is a major game changer for the geopolitical balance not only in the region but also globally, and would require re-evaluation of the findings in this thesis at a later point.

Additionally, since the research is performed by deducing 4 hypothetical scenarios, It would be interesting to investigate the effect of the pipeline, after its completion, on the geostrategic position of the island and confirm or reject the author's conclusions on regional stability, economy and energy trade. Capturing the more technical parts not evaluated in this study, such as the viability of transporting blue hydrogen through the EastMed pipeline, how the island proceeds to cultivating regional cooperations, or the physical land constraints that may exist in the scenario where Cyprus aims at extending its energy game to an LNG plant in Vassilikos, may also help confirm or reject the author's conclusions.

Finally, as the scenarios haven't been generated by the author, but instead deduced through content analysis of opinions, insights, and views of mainly the academic and research community, results can be subjective and thus affect reliability and validity of the conclusions. The interviews were conducted in order to rid of the subjective nature of the author's interpretation of content analysed, but a limitation may be the fact that in the opinion analysis section, most interviewees operate in fields of geopolitics, economics or in the case of Mr Kleanthous, LNG trade. Therefore, the author believes it would be interesting to also see the view of individuals who work at DEFA, the EMGF, that are directly involved in the project, in addition to people who will see indirect impact on their jobs once the effects of the pipeline in each scenario materialise.

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Appendix A’ - Content Analysis Overview Table

Table 1

Content Indicators	Content Source	Title	Content Type	Time Frame covered	Scenarios
Cyprus natural gas, TRNC EEZ, Delimitation of Maritime boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean	TRNC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021	Regarding the unilateral natural gas exploration activities of the Greek Cypriot administration of Southern Cyprus	Government Publication	2019-beyond	Pipeline increases tensions over delimitation of EEZ between Turkey and Kastelorizo

Cyprus natural gas, TRNC EEZ, Delimitation of Maritime boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey Foreign policy, Turkey Geopolitics, Turkey Libya EEZ, Kastelorizo EEZ	Geopolitical Cyprus, 2020	Turkey's self-contradicting doublespeak on maritime delimitations – A sign of unreliability	Insight	2011-beyond	Pipeline increases tensions over delimitation of EEZ between Turkey and Kastelorizo
Turkey EEZ, Turkey-US relations, Greek EEZ, Turkey Geopolitics, Turkey Libya EEZ, TRNC EEZ, UNCLOS in Eastern Mediterranean, Blue Homeland Doctrine	Geopolitical Cyprus, 2021	GeoInsight: Η Σύνοδος του ΝΑΤΟ βάζει τον διάλογο ΗΠΙΑ-Τουρκίας σε ράγες	Insight	2021-beyond	Pipeline increases tensions over delimitation of EEZ between Turkey and Kastelorizo
Turkey EEZ and Greek EEZ, Cyprus natural gas, Kastelorizo EEZ, Turkey-US relations, Delimitation of Maritime boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey-EastMed Pipeline, Turkey Geopolitics, Turkey Libya EEZ, TRNC EEZ, Blue Homeland Doctrine, Turkey natural gas, EMGF, Energy Security	The Washington Post, 2020	Opinion: A conflict could be brewing in the eastern Mediterranean. Here's how to stop it.	Opinion	2020-beyond	Pipeline increases tensions over delimitation of EEZ between Turkey and Kastelorizo
Turkey EEZ, Greek EEZ, Cyprus natural gas, Kastelorizo EEZ, Turkey-US relations, Delimitation of Maritime boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey EastMed Pipeline, Turkey Geopolitics, Turkey Libya EEZ, TRNC EEZ, UNCLOS	Atlantic Council, 2020	Solving the Eastern Mediterranean crisis requires compromise	Think Tank	2011-beyond	Pipeline increases tensions over delimitation of EEZ between Turkey and Kastelorizo

in Eastern Mediterranean, Blue Homeland Doctrine, Turkey natural gas, Energy Security, EMGF					
Turkey EEZ, Greek EEZ, Cyprus natural gas, Turkey-US relations, Delimitation of Maritime boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey EastMed Pipeline, Turkey Geopolitics, Turkey Libya EEZ, TRNC EEZ, Blue Homeland Doctrine, Energy Security,	Euractiv, 2021	Blue Homeland: Turkey's Strategy in the Eastern Mediterranean, Antonia Colibasanu	Opinion	2021-bey ond	Pipeline increases tensions over delimitation of EEZ between Turkey and Kastelorizo
Turkey EEZ, Greek EEZ, Cyprus natural gas, Turkey-US relations, Delimitation of Maritime boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey Geopolitics, TRNC EEZ, Turkey natural gas, Energy Security	Catak E. & Iledare O., 2004	Natural Gas Supply Diversification in Europe – Role of Turkey as a Transit Country, International Association for Energy Economics	Paper	2004-bey ond	Pipeline increases tensions over delimitation of EEZ between Turkey and Kastelorizo
Turkey EEZ, Greek EEZ, Cyprus natural gas, Kastelorizo EEZ, Turkey-US relations, Delimitation of Maritime boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey-EastMed Pipeline, Turkey Geopolitics, Turkey Libya EEZ, TRNC EEZ, UNCLOS in Eastern Mediterranean, Blue Homeland Doctrine, Turkey natural gas, Energy Security, EMGF	Anadolu Agency, 2019	Most rational option: Cooperation in E.Mediterranean	Government Whitepaper	2019-bey ond	Pipeline increases tensions over delimitation of EEZ between Turkey and Kastelorizo

Turkey EEZ, Greek EEZ, Cyprus natural gas, Kastelorizo EEZ, Turkey-US relations, Delimitation of Maritime boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey EastMed Pipeline, Turkey Geopolitics, Turkey Libya EEZ, TRNC EEZ, UNCLOS in Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey natural gas, Energy Security,	Berka I. and Schulte S., 2017	Turkey's role in natural gas – Becoming a transit country?	Paper	2017-bey ond	Pipeline increases tensions over delimitation of EEZ between Turkey and Kastelorizo
Turkey EEZ, Greek EEZ, Cyprus natural gas, Delimitation of Maritime boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey EastMed Pipeline, Turkey Geopolitics, Turkey Libya EEZ, TRNC EEZ, Turkey natural gas, Energy Security, EMGF, non-paper	KNEWS, 2022	Opinion; Op-ed: It's not the pipeline, stupid!	Opinion	2022-bey ond	Pipeline increases tensions over delimitation of EEZ between Turkey and Kastelorizo
Turkey EEZ, Greek EEZ, Cyprus natural gas, Kastelorizo EEZ, Turkey-US relations, Delimitation of Maritime boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey EastMed Pipeline, Turkey Geopolitics, Turkey Libya EEZ, TRNC EEZ, UNCLOS in Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey natural gas, Energy Security, EMGF	BESA, 2020	Kastellorizo: Tiny Island, Colossal Dispute	Think Tank	2020-bey ond	Pipeline increases tensions over delimitation of EEZ between Turkey and Kastelorizo

<p>Turkey EEZ, Greek EEZ, Cyprus natural gas, Kastelorizo EEZ, Turkey-US relations, Delimitation of Maritime boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey EastMed Pipeline, Turkey Geopolitics, Turkey Libya EEZ, TRNC EEZ, UNCLOS in Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey natural gas, Energy Security, EMGF</p>	<p>Anadolu Agency, 2020</p>	<p>Turkey to continue protecting its rights in East Med'</p>	<p>Government Whitepaper</p>	<p>2020-beyond</p>	<p>Pipeline increases tensions over delimitation of EEZ between Turkey and Kastelorizo</p>
<p>Turkey EEZ, Greek EEZ, Cyprus natural gas, Kastelorizo EEZ, Turkey-US relations, Delimitation of Maritime boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey EastMed Pipeline, Turkey Geopolitics, Turkey Libya EEZ, TRNC EEZ, UNCLOS in Eastern Mediterranean, Blue Homeland Doctrine, Turkey natural gas, Energy Security, EMGF</p>	<p>Global Security, 2020</p>	<p>Kastelorizo Is The Key To Turkish & Greek Ambitions In The Eastern Mediterranean</p>	<p>Think Tank</p>	<p>2020-beyond</p>	<p>Pipeline increases tensions over delimitation of EEZ between Turkey and Kastelorizo</p>
<p>Turkey EEZ, Greek EEZ, Cyprus natural gas, Kastelorizo EEZ, Turkey-US relations, Delimitation of Maritime boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey EastMed Pipeline, Turkey Geopolitics, UNCLOS in Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey natural gas, Energy Security, EMGF</p>	<p>CSIS, 2020</p>	<p>Getting East Med Energy Right</p>	<p>Think Tank</p>	<p>2009-beyond</p>	<p>Pipeline increases tensions over delimitation of EEZ between Turkey and Kastelorizo</p>

Security					
Content Categories	Content Source	Title	Literature Category	Time Frame covered	Scenarios
Blue Hydrogen, EU energy diversification, Decarbonization, Carbon Neutrality, Paris Agreement	Agora Energiewende, 2021	Agora Industry (2021): 12 Insights on Hydrogen.	Publication	2021-2050	Responding to the EU energy diversification plans through employing blue hydrogen
Hydrogen, EU energy diversification, Cyprus energy transition, Decarbonization, Carbon Neutrality, Paris Agreement, Cyprus National Energy and Climate Plan	Cyprus NECP, 2020	Cyprus' Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan for the period 2021-2030	Government Report	2021-2030	Responding to the EU energy diversification plans through employing blue hydrogen
Hydrogen, EU energy diversification, Decarbonization, Carbon Neutrality, Paris Agreement, Blue Hydrogen, Cyprus energy transition	Guidehouse, 2019	Smart Combination of Renewable Gas and Electricity Optimal Way to Decarbonize the EU Energy System	Think Tank	2019-2030	Responding to the EU energy diversification plans through employing blue hydrogen
Blue Hydrogen, EU energy diversification, Cyprus energy transition, EastMed pipeline, Decarbonization, Carbon Neutrality, Paris Agreement, Cyprus National Energy and Climate Plan	Republic of Cyprus Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021	CHRISTODOULIDES: TAKING ACTION TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE IS A ONE-WAY STREET, 2nd International Conference "Climate Change in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East"	Government Whitepaper	2021-2050	Responding to the EU energy diversification plans through employing blue hydrogen

Blue Hydrogen, EU energy diversification, Cyprus energy transition, EastMed pipeline, Decarbonization, Carbon Neutrality, Paris Agreement, Cyprus National Energy and Climate Plan	Stockwatch, 2021	Cyprus must act fast to meet Green Deal goals and reduce electricity prices, Energy Minister Natasa Pilides talk	Article on Interview	2022-2030	Responding to the EU energy diversification plans through employing blue hydrogen
Hydrogen, EU energy diversification, Cyprus energy transition, EastMed pipeline, Decarbonization, Carbon Neutrality, Paris Agreement, Cyprus National Energy and Climate Plan	Eastern Mediterranean Conference & Exhibition, 2021	Eastern Mediterranean Conference & Exhibition, 2022	Energy Minister Message	2021-2030	Responding to the EU energy diversification plans through employing blue hydrogen
Hydrogen, EU energy diversification, Cyprus energy transition, EastMed pipeline, Decarbonization, Carbon Neutrality, Paris Agreement, Cyprus National Energy and Climate Plan, Geopolitics of Energy	Wijk, 2019	Hydrogen The Bridge between Africa and Europe, “Shaping an Inclusive Energy Transition”		2019-2030	Responding to the EU energy diversification plans through employing blue hydrogen
Blue Hydrogen, EU energy diversification, Cyprus energy transition, EastMed pipeline, Decarbonization, Carbon Neutrality, Cyprus National Energy and Climate Plan	FCH 2 JU, 2020	Opportunities for Hydrogen Energy Technologies Considering the National Energy & Climate Plans, Cyprus	Whitepaper	2020-2050	Responding to the EU energy diversification plans through employing blue hydrogen

Blue Hydrogen, EU energy diversification, Cyprus energy transition, EastMed pipeline, Decarbonization, Carbon Neutrality, Cyprus National Energy and Climate Plan	Lloyds Register, 2021	Cyprus LNG project –blueprint for the future?	Insight	2021-2030	Responding to the EU energy diversification plans through employing blue hydrogen
Content Categories	Content Source	Title	Literature Category	Time Frame covered	Scenarios
Eastern Mediterranean Geopolitics, Energy Diplomacy, Cyprus LNG, Egypt LNG, Israel LNG, Cyprus energy, EastMed pipeline, Vasiliko LNG, Cyprus-East Mediterranean, Cyprus geostrategic position	Bruegel, 2020	Eastern Mediterranean Gas: What Prospects for the New Decade?	Think Tank	2020-2030	Cyprus becomes a regional energy hub
Eastern Mediterranean Geopolitics, Energy Diplomacy, Cyprus LNG, Egypt LNG, Israel LNG, Turkey LNG, Turkey aggression, Cyprus-Middle East, Cyprus energy, EastMed pipeline, Vasiliko LNG, Vasiliko Infrastructure, Cyprus-East Mediterranean, Cyprus geostrategic position	Brookings, 2020	Maritime Disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean: The Way Forward	Book	2020-beyond	Cyprus becomes a regional energy hub
Eastern Mediterranean Geopolitics, Energy Diplomacy, Cyprus LNG, Cyprus energy, EastMed pipeline, Vasiliko LNG, Vasiliko	Financial Mirror, 2022	LNG terminal will be ready summer 2023	Article	2023-beyond	Cyprus becomes a regional energy hub

Infrastructure, Cyprus FSRU, Cyprus economy					
Eastern Mediterranean Geopolitics, Energy Diplomacy, Cyprus LNG, Cyprus energy, EastMed pipeline, Vasiliko LNG, Vasiliko Infrastructure, Cyprus-East Mediterranean, Cyprus geostrategic position, Cyprus FSRU, Cyprus economy	Lloyds Register, 2018	East Mediterranean projects take steps towards adoption of alternative fuels.	Article	2023-beyond	Cyprus becomes a regional energy hub
Eastern Mediterranean Geopolitics, Energy Diplomacy, Cyprus LNG, Egypt LNG, Turkey LNG, Turkey aggression, Cyprus energy, EastMed pipeline, Cyprus-East Mediterranean, Cyprus geostrategic position, Cyprus FSRU, Cyprus economy	Cyprus Mail, 2022	LNG project: Problems from the outset	Opinion	2022-2050	Cyprus becomes a regional energy hub
Eastern Mediterranean Geopolitics, Energy Diplomacy, Cyprus LNG, Turkey aggression, Cyprus energy, EastMed pipeline, Vasiliko LNG, Vasiliko Infrastructure, Cyprus-East Mediterranean, Cyprus geostrategic position, Cyprus FSRU, Cyprus economy, electricity costs	Lloyds Register, 2021	Cyprus LNG project –blueprint for the future?	Insight	2021-beyond	Cyprus becomes a regional energy hub

Eastern Mediterranean Geopolitics, Energy Diplomacy, Cyprus LNG, Egypt LNG, Israel LNG, Turkey LNG, Turkey aggression, Cyprus-Middle East, Cyprus energy, EastMed pipeline, Vasiliko LNG, Vasiliko Infrastructure, Cyprus-East Mediterranean, Cyprus geostrategic position, Cyprus economy, electricity costs	Faustmann, H., Gurel, A., & Tzimitras, H., 2014	East Mediterranean Hydrocarbons: Geopolitical and Industry Perspectives, Markets and Export Routes, and Regional Cooperation. (2014 ed.)	Insight	2014-beyond	Cyprus becomes a regional energy hub
Eastern Mediterranean Geopolitics, Energy Diplomacy, Cyprus LNG, Egypt LNG, Israel LNG, Turkey LNG, Turkey aggression, Cyprus-Middle East, Cyprus energy, EastMed pipeline, Cyprus LNG, Cyprus-East Mediterranean, Cyprus geostrategic position, Cyprus economy, electricity costs	Tagliapietra, S., 2013	Towards a New Eastern Mediterranean Energy Corridor?: Natural Gas Developments Between Market Opportunities and Geopolitical Risks.	Paper	2013-beyond	Cyprus becomes a regional energy hub
Eastern Mediterranean Geopolitics, Energy Diplomacy, Cyprus LNG, Turkey aggression, Cyprus-Middle East, Cyprus energy, Vasiliko LNG, Cyprus-East Mediterranean, Cyprus geostrategic position, Cyprus FSRU, Cyprus economy, electricity costs	IEMed, 2012	Natural Gas Resources in the Eastern Mediterranean: Challenges and Opportunities	Paper	2012-beyond	Cyprus becomes a regional energy hub

Eastern Mediterranean Geopolitics, Energy Diplomacy, Cyprus-Middle East, Cyprus energy, EastMed pipeline, Cyprus-East Mediterranean, Cyprus geostrategic position	Litsas, S.N., & Tziampiris, A., 2015	The Eastern Mediterranean in Transition: Multipolarity, Politics and Power (1st ed.	Book	2015-beyond	Cyprus becomes a regional energy hub
Eastern Mediterranean Geopolitics, Energy Diplomacy, Cyprus LNG, Turkey aggression, Cyprus-Middle East, Cyprus energy, EastMed pipeline, Vasiliko LNG, Vasiliko Infrastructure, Cyprus-East Mediterranean, Cyprus geostrategic position, Cyprus FSRU, Cyprus economy, electricity costs	Cyprus Mail, 2021	LNG plant is Cyprus' best energy option	Opinion	2022-beyond	Cyprus becomes a regional energy hub
Content Categories	Content Source	Title	Literature Category	Time Frame covered	Scenarios
Diversification from Russian gas imports, Russia-Ukraine war, Europe reliance on Russia, Europe-Russia Relations, EU energy, US-EU relations	Carnegie, 2021	Russia's Ambitious Military-Geographic Posture in the Mediterranean	Think Tank	2021-beyond	EU sees EastMed pipeline as means for redirecting natural gas imports from Russia amidst war
Diversification from Russian gas imports, Russia-Ukraine war, Europe reliance on Russia, Europe-Russia Relations, EU energy, US-EU relations	Chatham House, 2021	Europe must admit Russia is waging war	Think Tank	2021-beyond	EU sees EastMed pipeline as means for redirecting natural gas imports from Russia amidst war

Diversification from Russian gas imports, Russia-Ukraine war, Europe reliance on Russia, Europe-Russia Relations, EU energy, US-EU relations, East Mediterranean, Nord Stream II	Carnegie, 2022	Russia's Ambitious Military-Geostrategic Posture in the Mediterranean	Think Tank	2021-beyond	EU sees EastMed pipeline as means for redirecting natural gas imports from Russia amidst war
Diversification from Russian gas imports, Europe reliance on Russia, EastMed Pipeline, EU energy, US-EU relations, East Mediterranean, Nord Stream II, Israel natural gas, East Mediterranean geopolitics	The Hill, 2022	America's strategic mistake in the Mediterranean	Think Tank	2022-beyond	EU sees EastMed pipeline as means for redirecting natural gas imports from Russia amidst war
Diversification from Russian gas imports, Russia-Ukraine war, Europe reliance on Russia, EastMed Pipeline, East Mediterranean geopolitics, Europe-Russia Relations, EU energy, US-EU relations, East Mediterranean, Nord Stream II, Israel natural gas	The Jerusalem Post, 2022	Business and Innovation: Can Israel become Europe's gas supplier?	Opinion	2022-beyond	EU sees EastMed pipeline as means for redirecting natural gas imports from Russia amidst war
Diversification from Russian gas imports, Russia-Ukraine war, Europe reliance on Russia, EastMed Pipeline, Europe-Russia Relations, EU energy, Nord Stream II	Euronews, 2022	Europe looks for alternate gas solutions, but could it be left in the cold?	Opinion	2022-beyond	EU sees EastMed pipeline as means for redirecting natural gas imports from Russia amidst war

Diversification from Russian gas imports, Russia-Ukraine war, Europe reliance on Russia, EastMed Pipeline, Cyprus Geopolitics, Europe-Russia Relations, EU energy, US-EU relations, East Mediterranean, Nord Stream II, Cyprus natural gas, East Mediterranean geopolitics	Lawfare, 2021	What's Driving the Conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean?	Opinion	2021-beyond	EU sees EastMed pipeline as means for redirecting natural gas imports from Russia amidst war
Diversification from Russian gas imports, Russia-Ukraine war, Europe reliance on Russia, EastMed Pipeline, Cyprus Geopolitics, Europe-Russia Relations, EU energy, US-EU relations, East Mediterranean, Nord Stream II, Israel natural gas, Cyprus natural gas, East Mediterranean geopolitics, US-Cyprus relations	Newsweek, 2022	The Demise of the EastMed Pipeline	Opinion	2022-beyond	EU sees EastMed pipeline as means for redirecting natural gas imports from Russia amidst war
Diversification from Russian gas imports, EastMed Pipeline, Cyprus Geopolitics, Europe-Russia Relations, EU energy, US-EU relations, East Mediterranean, Nord Stream II, Israel natural gas, Cyprus natural gas, East Mediterranean	CER, 2020	GAS HEATS UP THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN	Insight	2020-beyond	EU sees EastMed pipeline as means for redirecting natural gas imports from Russia amidst war

geopolitics					
Diversification from Russian gas imports, Russia-Ukraine war, Europe reliance on Russia, Europe-Russia Relations, East Mediterranean, Nord Stream II, US-Cyprus relation	Bloomberg Opinion, 2022	Europe to Russia: Invade Ukraine, and We All Join NATO	Opinion	2022-beyond	EU sees EastMed pipeline as means for redirecting natural gas imports from Russia amidst war
Diversification from Russian gas imports, Europe reliance on Russia, Cyprus Geopolitics, East Mediterranean, East Mediterranean geopolitics, US-Cyprus relations, Turkey natural gas	Catak E. & Iledare O., 2004	Natural Gas Supply Diversification in Europe – Role of Turkey as a Transit Country	Paper	2004-beyond	EU sees EastMed pipeline as means for redirecting natural gas imports from Russia amidst war
Diversification from Russian gas imports, Europe reliance on Russia, EastMed Pipeline, Cyprus Geopolitics, East Mediterranean, Israel natural gas, Cyprus natural gas, East Mediterranean geopolitics, US-Cyprus relation	Hasbun W., 2018	REGIONAL POWERS AND THE PRODUCTION OF INSECURITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST	Working Paper	2018-beyond	EU sees EastMed pipeline as means for redirecting natural gas imports from Russia amidst war
Diversification from Russian gas imports, Ukraine-Russia tensions, Europe reliance on Russia, Cyprus Geopolitics, Europe-Russia Relations, EU energy, US-EU relations, East Mediterranean, Cyprus natural gas, East Mediterranean	Indian Council of World Affairs, 2015	Dynamics behind Russia and Cyprus Relationship	Think Tank	2015-beyond	EU sees EastMed pipeline as means for redirecting natural gas imports from Russia amidst war

geopolitics					
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Appendix B' - Information about the Interview Participants

Table 2

Interview Participant	Position	Interviewee Role	Years of Expertise in Respective Field	Date	Location	Duration of Interview
Mr. Kleanthous Athos	Commercial Manager at GAP Vassilopoulos Group	Analyst in gas and LNG trading, worked in Cyprus Hydrocarbons Company and possesses long-standing experience in energy strategies	10 years	21 February 2022	GAP Vasilopoulos Group Head Offices	53 minutes
Mr. Tziarras Zenonas	Researcher at PRIO Cyprus Centre	Professor and Researcher for the Geopolitics of the Eastern Mediterranean. Focuses on Turkish politics and foreign policy, the international politics of the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean, International Relations theory, security & strategic studies	9 years	22 February 2022	Virtual Zoom Meeting	58 minutes
Mr. Tsouknidis Dimitris	Associate Professor at Athens University of Economics and	Extensive knowledge in economics, business, financial	10 years	23 February 2022	Virtual Zoom Meeting and then questions answered	30 minutes

	Business	markets and the shipping sector				through email in PDF form	
Mr. Charles Ellinas	CEO at EC Cyprus Natural Hydrocarbons Company Ltd (eCNHC)	Deep understanding in project management and consultancy services in the oil & gas and energy sectors. Was responsible for the government's strategy for the development of the Hydrocarbons sector, management of new facilities for the monetization of hydrocarbons and the establishment of an LNG Plant at Vasilikos.	35 years	24 February 2022	Virtual Zoom Meeting		46 minutes
Mrs. Vera Polykarpou	Head of the International Relations Bureau of the Central Committee of AKEL	Extensive understanding and active participation in International Relations, international geopolitics and strategic planning of the island	approx. 15-20 years	28 February 2022	Phone Call, due to the interviewee's busy schedule		17 minutes

Appendix C' - Interview Questions

Table 3

Interview Questions	
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Scenario 1: EU sees EastMed pipeline as means (a form of i from russia ukraine conflict) for redirecting natural gas imports from Russia amidst war	1. How do you believe the tensions between Russia, the EU, the US and Ukraine impact Cyprus in terms of energy trade? Could the pipeline be used as a form of diversification from reliance on Russian gas for the EU?
	2. On the other hand, Cyprus has had good foreign relations with Russia for many areas, which are now at risk. If the EU applies sanctions on Russia, how do you believe, in these conditions, the pipeline will impact the island economy?
	3. Turkey has been trying to create regional cooperations with Middle Eastern and Eastern Mediterranean states, in addition to trying to act as a mediator in the Russian-Ukrainian crisis. How could that change the Russia-Turkey relationship, and could there be a positive impact for Cyprus?
Scenario 2: Responding to the EU energy diversification plans through employing blue hydrogen	4. Could the pipeline be used for the transportation of blue hydrogen (make hydrogen through natural gas)?
	5. Would something like that help the island's economy? Will it attract more capital and investors that opt for a carbon neutral future and encourage regional energy collaborations?
	6. Cyprus is in the EU, therefore should follow its rules and regulations, something that for instance Middle Eastern states don't. Will Cyprus using blue hydrogen improve its geostrategic position?
Scenario 3: Delimitation of EEZ between Turkey and Kastelorizo in favour of Turkey	7. By employing proper green energy diplomacy and seeking regional collaborations with regional non-EU energy players, could Cyprus be the node to connect i.e. Middle Eastern states trading with the EU? Could that improve energy security against Turkish threats?
	8. Has the EastMed pipeline worsened the Greece-Turkey relationships in terms of delimitation of EEZ for its islands, namely Kastelorizo? Should Greece accept that Kastelorizo will have a much smaller EEZ than it is requesting, in order to ease tensions with Turkey?
Scenario 4: Cyprus becomes a regional energy hub	9. Do you believe that will create additional security issues with Cyprus if Turkey signs UNCLOS and takes up some of Kastelorizo EEZ (i.e. more aggressive Turkish action)?
	10. Do you believe it is viable if Cyprus had an LNG plant? Would an FSRU be more flexible and economically viable? Would it cause more tensions with Turkey?
Conclusive questions	11. If the pipeline is the first step in developing Cyprus into a regional energy hub, then it would not be limited to the European market and expand to Asian and Middle Eastern markets. Does that sound like a promising solution to alleviating the country geopolitically? Will it also create security or increase instability with Turkey?
	12. Could the pipeline act as a first step towards Cyprus becoming a connecting node for strengthening diplomatic ties of the EU with the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean states (since it is in the EU and abides by its regulations)?
	13. What is your intake on the impact of the pipeline on the Cypriot economy (value-added jobs, employment, investments, GDP, national debt)? Will it worsen the island's economy by creating tensions or will it enhance it?
	14. What would you say would be the impact on the island's geoeconomic position in the region with the pipeline in operation? Will it attract or instead push away FDI?

Appendix D' - Interview Transcripts

Interview with Mr. Athos Kleanthous

1. How do you believe the tensions between Russia, the EU, the US and Ukraine impact Cyprus in terms of energy trade? Could the pipeline be used as a form of diversification from reliance on Russian gas for the EU?

The EU doesn't export anything, it has no export terminals. The US wants to supply LNG to the EU. It is trying its hardest to remove Russia from the picture and be the only supplier to the EU. It's like selling the drug to the drug addict. If they convince the EU to buy more LNG from them, or if they impose sanctions on Russia, then the US has won. Europe will not see a big impact from the pipeline but it's still a diversification, so it's still beneficial for them. If they put sanctions on Russia because of violation of civil rights, then some countries, excluding Germany of course, will not take so much from Russia and then due to increased prices the EastMed pipeline will really assist. It is a rather small diversification but still is one.

2. On the other hand, Cyprus has had good foreign relations with Russia for many areas, which are now at risk. If the EU applies sanctions on Russia, how do you believe, in these conditions, the pipeline will impact the island economy?

For now Russia would probably see it as a threat especially since the EU wants to redirect its imports away from it. Russia would have been opposed but maybe it will be in favour eventually because it could benefit it. Geopolitics always dictate the outcome, so yes.

3. Turkey has been trying to create regional cooperations with Middle Eastern and Eastern mediterranean states, in addition to trying to act as a mediator in the Russian-Ukrainian crisis. How could that change the Russia-Turkey relationship, and could there be a positive impact for Cyprus?

I am not completely sure.

4. Could the pipeline be used for the transportation of blue hydrogen (make hydrogen through natural gas)?

Blue hydrogen is a complication step actually. It is energy consuming to produce it and also energy to convert it to blue hydrogen. It depends, however, on the Paris summit and EU thoughts on it and the politics behind it. Natural gas is already efficient enough but maybe it is beneficial after developing the proper infrastructure. For instance Germany will still need natural gas and doesn't seem to rush into complete decarbonization, so here blue hydrogen makes sense.

5. Would something like that help the island's economy? Will it attract more capital and investors that opt for a carbon neutral future and encourage regional energy collaborations?

Probably it would help, as it would create new jobs and attract employment from outside Cyprus, so it can help our economy. About investors, probably it will but it is hard to tell.

6. Cyprus is in the EU, therefore should follow its rules and regulations, something that for instance Middle Eastern states don't. Will Cyprus using blue hydrogen improve its geostrategic position?

The island would have some bargaining leverage.

7. By employing proper green energy diplomacy and seeking regional collaborations with regional non-EU energy players, could Cyprus be the node to connect ie. Middle Eastern states trading with the EU? Could that improve energy security against Turkish threats?

It is too soon to tell I believe.

8. Has the EastMed pipeline worsened the Greece-Turkey relationships in terms of delimitation of EEZ for its islands, namely Kastelorizo? Should Greece accept that Kastelorizo will have a much smaller EEZ than it is requesting, in order to ease tensions with Turkey?

The major player that deserves a seat on the table is Turkey. The EastMed acted like a pressure handle to alleviate Cyprus in energy and instead managed to only anger Turkey.

9. Do you believe that will create additional security issues with Cyprus if Turkey signs UNCLOS and takes up some of Kastelorizo EEZ(ie. more aggressive Turkish action)?

Turkey has to sign UNCLOS for the 12 nautical miles. It should be divided in half between Turkey and Kastellorizo.

10. Do you believe it is viable if Cyprus had an LNG plant? Would an FSRU be more flexible and economically viable? Would it cause more tensions with Turkey?

Definitely makes sense and has an impact on the economy in cyprus. Directly and indirectly related to the economy. The problem is that Cyprus is seriously behind in infrastructure. The LNG on top of the pipeline will feed local consumption, GID, and create many value added jobs.

11. If the pipeline is the first step in developing Cyprus into a regional energy hub, then it would not be limited to the European market and expand to asian and Middle Eastern markets. Does that sound like a promising solution to alleviating the country geopolitically? Will it also create security or increase instability with Turkey?

Cyprus will definitely benefit if the pipeline and other energy projects happen with Middle Eastern support. Cyprus could give lower transition fees and give Middle Eastern countries EU benefits.

12. Could the pipeline act as a first step towards Cyprus becoming a connecting node for strengthening diplomatic ties of the EU with the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean states (since it is in the EU and abodes by its regulations)?

It's a game ruled by geopolitics. One day it may seem to turn in a favourable direction with the island being backed up by the US and the EU, and the next, Russia may be forming an alliance with Egypt to benefit from gas trade in the Mediterranean and control the EU even more, therefore dooming it. In that case Cyprus doesn't really stand a chance. Egypt has huge reserves, is already utilising its natural gas and has already facilities and huge demand for natural gas. It is a developing country with huge gas reserves and demand for electricity thus natural gas. Therefore it is crucial that we closely cooperate with it. Also Israel could work as an LNG hub but has a lot of mental opposition however it could cooperate with Cyprus and make its own FSRU as well. It's a zone there, they don't want to risk a land facility, so they want to use FSRU for flexibility and enjoy the advantages of it being disconnected from land. It's important to us as a partner.

13. What is your intake on the impact of the pipeline on the Cypriot economy(value-added jobs, employment, investments, GDP, national debt)? Will it worsen the island's economy by creating tensions or will it enhance it?

It will create lots of value added jobs, create and also support lots of jobs directly and indirectly. It will help many sectors of the economy.

14. What would you say would be the impact on the island's geoeconomic position in the region with the pipeline in operation? Will it attract or instead push away FDI?

It will definitely attract FDI, but only if managed properly by the Cypriot government, which so far doesn't seem like it will go well. Cyprus doesn't yet know how to act geo economically to its advantage and it endangers our prospects.

Interview with Mr. Zenonas Tziarras

1. How do you believe the tensions between Russia, the EU, the US and Ukraine impact Cyprus in terms of energy trade? Could the pipeline be used as a form of diversification from reliance on Russian gas for the EU?

The EastMed pipeline and Cyprus in this case gains more importance. Our gas will of course not be a gamechanger for the EU but will create big geoeconomic benefits for us. We should know how to price it competitively though.

2. On the other hand, Cyprus has had good foreign relations with Russia for many areas, which are now at risk. If the EU applies sanctions on Russia, how do you believe, in these conditions, the pipeline will impact the island economy?

It depends on how the energy market goes by the time it is operational. If it is favourable in 5-6 years, then we could make profits. Also it depends on how we approach the Russian-Ukrainian war and the strategic course we take with Russia in order for the EastMed to help our economy.

3. Turkey has been trying to create regional cooperations with Middle Eastern and Eastern mediterranean states, in addition to trying to act as a mediator in the Russian-Ukrainian crisis. How could that change the Russia-Turkey relationship, and could there be a positive impact for Cyprus?

It is risky for Turkey. That might be the case but it is too soon to tell with certainty.

4. Could the pipeline be used for the transportation of blue hydrogen (make hydrogen through natural gas)?

Blue hydrogen is more technical and I don't have the expertise to evaluate this. I know the EU is very hyped up about it. We should rush with the natural gas plans in general before it's too late for it, and blue hydrogen could be an option for later.

5. Would something like that help the island's economy? Will it attract more capital and investors that opt for a carbon neutral future and encourage regional energy collaborations?

Our position can be greatly alleviated. It is an opportunity for us but we have to really act upon it.

6. Cyprus is in the EU, therefore should follow its rules and regulations, something that for instance Middle Eastern states don't. Will Cyprus using blue hydrogen improve its geostrategic position?

Could probably work and makes sense but it seems like a long term thing. We still don't have a concrete and definite action plan about this so it is hard to tell though it is likely to improve it.

7. By employing proper green energy diplomacy and seeking regional collaborations with regional non-EU energy players, could Cyprus be the node to connect ie. Middle Eastern states trading with the EU? Could that improve energy security against Turkish threats?

Cyprus could use this opportunity to expand the EMGF to a broader energy forum including more countries in it and promote cleaner energy. The EMGF as it is now is creating and multiplying tensions in the region but with more renewable energy it could also use solar and wind energy in common grounds between states and there will be no problem between say Turkey and Lebanon and Turkey could be included as well. Blue hydrogen could then be seen as a transition to less conflict as well through the EMGF as it will be less sensitive geopolitically.

8. Has the EastMed pipeline worsened the Greece-Turkey relationships in terms of delimitation of EEZ for its islands, namely Kastelorizo? Should Greece accept that Kastelorizo will have a much smaller EEZ than it is requesting, in order to ease tensions with Turkey?

It should be decided in the Court of Hague. It will however most probably not benefit neither Turkish nor Greek claims for EEZ. Kastelorizo will probably be given an EEZ but not as much as it had hoped for. It isnt likely that tensions are reduced just by this.

9. Do you believe that will create additional security issues with Cyprus if Turkey signs UNCLOS and takes up some of Kastelorizo EEZ(ie. more aggressive Turkish action)?

Turkey doesn't even recognize the RoC, so even if it gets most of the claimed Kastelorizo EEZ, it will still have issues with Cyprus. Since it will be in the UNCLOS however it is more likely that it abides. The Cyprus Problem resolution is the way forward in this scenario.

10. Do you believe it is viable if Cyprus had an LNG plant? Would an FSRU be more flexible and economically viable? Would it cause more tensions with Turkey?

It is more flexible if we have an FSRU than an LNG plant but both could help us. We will not be limited to one market. Turkey will definitely not like it.

11. If the pipeline is the first step in developing Cyprus into a regional energy hub, then it would not be limited to the European market and expand to asian and Middle Eastern markets. Does that sound like a promising solution to alleviating the country geopolitically? Will it also create security or increase instability with Turkey?

Cyprus could sell even to Asia at much higher prices if it becomes an LNG hub. It will however increase Turkey's claims in the area and reduce the island's security. It could interfere with the LNG vessel's routes. What we can do is build stronger regional partnerships which could create a way of opportunity in mitigating Turkey's attacks. We will have a sort of backing from them.

12. Could the pipeline act as a first step towards Cyprus becoming a connecting node for strengthening diplomatic ties of the EU with the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean states (since it is in the EU and abodes by its regulations)?

It could work but currently we lack diplomacy. We could have so much but sacrifice it for our useless investments and collaborations that only put us in a worse position. Economically strengthening ties with the Middle East and

the EastMed region will help us a lot through energy synergies. On the other hand however there are always geopolitical interests in the middle. Like for instance when UAE strengthened ties with Cyprus and Greece against Turkey only to have them support UAE in front of the EU when it violated the gun embargo violations they had committed. So geopolitical incentives are tricky. We must find out as a country how to transform a new network of collaborations with other states into power and leverage.

13. What is your intake on the impact of the pipeline on the Cypriot economy(value-added jobs, employment, investments, GDP, national debt)? Will it worsen the island's economy by creating tensions or will it enhance it?

If it doesn't ruin our economy, if it doesn't literally explode from any external factors(Turkish aggression), and we pick up the messes, if the deals we get for exporting it are favourable to us, then yes it will assist our economy greatly. There are factors you see? Theoretically it should help the island in jobs creation and competitiveness of our economy.

14. What would you say would be the impact on the island's geoeconomic position in the region with the pipeline in operation? Will it attract or instead push away FDI?

The problem is that when it is constructed, if we mess it up from the political side, we lose our credibility because it's like we sold the idea of the pipeline with triumphs for many years, but then we lose our investors and push away FDI, dooming our geoeconomic position.

Interview with Mr. Charles Ellinas

1. How do you believe the tensions between Russia, the EU, the US and Ukraine impact Cyprus in terms of energy trade? Could the pipeline be used as a form of diversification from reliance on Russian gas for the EU?

It could be but it is uncertain which way the situation will go exactly. It all depends on the geoeconomic interests of the big powers. Cyprus is too weak to make these decisions. The world and the EU will still need natural gas so it is a form of diversification for the EU. It comes down to the politics behind it.

2. On the other hand, Cyprus has had good foreign relations with Russia for many areas, which are now at risk. If the EU applies sanctions on Russia, how do you believe, in these conditions, the pipeline will impact the island economy?

Not answered.

3. Turkey has been trying to create regional cooperations with Middle Eastern and Eastern mediterranean states, in addition to trying to act as a mediator in the Russian-Ukrainian crisis. How could that change the Russia-Turkey relationship, and could there be a positive impact for Cyprus?

Turkey is in a tight spot. It is a big problem for Turkey since it has a relationship with Ukraine through NATO and not only, but also heavily depends on Russia. For Turkey it is better to stay aside instead of meddling, because it could get her in big trouble. Its constant conflicts with the region mainly for energy resources doesn't do her any good either. Cyprus is too weak to benefit from this situation much but it could keep Turkey away if it angers Russia.

4. Could the pipeline be used for the transportation of blue hydrogen(make hydrogen through natural gas)?

The EU will give more attention now to cleaner sources of energy and will support this plan if it is economically viable. No matter its decarbonization targets, it will still probably use natural gas. Our natural gas should be competitive in prices with other exporting states in order for it to benefit our country and have the EU buy it in the form of blue hydrogen. It is a probable scenario but the island should develop proper strategic action in order for us to be able to price it competitively and export blue hydrogen onto the EU.

5. Would something like that help the island's economy? Will it attract more capital and investors that opt for a carbon neutral future and encourage regional energy collaborations?

It will for sure if and only if we know how to strategically plan this to reduce regional threats to create a safe environment.

6. Cyprus is in the EU, therefore should follow its rules and regulations, something that for instance Middle Eastern states don't. Will Cyprus using blue hydrogen improve its geostrategic position?

Not answered.

7. By employing proper green energy diplomacy and seeking regional collaborations with regional non-EU energy players, could Cyprus be the node to connect ie. Middle Eastern states trading with the EU? Could that improve energy security against Turkish threats?

Not answered.

8. Has the EastMed pipeline worsened the Greece-Turkey relationships in terms of delimitation of EEZ for its islands, namely Kastelorizo? Should Greece accept that Kastelorizo will have a much smaller EEZ than it is requesting, in order to ease tensions with Turkey?

At first the EastMed didn't bother Turkey but the geopolitical dimension came in later, at Crans Montana Conference which marked the hiatus in peace talks between Cyprus and Turkey and it became assertive in the area and saw the pipeline as a threat. The only solution to it all is the resolution of the Cyprus Dispute. Solution there will lead to a solution in a secure energy trade and non aggression from Turkey. As for Kastelorizo, Greece needs to accept the result which might be worse for it. Turkey doesn't need to retreat in this. Also it will most definitely not be enough to give Kastelorizo. They should go to the Court of Hague and resolve this if they both agree on it.

9. Do you believe that will create additional security issues with Cyprus if Turkey signs UNCLOS and takes up some of Kastelorizo EEZ(ie. more aggressive Turkish action)?

Turkey isn't likely to sign UNCLOS. It isn't easy to delimitate the EEZ in the area after energy discoveries and ambition to utilise them, especially since Turkey is left out. UNCLOS doesn't decide about how pipelines operate, thus it comes down to how the states approach the matter diplomatically.

10. Do you believe it is viable if Cyprus had an LNG plant? Would an FSRU be more flexible and economically viable? Would it cause more tensions with Turkey?

Cyprus should find additional private capital for such investments. Foreign investment from states we work with and so that it is priced competitively. We can't expect it to work if we sell it at \$8 per barrel when other countries sell it for \$4(Israel). For that though again the Cyprus Problem needs to be resolved so that we are free to trade without their interventions. Both the TRNC and RoC will have rights on the gas and Cyprus might also make new gas discoveries and then it will benefit us all. But for now it would cause more tension with Turkey. We still have to have

someone invest in the infrastructure for an LNG plant in Cyprus in addition to competitive prices. Also because of Turkish pressure it is also uncertain that all will run smoothly. But it is something that has prospects to happen.

11. If the pipeline is the first step in developing Cyprus into a regional energy hub, then it would not be limited to the European market and expand to Asian and Middle Eastern markets. Does that sound like a promising solution to alleviating the country geopolitically? Will it also create security or increase instability with Turkey?

It is a good idea but we need to work fast for it to work and alleviate our position. The ROI will come in 10-20 years and it won't go hand in hand with the EU's environmental goals so we should really hurry up to benefit from it. We should learn from Egypt in terms of energy diplomacy, where their energy minister is cautiously realising their goals and helps their economy. Also strengthening our ties with the region and beyond but will need to see their interests first.

12. Could the pipeline act as a first step towards Cyprus becoming a connecting node for strengthening diplomatic ties of the EU with the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean states (since it is in the EU and abides by its regulations)?

Yes. If the EMFG expands to also a renewable energy forum and involves itself with cleaner energy generation, it could work with international companies such as for instance Boston Consulting, and let them operate and lead the EMFG and by extension Cyprus to a good direction for better results. The future is in our region. Now the cost of renewables is at 18 cents, which is unacceptable. In Spain and Portugal it's at 2.5 cents, so we really need to get more competitive and stop aiming for getting money fast.

13. What is your intake on the impact of the pipeline on the Cypriot economy (value-added jobs, employment, investments, GDP, national debt)? Will it worsen the island's economy by creating tensions or will it enhance it?

It will if we move strategically. For now it is causing more tensions and endangers our geoeconomic position.

14. What would you say would be the impact on the island's geoeconomic position in the region with the pipeline in operation? Will it attract or instead push away FDI?

It all depends on how our diplomacy plays out, which so far hasn't been great. It is making it more dangerous for the island's wellbeing. When talking about energy, we need both politics and investments from private capital. It is not up to states to do that, it is up to companies. But states can create incentives and that's what we should do.

Interview with Mr. Dimitris Tsouknidis

1. How do you believe the tensions between Russia, the EU, the US and Ukraine impact Cyprus in terms of energy trade? Could the pipeline be used as a form of diversification from reliance on Russian gas for the EU?

The pipeline will probably make things more complex in terms of geoeconomics.

2. On the other hand, Cyprus has had good foreign relations with Russia for many years, which are now at risk. If the EU applies sanctions on Russia, how do you believe, in these conditions, the pipeline will impact the island economy?

It will be very difficult for Cyprus to maintain equal distances from the EU and Russia at the same time.

3. Turkey has been trying to create regional cooperations with Middle Eastern and Eastern mediterranean states, in addition to trying to act as a mediator in the Russian-Ukrainian crisis. How could that change the Russia-Turkey relationship, and could there be a positive impact for Cyprus?

The Turkey-Russia relationships are very volatile over time. I think volatility is typically not beneficial, especially for smaller countries like Cyprus.

4. Could the pipeline be used for the transportation of blue hydrogen(make hydrogen through natural gas)?

This is out of my field of expertise.

5. Would something like that help the island's economy? Will it attract more capital and investors that opt for a carbon neutral future and encourage regional energy collaborations?

This is out of my field of expertise.

6. Cyprus is in the EU, therefore should follow its rules and regulations, something that for instance Middle Eastern states don't. Will Cyprus using blue hydrogen improve its geostrategic position?

This is out of my field of expertise.

7. By employing proper green energy diplomacy and seeking regional collaborations with regional non-EU energy players, could Cyprus be the node to connect ie. Middle Eastern states trading with the EU? Could that improve energy security against Turkish threats?

This is out of my field of expertise.

8. Has the EastMed pipeline worsened the Greece-Turkey relationships in terms of delimitation of EEZ for its islands, namely Kastelorizo? Should Greece accept that Kastelorizo will have a much smaller EEZ than it is requesting, in order to ease tensions with Turkey?

This is out of my field of expertise, however I do not think it would be a correct strategy.

9. Do you believe that will create additional security issues with Cyprus if Turkey signs UNCLOS and takes up some of Kastelorizo EEZ(ie. more aggressive Turkish action)?

I find it very improbable for Turkey to sign the law of the sea. This seems very difficult given Turkey's deviations from international law over time.

10. Do you believe it is viable if Cyprus had an LNG plant? Would an FSRU be more flexible and economically viable? Would it cause more tensions with Turkey?

Technically it is viable. I do not see how this may cause further tensions with Turkey.

11. If the pipeline is the first step in developing Cyprus into a regional energy hub, then it would not be limited to the European market and expand to asian and Middle Eastern markets. Does that sound like a promising solution to alleviating the country geopolitically? Will it also create security or increase instability with Turkey?

If the profits are not at least equally shared with Turkey, it will probably increase instability.

12. Could the pipeline act as a first step towards Cyprus becoming a connecting node for strengthening diplomatic ties of the EU with the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean states (since it is in the EU and abides by its regulations)?

I believe so, yes.

13. What is your intake on the impact of the pipeline on the Cypriot economy(value-added jobs, employment, investments, GDP, national debt)? Will it worsen the island's economy by creating tensions or will it enhance it?

It will improve the economy and welfare, but probably at a high and unknown cost of tensions.

14. What would you say would be the impact on the island's geoeconomic position in the region with the pipeline in operation? Will it attract or instead push away FDI?

It should attract FDI.

Interview with Mrs. Vera Polykarpou

1. How do you believe the tensions between Russia, the EU, the US and Ukraine impact Cyprus in terms of energy trade? Could the pipeline be used as a form of diversification from reliance on Russian gas for the EU?

Yes it could be used, but we as a nation should approach it carefully and diplomatically, seeing what's best for our country instead of satisfying NATO and EU. The pipeline can be used as a diversification method but should be planned in such a way that it alleviates our geostrategic position in the area without angering the big guy(Russia).

2. On the other hand, Cyprus has had good foreign relations with Russia for many areas, which are now at risk. If the EU applies sanctions on Russia, how do you believe, in these conditions, the pipeline will impact the island economy?

They indeed have been compromised a little bit already. After the sanctions we applied on Russia, the banking sector saw significant damage with Russian investors removing their capital from the island. Additionally when the pipeline comes to life and operates it will be difficult to maintain good relations with Russia with the current conditions, so if we don't change our strategic planning that has to do with energy diplomacy, the situation in Russia and our former good relations will fluctuate tremendously. Russia has been an important ally for us but we decided to go with the US and support its ambitions, endangering our relationship, our economy, trade and tourism. We should cooperate with Russia in terms of energy, because it is the only one that could really have our back.

3. Turkey has been trying to create regional cooperations with Middle Eastern and Eastern Mediterranean states, in addition to trying to act as a mediator in the Russian-Ukrainian crisis. How could that change the Russia-Turkey relationship, and could there be a positive impact for Cyprus?

We have already seen that their relationship started worsening. For now Turkey is playing it well, diplomatically, but I wonder for how long that will last. Turkey needs Russia for its energy and trade from many sectors.

4. Could the pipeline be used for the transportation of blue hydrogen(make hydrogen through natural gas)?

It is too technical for me but that could work.

5. Would something like that help the island's economy? Will it attract more capital and investors that opt for a carbon neutral future and encourage regional energy collaborations?

Not answered due to limited time.

6. Cyprus is in the EU, therefore should follow its rules and regulations, something that for instance Middle Eastern states don't. Will Cyprus using blue hydrogen improve its geostrategic position?

Not answered due to limited time.

7. By employing proper green energy diplomacy and seeking regional collaborations with regional non-EU energy players, could Cyprus be the node to connect ie. Middle Eastern states trading with the EU? Could that improve energy security against Turkish threats?

It would probably be a good idea and should be pushed but It is hard to say for now. For sure creating regional strong ties will help us and improve our geopolitical framework and Middle Eastern countries will in the future need to diversify their energy, so Cyprus could become the connecting spot for Europe and them(Middle Eastern states).

8. Has the EastMed pipeline worsened the Greece-Turkey relationships in terms of delimitation of EEZ for its islands, namely Kastelorizo? Should Greece accept that Kastelorizo will have a much smaller EEZ than it is requesting, in order to ease tensions with Turkey?

It for sure had an effect on the delimitation of EEZ between them and Turkish aggression in the area. Turkey was supposed to be an important player but was left out and it wants to take anything it can. That could be one way to go, however the matter is very complex. They both should agree on it.

9. Do you believe that will create additional security issues with Cyprus if Turkey signs UNCLOS and takes up some of Kastelorizo EEZ(ie. more aggressive Turkish action)?

Again they both should agree on the delimitation of EEZ. The only way we will be secure is if the Cyprus Problem is resolved. Then there will be a clear cut delimitation of EEZ, nautical and aerial sovereignty, boundaries which will be more clear, and Turkey can even be involved in trade with us.

10. Do you believe it is viable if Cyprus had an LNG plant? Would an FSRU be more flexible and economically viable? Would it cause more tensions with Turkey?

Yes that will probably be beneficial for us, but we should closely look at the politics of it all. The Cyprus Dispute should be resolved for us to move forward. Economists or specialists in the hydrocarbons industries will have a better view at this since it is too technical for me, but if done carefully it would help us also ease tensions in the region.

11. If the pipeline is the first step in developing Cyprus into a regional energy hub, then it would not be limited to the European market and expand to asian and Middle Eastern markets. Does that sound like a promising solution to alleviating the country geopolitically? Will it also create security or increase instability with Turkey?

When Christofias was president, he had tried to make deals for LNG and FSRU in order to cover the island's energy needs, minimise our carbon footprint, make a better energy mix for Cyprus, allow for the island to export gas and

also use our LNG facilities to trade with Egypt and Israel. But now we have become a vehicle for the development of the Arab NATO and a node to help realise the New American Century. We will have to be very careful who we are engaging in diplomatic ties with, but it will be good for us to have good allies in the area.

12. Could the pipeline act as a first step towards Cyprus becoming a connecting node for strengthening diplomatic ties of the EU with the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean states (since it is in the EU and abodes by its regulations)?

It will mean a lot for us, but so far Cyprus is weak in diplomacy. We should strengthen our ties with the region so as to not fear imminent threats from Turkey.

13. What is your intake on the impact of the pipeline on the Cypriot economy(value-added jobs, employment, investments, GDP, national debt)? Will it worsen the island's economy by creating tensions or will it enhance it?

Not answered due to limited time.

14. What would you say would be the impact on the island's geoeconomic position in the region with the pipeline in operation? Will it attract or instead push away FDI?

Not answered due to limited time.

Appendix D' - Literature review table

Table 3

Authors	Origin	Title	Purpose	Type of source	Major themes
Luttwak (1990)	USA	From Geopolitics to Geo-Economics: Logic of Conflict, Grammar of Commerce	Distinction between geopolitics and geoeconomics	Research	Logic of commerce, world of business, world of politics
Goldthau, Rickert and Stetter (2020)	USA	Leviathan Awakens: Gas Finds, Energy Governance, and the Emergence of the Eastern Mediterranean as a Geopolitical Region	How energy resources can be the core focus of regional governance	Research	Role of energy in regionalization processes, Eastern Mediterranean: an area of conflict and opportunity

Tziarras (2019)	Cyprus	The New Geopolitics of the Eastern Mediterranean: Trilateral Partnerships and Regional Security	Identify how trilateral partnerships play a role in creating regional security	Research	Trilateral partnerships as means for regional security,
Moran D. & Russel J.A. (2009)	USA	Energy security and global politics : the militarization of resource management	Evaluate energy security as a means of warfare	Research	Energy security, military competition
Klare (2014)	USA	Twenty-first century energy wars: how oil and gas are fuelling global conflicts	Competition for energy resources will be a central focus of international affairs	Research	Energy diplomacy, energy competition, international relations
Nathanson R. & Levy R. (2012)	Tel Aviv	Natural gas in the eastern mediterranean casus belli or chance for regional cooperation?	Investigate whether or not hydrocarbon discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean has caused geopolitical tensions	Research	Hydrocarbon discoveries, geopolitics, conflict
Niglia (2015)	Georgia	The protection of critical energy infrastructure against emerging security challenges.	Assessment of economic impact of the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline on Albania,	Research	Energy infrastructure impact on economy
Mehmet, O. & Yorucu V. (2020)	Turkey	Modern Geopolitics of Eastern Mediterranean Hydrocarbons in an Age of Energy Transformation. Lecture Notes in Energy	Assessment of modern geopolitics of hydrocarbon resources in the territorial waters of the Eastern Mediterranean	Research	Using energy cooperations for sustainable energy and economic prosperity

Baroudi, R., Cagan, D., & Toperich, S. (2020)	Brazil	Maritime Disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean: The Way Forward	Finding a way of resolving maritime disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean	Research	Dispute resolution through international collaborations
Norouzi N.(2021)	Iran	An investigation of oil and gas geopolitical situation in the eastern Mediterranean region	Investigates the energy geopolitics in the eastern Mediterranean and North African region	Article	Libya's oil geopolitics and challenges in the eastern Mediterranean region
Colombo & Soler i Lecha (2021)	Spain	Europe and the 'New' Middle East	Assesses the implications of those shifts for the European Union and its capacity to shape or adapt to new realities	Research	Intra-state conflicts in the Middle East, volatile alliances and rivalries