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Opinions

Energy – A Geopolitical Game Changer?

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Abstract

Energy trade cannot overcome longstanding political conflicts. There are no ‘peace pipelines’ anywhere in the world. Rather peace is a condition for investment in pipelines and other forms of energy infrastructure. Where political breakthroughs have been achieved, however, energy trade can reinforce cooperation between states and contribute to regional stability. These considerations are particularly pertinent to the Cyprus settlement talks and Middle East Peace Process, against the background of energy discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Keywords:

Energy | geopolitics | pipelines | conflict

Notes

[1] Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, “President Gül Delivers Speech at Energy and Economy Summit”, Istanbul, 21 November 2013, http://www.tccb.gov.tr/news/397/87824/president-gul-delivers-speech-at-economy-and-energy-summit.html

[2] M. Leigh, “Exploring the Cyprus-Israel Alliance in the Eastern Mediterranean”, GBF Blog, 20 April 2012, http://blog.gmfus.org/2012/04/30/exploring-the-cyprus-israel-alliance-in-the-eastern-mediterranean/.

[3] Author’s interviews, November 2013.

[4] Shaffer, Energy Politics, 30.

[5] Gazprom is seeking a stake in Eastern Mediterranean gas principally to safeguard its role as dominant supplier to Europe.

[6] Shaffer, Energy Politics, 28.

[7] On the conditions applying to crossing the ‘Green Line’, see the relevant EU Council Regulation and subsequent amendments.

[8] For an overall survey of Israel’s offshore gas resources, see Henderson, Energy Discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean.

[9] “Noble: Cyprus Gas World Class”, Cyprus Mail, 4 October 2013, http://cyprus-mail.com/2013/10/04/noble-cyprus-gas-world-class/.

[10] See Engel, Managing New Hydrocarbon Wealth.

[11] See Henderson, Natural Gas Export Options.

[12] Scovazzi, Maritime Boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean.

[13] For more on natural gas trade and peace, see Shaffer, “Natural Gas Supply Stability”, 114-25.

[14] “Supreme Court Rejects Petition to Halt Israel’s Natural Gas Exports”, Haaretz, 21 October 2013, http://www.haaretz.com/business/.premium-1.553687.

[15] “The widespread assumption that pipeline sales of gas from Cyprus (or Israel) to Turkey would be the most attractive and natural export option in purely commercial terms is open to question.” Giamourides, Natural Gas in Cyprus, 16-9.

[16] Author’s interviews, May 2013.

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[20] See Communication from the Commission, Long-term Infrastructure Vision, and the accompanying list of Projects of Common Interest.

[21] European Parliament and Council, “Safety of Offshore Oil and Gas Operations”, and amending Directive, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:178:0066:0106:EN:PDF.

[22] Notably, the 1976 Barcelona Convention for Protection against Pollution in the Mediterranean Sea and its protocols.

[23] “Oilspill in Northern Cyprus Threatens Wildlife, Tourism”, Reuters, 17 July 2013, http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/17/cyprus-spill-idUSL6N0FN1Z320130717.

[24] Notably, the 1995 Cooperation Agreement between Israel, Cyprus and Egypt, concluded in the framework of the Barcelona Convention, which requires the parties to assist their neighbours in the event of oil spills.

Additional information

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