

Blue Economy is Essential for All of the Euro-Mediterranean Nations



ATHENS: (Agencies) No single factor is more important to cross-border cooperation than the rule of law, a leading energy policy expert told this week's EU-Arab World Summit in Athens.



Greek Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis greeting Energy expert Mr. Roudi Baroudi at the 4th EU Arab-World Summit in Athens, October 2019

Several high-profile speakers addressed opening-day sessions on Tuesday, including Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades, former French Prime Minister Francois Fillon, and former Italian Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema. Most of these dealt in broad strokes with topics of mutual EU/Arab interest such as economic challenges, the immigration crisis, and shared interests in the Mediterranean's rapidly expanding oil and gas industry.

On Wednesday, speakers delved more deeply into specific issues, among them Greece's Deputy Minister for Energy and the Environment, Gerassimos Thomas, who focused on the geopolitical relationship(s) among undersea gas resources, liquified natural gas (LNG) activities, the delivery of East Med resources to Europe, and associated concerns about

environmental impacts.

This and other in-depth talks prompted Roudi Baroudi, CEO of Doha-based independent consultancy Energy and Environment Holding, to remark that with such a complex web of factors at play among so many countries, the only logical approach was to ensure that any and all stakeholders willingly submit to the same rules.



Mr. Roudi Baroudi with H.E. Mr. Massimo D'Alema, former Prime Minister of Italy

“In order to fully appreciate and safely exploit all of the advantages offered by well-managed maritime resource, there can be no substitute for common rules and standards,” Baroudi told attendees and journalists on the sidelines of the summit. “This blue economy could be a game-changer for countries all around the Mediterranean and even further afield.”

Baroudi, a 40-year veteran of the energy business who has helped shape both public and private policies on several continents, said that “the best, the cheapest, and the easiest way” to ensure timely and sustainable development for all

players to honor their obligations under international law.

“If these countries just do their basic duty under the United Nations Charter, which is to seek the peaceful resolution of disputes, we’ll already be halfway there,” Baroudi said. “If they also make policy decisions based on the principles of Euro-Med partnership, then everyone wins.”

Baroudi also mentioned that the EU, for instance, has a clear interest in promoting full Maritime demarcation, not just because it would remove uncertainties affecting its southern members, but also because it would open up new opportunities for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership by continuing dialogue, reducing frictions and strengthening business ties.



Former Prime Minister of France, Francois Fillon and Energy expert Roudi Baroudi in discussions during the 4th EU-Arab World Summit in Athens, October 2019

“The peoples of the Mediterranean deserve the chance at affluence that new oil and gas revenues would provide. They

deserve the modern schools, hospitals, roads, and other infrastructure that would reinvigorate their economies, eliminate poverty, and reduce inequality .”

Baroudi concluded that it is very important to increase public awareness of the Maritime domain for the blue economy to really take hold all of the Euro Mediterranean Nations enjoy and to integrate fair, diplomatic, political, legal and scientific dimensions/approaches.