

CYPRUS: THE EURO-MED REGION'S ULTIMATE 'COUNTRY OF COMMON INTEREST' IS ABOUT TO HAVE ITS MOMENT



By Roudi Baroudi

Lebanon, Beirut – 07/01/2026

January 1 marked a watershed moment for Cyprus, the first day of a six-month stint in the rotating presidency of the European Union that will give the tiny island nation massive influence, not just over the current agenda, but also the future direction of the entire EU and the destiny of the Eastern Mediterranean region.

The real significance of the moment lay not in the position itself, though, nor even in the considerable (but temporary) increase of Nicosia's raw political power. In fact, this is not even the first time that Cyprus has held the presidency; that came in the second half of 2012.

Instead, what makes this time different is that a) the Cypriot leadership has laid out a highly ambitious agenda, one designed to generate recurring benefits for both the EU and its Mediterranean neighbors; b) regional circumstances cry out for precisely the kind of engagement that Nicosia envisions; and c) Cyprus today is far better-equipped to advance its politico-diplomatic goals than it was in 2012, not just because its economy and finances are in better shape, but also because it is now on the verge of becoming an oil and gas producer and exporter. If well-managed, this latter point figures to drive growth for decades to come, enabling historic investments in education, healthcare, transport, and other drivers of greater economic competitiveness and better living standards, not to mention greater ability to influence – and stabilize – the surrounding region.

None of this has happened overnight. Geography and history have situated Cyprus – both literally and figuratively – athwart what is both our planet's most long-lived maritime trade route and its most famous crossroads of different languages, cultures, faiths, and ethnicities. The island's copper and other resources have always had their own attractiveness, rising or falling in value depending on the period, but it was location – specifically its proximity to each of Asia, Africa, and Europe – that made Cyprus a strategic prize for millennia, and that same location gives it enormous potential today.

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strategic prize for millennia, and that same location gives it enormous potential today.

For decades, the centerpiece of this toolkit has been a foreign policy which seeks friendly relations with as many countries – especially neighboring ones – as possible. And it has worked. Both during and since the Cold War, for example, Nicosia has been able to maintain working relationships with governments on both sides of the East/West divide, and its search for neutrality has been equally assiduous on the Arab-Israeli front. By habitually staking out the middle ground, Cyprus has not only insulated itself against most external problems, but also steadily burnished its bona fides as a helpful player on the international stage.

All of this helped, but it was not enough. Try as Cyprus might to parlay its neutrality into tangible benefits at home and abroad, its economy remained fragile and unbalanced, distracting and undermining the freedom of action of successive governments. After its banks had to be rescued with EU bailout funds in 2012-2013, support began to grow for reforms that would prevent future meltdowns, restore the stability of the financial services industry, and rebuild its ability to finance private and public activities alike.

By the time President Nikos Christodoulides took office in early 2023, Cypriots of all persuasions were fed up with “business as usual”. Because he had run as an independent and attracted support from a broad cross-section of society, he had a strong mandate to make sweeping changes, and these have included an increase in the minimum wage, income tax cuts for working people, more effective financial regulation, and a far-reaching program for digital transformation. His administration also has run a tight fiscal ship, dramatically reducing public debt (from 115% of GDP in 2020 to a forecast 65% for 2025) and thereby making more credit available to the private sector. As a result, Cyprus’ sovereign rating was upgraded by all three of the major credit rating agencies in

2024, and as of this writing, two of them regard its outlook as positive, while the third views it as stable.

At the same time, Christodoulides' background as a professional diplomat has empowered him to focus closely and effectively on foreign policy, recognizing its capacity to help shield the island against exogenous shocks, shore up the stability required to pursue its domestic social and economic development goals, and restore regional stability in the aftermath of the war in Gaza. It is no surprise, therefore, that his government has been at the center of international efforts to assist Palestinian refugees affected by the conflict, making Cyprus the staging ground for a vital flow of relief supplies.

Earlier this year, Christodoulides also teamed up with his Lebanese counterpart, President Joseph Aoun, to make sure their respective negotiating teams finally concluded a long-awaited maritime boundary agreement. The MBA clearly defines who owns what on the seabed, making both countries' offshore hydrocarbon sectors more attractive, especially to the major oil and gas companies whose capabilities will be required to explore, develop, and extract the resources in question. Nicosia and Beirut are considering several other agreements as well, including ones that would expand cooperation in electricity and other fields, but the MBA was crucial because of the doubts it removed and the doors it opened.

All of these factors are steering the entire Eastern Mediterranean region to what can only be described as its "Cyprus moment": the day when this miniscule country finally rises to its full stature as an exemplar of effective governance at home and a voice for peace and prosperity abroad. By some measures, this moment has already arrived, but the first exports of Cypriot natural gas to the European mainland will leave no doubt, and those are currently planned for late 2027.

Some say that timeline will be difficult to meet, but the positive effects are already being felt, and historians looking back will rightly regard the precise start state as a footnote. The economy has responded well to treatment, growth is expected to average 3% for the next couple of years, and diversification is already under way, including a variety of technology-related businesses that are helping to reduce the island's traditional reliance on tourism and construction.

Most importantly, the buzz generated by offshore hydrocarbons has attracted the attention of international investors, and they like what they see: in addition to its prime location and increasingly sophisticated workforce, Cyprus also offers some of the EU's most favorable tax conditions, strong investment protections, and a common law legal system modeled on the United Kingdom's, making it more familiar and easier to use for many outsiders. The result? Over the past few years, hundreds of companies have relocated to Cyprus, including some 270 in 2024 alone, adding at least 10,000 new jobs to the island's economy.

When gas production starts adding extra motive force to the economy, even more opportunities will open up. The advent of domestic energy production will not only spur employment both directly and indirectly, but also reduce the country's need for expensive energy imports, and put downward pressure on domestic energy prices across the board, imparting a key competitive advantage on the entire economy. If all goes according to plan, this would be just the beginning, because while the savings and security enabled by production will be significant, the really lucrative next step will be exports, and Western Europe – the world's hungriest energy market – is right next door.

As luck would have it, one of the island's first commercially operational undersea gas fields figures to be Cronos, which lies within easy distance of existing Egyptian infrastructure, meaning its production can be easily piped to the Egyptian

processing facility at Damietta and then delivered to European customers by LNG carrier. Nicosia's plan is for this flow to begin in 2027, but again, that is just the beginning: Cyprus also expects the nearby Aphrodite field to be a major money spinner, and the plan there is to install a Floating Production Storage and Offloading Unit directly above the deposit. This would enable both dry gas shipments for use in Egypt and further production of LNG for export further afield.

In the longer term, other streams are under consideration as well, including undersea pipelines to Greece, Italy, and/or (one day) even Turkey, and possibly a fully fledged liquefaction plant onshore that would be far and away the largest infrastructure project in Cypriot history. The investments being made and planned now are expected to fundamentally alter the path of Cyprus' economic and social development. What is more, if and when the time comes, the same infrastructure could also be used to help neighbors like Lebanon and Syria, both of whose coasts are less than 100 nautical miles away, to get their own gas to market. That could be crucial in enabling both of those countries to start recovering and rebuilding after decades of stagnation, and like Cyprus itself, the EU at large has a vested interest in seeing peace and prosperity spread across the Levant.

These and other factors give Cyprus' strategy a level of importance that goes beyond the purely national. Gas exports to Europe also will help increase the EU's energy independence, for example, further reducing continuing dependence on Russian energy supplies, and strengthening Europe's position in any negotiations over the situation in Ukraine. An LNG plant also would make affordable primary energy supplies available to several African countries, enabling them to pursue the electrification strategies they need to modernize their own economies. Again, Europe has countless reasons to want a stabler, happier Africa on its doorstep, beginning with the fact that this would

automatically reduce the flow of undocumented migrants making their way across the Med.

The Cypriot approach is nothing less than inspiring, especially since it springs from the very same wells of good will, good governance, and good sense that inspired the Barcelona Declaration more than 30 years ago. The EU envisioned by Barcelona, a strong and cohesive bloc closely integrated with vibrant neighborhoods in the MENA region, has been long-delayed by the collapse of what was then a promising Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and some countries have largely given up on that dream.

Clearly, Cyprus is not one of those countries. Instead, it has wagered on cooperation, weaving good governance and sensible diplomacy into a bold and hopeful venture.

No longer is Cyprus just a sunny little island filled with charming holiday homes and ringed with the Mediterranean's cleanest beaches; now it is also going to be a regional energy hub, a magnet for international investment, a docking mechanism to help its non-EU neighbors access European markets, and a catalyst for EU dialogue and engagement with Africa and Asia. In short, the country has refashioned itself into the ultimate "project of common interest" – a venture that serves so many useful purposes, both inside and outside the bloc, that it verily demands support from Brussels.

The before and after contrast is increasingly striking. Once a fragile neophyte dependent on handouts from Brussels, today's Cyprus has transformed itself into the very model of a Euro-Mediterranean country envisioned by the Barcelona process: a hopeful, peaceful, and universally useful land whose success promises only more opportunities for its friends and neighbors.

Cyprus: The Euro-Med region's ultimate 'country of common interest' is about to have its moment

LEBTALKS INTERVIEW: INTERNATIONAL ENERGY EXPERT ROUDI BAROUDI APPLAUDS 'HISTORIC' LEBANON-CYPRUS DEAL, DISMISSES 'BASELESS' CRITICISMS FROM NEIGHBORS



Following criticism of the Lebanon-Cyprus Maritime Boundary Agreement (MBA) by the governments of Israel and Turkiye, LebTalks spoke with energy and policy expert Roudi Baroudi,

who has authored several books and studies on sea borders in the Eastern Mediterranean. Baroudi praised the pact as “full of positives” for the interests of both parties and stressed the words of Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, who pledged after signing the MBA that “this agreement targets no one and excludes no one.”

LebTalks: How significant is the signing of the maritime boundary agreement between Lebanon and Cyprus?

RB: The official signing of the Lebanon-Cyprus deal is a major achievement, one that confers important advantages on both parties. This process was delayed for a very long time for no good reason, so President Joseph Aoun and the government deserve congratulations for having seized the initiative, and for having seen the job through to completion. So do Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides and his team, because they did the same thing. What made this historic agreement possible – after an impasse lasting almost two decades – was that Lebanon finally had a president who both understood the need for an MBA and made achieving it a top priority.

LebTalks: What does Lebanon gain by signing this deal?

RB: The agreement, which was reached by the negotiating teams in September, provides several benefits for both countries in the short, medium, and long terms.

The new equidistance line between the two states, defined according to the rules and guidelines of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), provides a fair and largely uniform boundary between the two brotherly countries' maritime zones. Most of the new turning points used to draw the line have moved in Lebanon's favor compared to the earlier negotiation in 2011, giving it an extra 10,200 meters on its western front while Cyprus received 2,760 meters.

Crucially, the MBA wipes away all overlapping claims caused by previous uncertainty over the precise location of the border.

Accordingly, this eliminates 108 km² of (map attached) Lebanese offshore blocks that were actually in Cypriot waters, as well as 14 km² of Cypriot blocks which were also on the wrong side of the line.

Apart from removing a key risk for would-be investors, the agreement also contributes to stability and security by providing clarity and thereby enabling easier cooperation, not just bilateral, but also, potentially, involving other states as well. It really is full of positives for both Lebanon and Cyprus, and therefore for the region as a whole.

LebTalks: What should Lebanon do to follow up on this agreement?

RB: To make the most of this clearer playing field, the logical next step is for Lebanon and Cyprus to immediately start drafting a joint development agreement, which would allow them to have a smooth partnership in place for any hydrocarbon reserves which are found to straddle their maritime boundary.

Perhaps the most important feature of the Lebanon-Cyprus MBA is that it provides a clear and stable starting point, putting Lebanon in ideal position to finish defining its maritime zones. The new line means that Lebanon's existing maritime boundary arrangements with Israel, signed in 2022, should be tweaked a little, but it also makes it easier to do that – and to negotiate a similar agreement in the north with Syria when that country's new leadership is ready to do so.



LebTalks: What about the objections voiced by Israel and Turkiye?

RB: With all due respect, these claims and complaints are completely baseless. As President Aoun has stressed from the very day it was signed, this accord targets no one, excludes no one, challenges no one else's borders, and undermines no one else's interests. I know there has been some negative commentary from both Israel and Turkiye, but there really is nothing here for anyone to be upset about. The line agreed to by Lebanon and Cyprus, which Turkiye has claimed is 'unfair' to residents of the self-styled 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus', is literally several kilometers away from any waters claimed by the TRNC. Beirut and Nicosia were very careful to make sure of this.

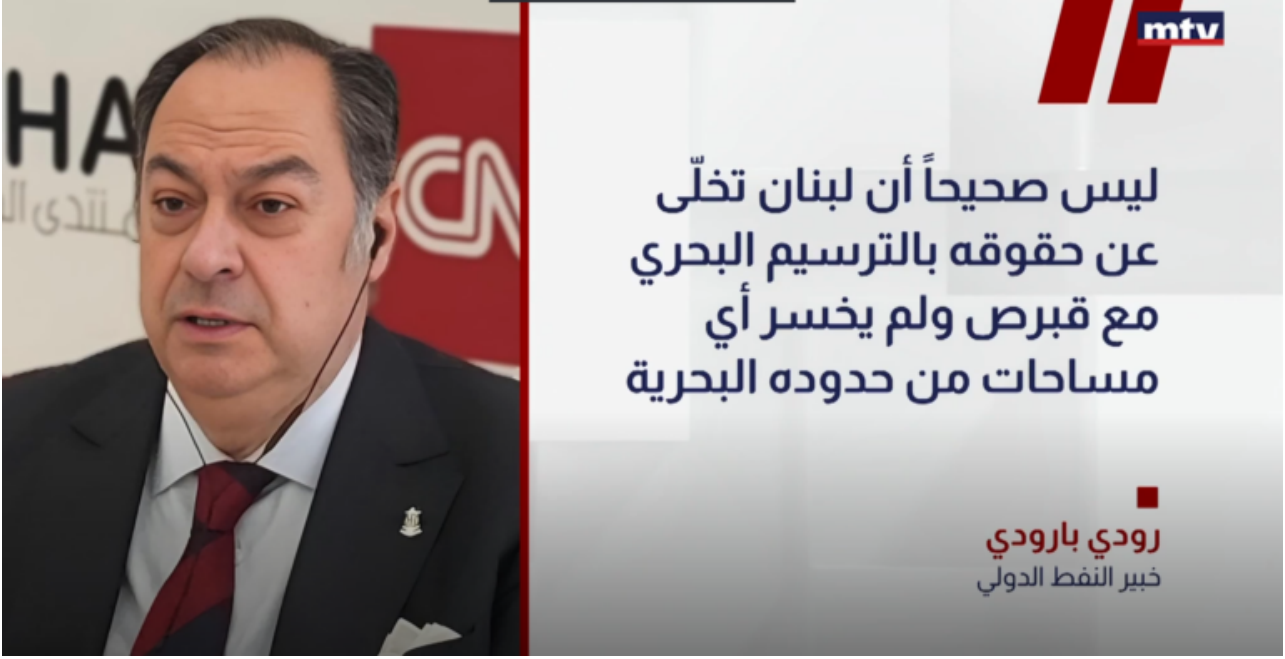
As for the Israelis, the only material change relating to the Lebanon-Cyprus line is that it pushes the Israel-Cyprus line in Cyprus' favor. But that's not Lebanon's fault. Or Cyprus' or anyone else's. It's just a fact of new mapping technologies, which today are far more precise and more accurate than those used when the Israel-Cyprus line was drawn

in their 2011 treaty.

On that subject, I would also note for all stakeholders in the East Med that while Lebanon and Cyprus are the region's only full-fledged members of UNCLOS, all states are subject to its rules and precedents, which have become part of Customary International Law. Since the Lebanon-Cyprus deal adheres strictly to those rules and the science behind them, the criticisms haven't got a legal leg to stand on. This is especially true with regard to Israel, whose own treaty with Cyprus was negotiated on the basis of the very same laws, rules, and science.

I have to assume that a lot of this is posturing, that both Israel and Turkiye will settle down once they've had more time to analyze the deal and see that, far from damaging them in any way, it could help all concerned by contributing to regional stability and economic growth. And again, I would go back to Aoun's words on signing day, when he declared that "this agreement should be a foundation for wider regional cooperation, replacing the language of violence, war, and ambitions of domination with stability and prosperity."

اتفاية ترسيم الحدود البحرية مع قبرص



https://euromenaenergy.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/WhatsApp-Video-2025-11-05-at-21.02.16_2f318946.mp4

What Africans want from COP30



The upcoming UN Climate Change Conference (COP30) will be the first to take place in the Amazon, sending a powerful symbolic message about the central role developing economies must play in the global response to the climate crisis. But at a time of geopolitical fragmentation and low trust in multilateralism, symbolism is not enough. Developing economies must plan and propel the green transition. Africa is no exception.

So far, Africa's climate narrative has been one of victimhood: the continent contributes less than 4% of global greenhouse-gas emissions, but it is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. This disparity fuelled the calls for "climate justice" that helped to produce ambitious climate-financing pledges from the industrialised economies at past COPs. But with those pledges going unfulfilled, and Africa's climate-finance needs rising fast, moral appeals are clearly not enough.

A shift to a more strategy-oriented discourse is already underway. The Second Africa Climate Summit (ACS2), which took place in Addis Ababa last month, positioned the continent as a

united actor capable of shaping global climate negotiations. It also produced several initiatives, such as the Africa Climate Innovation Compact and the African Climate Facility, that promise to strengthen Africa's position in efforts to ensure a sustainable future.

Instead of continuing to wait for aid, Africa is now seeking to attract investment in its green transition, not because rich countries "owe" Africans – though they do – but rather because Africa can help the world tackle climate change. But success will require progress on four fronts, all of which will be addressed at COP30.

The first is the cost of capital. Because systemic bias is embedded in credit-rating methodologies and global prudential rules, African countries face the world's highest borrowing costs. This deters private capital, without which climate finance cannot flow at scale. While multilateral development banks (MDBs) can help to bridge the gap, they typically favour loans – which increase African countries' already-formidable debt burdens – rather than grants.

At COP29, developed economies agreed to raise "at least" \$300bn per year for developing-country climate action by 2035, as part of a wider goal for all actors to mobilise at least \$1.3tn per year. If these targets are to be reached, however, systemic reform is essential. This includes changes to MDB governance, so that African countries have a greater voice, and increased grant-based financing. Reform also must include recognition of African financial institutions with preferred creditor status, and the cultivation of a new Africa-led financial architecture that lowers the cost of capital.

The second area where progress is essential is carbon markets. Despite its huge potential for nature-based climate solutions, Africa captures only 16% of the global carbon-credit market. Moreover, the projects are largely underregulated and poorly priced, with limited community involvement. Africa is now at

risk of falling into a familiar trap: supplying cheap offsets for external actors' emissions, while reaping few benefits for its people.

While some African countries are developing their own carbon-market regulations, a fragmented system will have limited impact. What Africa needs is an integrated carbon market, regulated by Africans, to ensure the quality of projects, set fair prices, and channel revenues toward local development priorities, including conservation, renewable energy, and resilient agriculture. This system should be linked with Article 6 of the Paris climate agreement, which aims to facilitate the voluntary trading of carbon credits among countries.

The third imperative for Africa at COP30 is to redefine adaptation. Rather than treating it primarily as a humanitarian project, governments must integrate adaptation into their industrial policies. After all, investment in climate-resilient agriculture, infrastructure, and water systems generates jobs, fosters innovation, and spurs market integration.

By linking adaptation to industrialisation, Africa can continue what it started at ACS2, shifting the narrative from vulnerability to value creation. Africa should push for this approach to be reflected in the indicators for the Global Goal on Adaptation, which are set to be finalised at COP30. The continent's leaders should also call for adaptation finance to be integrated into broader trade and technology frameworks.

The final priority area for Africa at COP30 is critical minerals. Africa possesses roughly 85% of the world's manganese, 80% of its platinum and chromium, 47% of its cobalt, 21% of its graphite, and 6% of its copper. In 2022, the Democratic Republic of the Congo alone accounted for over 70% of global cobalt production.

But Africa knows all too well that natural-resource wealth does not necessarily translate into economic growth and development. Only by building value chains on the continent can Africa avoid the “resource curse” and ensure that its critical-mineral wealth generates local jobs and industries. This imperative must be reflected in discussions within the Just Transition Work Programme at COP30.

These four priorities are linked by a deeper philosophical imperative. The extractive logic of the past – in which industrialisation depended on exploitation and destruction – must give way to a more holistic, just, and balanced approach, which recognises that humans belong to nature, not the other way around. Africa can help to lead this shift, beginning at COP30.

The barriers to progress are formidable. China likes to tout South-South solidarity, but it does not necessarily put its money where its mouth is. The European Union is struggling to reconcile competing priorities and cope with political volatility. The US will not attend COP30 at all, potentially emboldening others to resist ambitious action. If consensus proves elusive, parties might pursue “mini-lateral” deals, which sideline Africa.

When it comes to the green transition, Africa’s interests are everyone’s interests. If the continent is locked into poverty and fossil-fuel dependency, global temperatures will continue to rise rapidly. But if Africa is empowered to achieve green industrialisation, the rest of the world will gain a critical ally in the fight for a sustainable future. – Project Syndicate

- *Carlos Lopes, COP30 Special Envoy for Africa, is Chair of the African Climate Foundation Board and a professor at the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance at the University of Cape Town.*

Σε συνομιλίες η Κύπρος για την ΑΟΖ με τον Λίβανο. Οι επαφές που κάνει ο πρόεδρος της Κύπρου



Οι τεταμένες σχέσεις Ισραήλ-Λιβάνου και οι ραγδαίες εξελίξεις στη Μέση Ανατολή έχουν κινητοποιήσει τη Λευκωσία για επαφές υψηλού επιπέδου για την επικύρωση της ΑΟΖ με το Λίβανο. Έτσι ο πρόεδρος της Κύπρου Νίκος Χριστοδουλίδης συναντήθηκε με τον εμπειρογνώμονα περιφερειακής πολιτικής Ρούντι Μπραούντι, μακροχρόνιος υποστηρικτής του διαλόγου, της διπλωματίας και της ειρηνικής ανάπτυξης, ως προς τις ασφαλέστερες διαδρομές

προς μεγαλύτερη σταθερότητα για ολόκληρη την Ευρω-Μεσογειακή περιοχή και άτυπο διαμεσολαβητή των δύο χωρών. Μάλιστα έχει γράψει και σχετικά βιβλία, όπως την «οριστικοποίηση θαλάσσιων Συνόρων στην Ανατολική Μεσόγειο: Ποιος θα Είναι ο Επόμενος;» και «Ένα Κλειδί, Πολλαπλά Έπαθλα: Οριστικοποίηση θαλάσσιων Συνόρων ανάμεσα στην Κύπρο, το Λίβανο και τη Συρία».

Ο κ. Χριστοδουλίδης και ο ομόλογός του από το Λίβανο, ο πρώην Γενικός Τζόζεφ Αουν, συμφώνησαν τον Ιούλιο να διαπραγματευτούν και να οριστικοποιήσουν μια γραμμή θαλάσσιων συνόρων. Και οι δύο χώρες αναμένουν ότι θα αποκομίσουν πολλά οφέλη από μια τέτοια συμφωνία, και η κατοχύρωση εδαφικών συνόρων στη θάλασσα θα καταστήσει ευκολότερη την προσέλκυση ξένων επενδυτών για την ανάπτυξη των ενεργειακών πηγών τους.

«Η επίτευξη συμφωνίας θα ανοίξει όλες τις πόρτες για την Κύπρο και το Λίβανο», δήλωσε ο κ. Μπαρούντι μετά από τη συνάντηση. «Οι τάσεις πηγαίνουν στη σωστή κατεύθυνση, και όχι μόνο σε σχέση με το Λίβανο. Ο πρόεδρος της Κύπρου έχει φιλόδοξα σχέδια εξωτερικής πολιτικής, ιδιαίτερα σχετικά με τις δραστηριότητες της Κύπρου τους πρώτους έξι μήνες του 2026, όταν θα έχει την προεδρία του συμβουλίου της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης».

«Εκμεταλλεύτηκα επίσης την ευκαιρία να ευχηθώ στο πρόεδρο της Κύπρου καλή επιτυχία σε αυτή την αποστολή», πρόσθεσε, «ειδικά καθώς αναμένεται να εστιάσει όχι μόνο στην ενίσχυση της συνοχής της Ευρώπης, αλλά και στην ενίσχυση του ρόλου της Κύπρου ως γέφυρα μεταξύ Ευρώπης και γειτονικών χωρών.»

Πράγματι, η Λευκωσία έχει ένα φιλόδοξο πρόγραμμα για την προεδρία της και συνεργάζεται στενά με τη Δανία, που ασκεί την προεδρία αυτό το εξάμηνο, και την Πολωνία, που θα διαδεχθεί την Κύπρο. Η λεγόμενη «τριπλή προεδρία» βοηθά στη διασφάλιση συνέχειας από τη μία προεδρία στην επόμενη.

Ο κ. Μπαρούντι έχει γράψει αρκετά βιβλία και μελέτες σχετικά με το πώς τα υπάρχοντα εργαλεία του ΟΗΕ μπορούν να βοηθήσουν τις παράκτιες χώρες να συμφωνήσουν δίκαια και ισότιμα θαλάσσια

σύνορα, να μειώσουν τις εντάσεις και να αποκομίσουν σημαντικά οικονομικά και κοινωνικά οφέλη. Έχει επίσης γράψει και μιλήσει δημόσια για διάφορες ευκαιρίες περιφερειακής συνεργασίας, από διασυνδεδεμένα ενεργειακά δίκτυα και υπεράκτια αιολικά πάρκα μέχρι κοινή διαχείριση θαλάσσιων προστατευόμενων περιοχών.

Το 2023, απονεμήθηκε στον κ. Μπαρούντι το Βραβείο Ηγεσίας από το Transatlantic Leadership Network, ένα think-tank της Ουάσινγκτον, για τη «πολύτιμη συμβολή του στην οικοδόμηση μιας ειρηνικής και ευημερούσας Ανατολικής Μεσογείου».

Σε δεκάδες άρθρα, μελέτες, εμφανίσεις στα μέσα ενημέρωσης και ομιλίες, για παράδειγμα, ο βετεράνος της κλάδου έχει τεκμηριώσει την επιχειρηματική βάση για το νησιωτικό κράτος να γίνει κέντρο επεξεργασίας και διανομής φυσικού αερίου για τους γείτονές του. Αυτό θα περιελάμβανε την Κύπρο να δημιουργήσει έναν υπόθαλάσσιο αγωγό φυσικού αερίου προς την ευρωπαϊκή ενδοχώρα, ένα εργοστάσιο υγροποιημένου φυσικού αερίου (LNG) που θα ήταν το μεγαλύτερο έργο που έχει ποτέ η χώρα, ή και υπεράκτια πλωτά συστήματα αποθήκευσης και υγροποίησης για την εξυπηρέτηση απομακρυσμένων χωρών δια θαλάσσης.

«Όλες αυτές οι μελέτες και οι παράγοντες που ανέδειξαν παραμένουν επίκαιροι σήμερα», δήλωσε ο κ. Μπαρούντι. «Η Κύπρος διαθέτει την εγγύτητα, τις τιμές γης και τις σχέσεις με τους γείτονές της για να γίνει ο συνεταιριστής όλων στις εξαγωγές ενέργειας, αλλά και να λειτουργήσει ως θεμέλιος λίθος για μια πιο σταθερή και ευημερούσα περιοχή.»

بارودي: استجزار الكهرباء

والغاز من قبرص ينوع مصادر الطاقة ويحميها من أي تداعيات جيوسياسية

ARTISTIC MAP
ILLUSTRATION OF CYPRUS BLOCK 6
GAS & ELECTRICITY PLAY



تبدو العلاقات اللبنانية القبرصية في حال تطور سريع وقد فتح هذا الباب رئيس الجمهورية العماد جوزاف عون فلاقى استجابة ورغبة عارمة لدى نظيره القبرصي كريستو دوليديس تجاه تطوير العلاقة بين البلدين الجارين وما لفت أن الرئيس القبرصي هو الذي بادر وطرح على الرئيس عون استئجار الكهرباء من قبرص إلى لبنان وقد تلقف رئيس الجمهورية اللبنانية هذه المبادرة وطلب من وزير الطاقة جو صدي متابعة الموضوع.

وفي هذا السياق أثنى خبير الطاقة الدولي رودي بارودي على مبادرة الرئيس القبرصي واللبناني، مؤكّداً وجوب الترحيب بأي خطوة من هذا النوع باعتبارها نقطة انطلاق مهمة لتأمين الكهرباء للبنانيين وحل أزمة القطاع المستفحلة جزئياً منذ عقود وأن هذه الخطوة تأتي بعد الإعلان عن استئناف مفاوضات ترسيم الحدود البحرية بين البلدين. كما أثنى بارودي على الدور الذي يلعبه الرئيس عون في ملف الطاقة ككل واعتباره أولوية لما فيه من فائدة على الاقتصاد وتعزيز القدرات الاجتماعية للمواطنين اللبنانيين.

ولفت بارودي إلى أن هذه الخطوة ستتيح تزويد لبنان ما بين 150 و300 ميغاواط وفق مراحل متعددة ولا سيما بعد عام أو عامين على الأكثر عندما تبدأ قبرص بإنتاج الكهرباء من الغاز المستخرج من ENI & TOTAL ENERGIES حقولها البحرية خاصة حقل كرونوس الذي يديره كل من شركتي ما يعزز تنوع مصادر الطاقة وبأسعار مقبولة لا سيما وأن الحقل المعني في قبرص لا يبعد عن حقل زهر المصري سوى ٦٠ كلم ما يعني أن كلفة الإستخراج ستكون مماثلة لتلك المعتمدة في الحقل المصري وهي كلفة رخيصة نوعاً ما.

ولفت بارودي إلى وجود محطتين رئيسيتين لإنتاج الكهرباء في قبرص، بين ليماسول Vassiliko إحداهما بين لارنكا وليماسول، والأخرى في وبافوس، بقدرة إجمالية تقارب 1600 ميغاواط من دون الكهرباء المنتجة من الطاقة الشمسية وبالتالي يمكن للبنان الاستفادة من هذه الطاقة بكلفة يتم التوافق عليها موضحاً أن الكلفة ستكون أقل بكثير من كلفة الكهرباء المنتجة في لبنان عندما تبدأ قبرص العام المقبل باستخدام الغاز المستخرج من حقولها البحرية لإنتاج الكهرباء. ولاسيما البلوك رقم 6.

بارودي طالب الحكومة اللبنانية بالإسراع بوضع الأطر الإصلاحية والتنظيمية للقطاع بشأن استرجار الكهرباء من قبرص وبإعداد دراسة جدوى اقتصادية تأخذ في الاعتبار كلفة الاسترجار ولفت أن محطة هي المحطة التي تصدر الغاز في 2026، على أن يواصل Vassiliko لبنان مساعيه لربط شبكته بالشبكة السورية للحصول على دعم إضافي كهربائي عن طريق محطة دير نبوح، بما في ذلك محطة الكسارة في منطقة البقاع.

ENERGY EXPERT'S NEW MARITIME BOUNDARY BOOK ARRIVES AMID WAVE OF EAST MED BORDER DIPLOMACY



Roudi Baroudi

SETTLING MARITIME BOUNDARIES IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN: WHO WILL BE NEXT?

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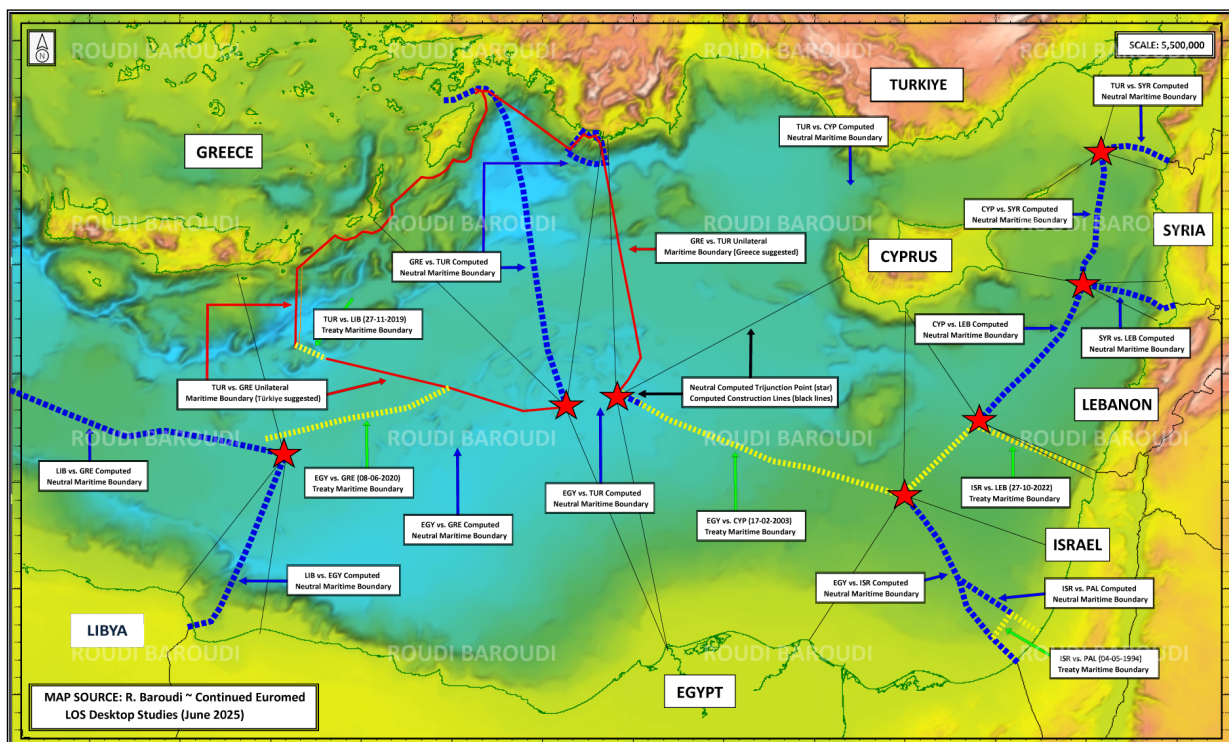
Recent weeks have seen multiple contacts among several countries including – Cyprus, Greece, Lebanon, and Syria – aimed at increasing cooperation among East Mediterranean

countries.

This flurry of diplomatic activity provides the perfect backdrop as Notre-Dame University – Louaize is pleased to announce that it will host a book launch and signing on April 23rd, welcoming international energy expert Roudi Baroudi as he releases his latest work, “Settling Maritime Boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean: Who Will Be Next? ”

The book outlines the need for countries in the region to resolve their maritime boundaries, the energy and other economic opportunities that doing so could open up, and the legal, scientific, and technical means of ensuring that delimitation is fair and equitable. The volume even carries exclusive, high-precision maps indicating with unprecedented accuracy where the negotiated or adjudicated sea borders of several East Med countries would be, as per United Nations rules.

EURO MED RESOLVED & UNRESOLVED MBL 2025



Yellow lines - Fully Treated MBs.

Dark Blue dashed lines - 100% neutral strict equidistance lines (unresolved/disputed)

Red solid lines - Unilateral Claimed MBL

The book emphasizes that settling these unresolved boundaries – including those between Lebanon and Cyprus, Lebanon and Syria, Greece and Turkey, Turkey and Syria, Syria and Cyprus, and Turkey and Cyprus – is a necessary first step for those seeking to develop offshore energy resources. The advent of energy security and possible lucrative exports could have a profound effect on several states, allowing them to make historic investments in schools, hospitals, and transport infrastructure, all while creating well-paying jobs and reducing poverty and inequality. Baroudi also highlights a series of cross-border benefits, including reducing potential irritants between neighbors, building trust, and opening up new avenues for cooperation.

As a 47-year veteran of the energy industry, Baroudi has a wealth of experience to share, and does so frequently as an author and speaker, promoting energy as a catalyst for dialogue and peace wherever and whenever he can. He will be on hand for the launch at NDU's Pierre Abou Khater Auditorium beginning at 12:00 noon, answering questions and signing copies of the book for anyone who purchases one.

All sale proceeds will go toward Student Financial Aid at NDU.



**‘Prerequisites for peace’:
Expert applauds Skylakakis
for endorsing energy
transition policies that
‘open the way to dialogue and
cooperation’**



ATHENS, July 7, 2024 Greece: Energy and Environment Minister Theodoros Skylakakis is on the right track with his approach to Greece's energy transition plans, a noted regional expert says.

"He's got the right perspective," industry veteran and author Roudi Baroudi said after Skylakakis spoke at this week's Athens Energy Summit. "He understands that although the responsibility to reduce carbon emissions is universal, the best policy decisions don't come in 'one-size-fits-all'."

Baroudi, who has more than four decades in the field and currently serves as CEO of Doha independent consultancy Energy and Environment Holding, made his comments on the sidelines of the forum, where he also was a speaker.

In his remarks, Skylakakis expressed confidence that Greece's increasing need to store electricity – as intermittent renewables generate a growing share of electricity – would drive sufficient investment in battery capacity, without the need for subsidies. Among other comments, he also stressed the need for European Union policymakers to account for the fact that member-states currently face the costs of both limiting

future climate change AND mitigating the impacts that are already under way.

“Every country is different in terms of how it can best fight climate change. Each one has its own set of natural resources, industrial capacity, financial wherewithal, and other variables. What works in one situation might be a terrible idea elsewhere. That’s crucial and Skylakakis gets it,” Baroudi said. “He also understands that an effective transition depends on carefully considered policies, policies that attract investment to where it can not only have the greatest impact today, but also maximizes the impact of tomorrow’s technologies and tomorrow’s partnerships.”



“What Skylakakis is saying and doing fits in nicely with many of the same ideas I spoke about,” Baroudi added. “When he talks about heavier reliance on wind farms, the added storage capacity is a foundation that will help derive a fuller return from each and every turbine. When he highlights the utility – pun intended – of power and gas interconnections with other countries and regions, these are the prerequisites for peace, the building blocks for cooperation and dialogue.”

In his own speech shortly after Skylakakis’, Baroudi told the audience at the capital’s Hotel Grande Bretagne that countries

in the Eastern Mediterranean should work together to increase cleaner energy production and reduce regional tensions.

“Surely there is a method by which we can re-establish the same common ground enshrined in the wake of World Wars I and II, recall the same common interests and identify new ones, and work together to achieve common goals, just as the UN Charter implores us to,” he said.

Baroudi advises companies, governments, and international institutions on energy policy and is an award-winning advocate for efforts to promote peace through dialogue and diplomacy. He told his audience that with both climate change and mounting geopolitical tensions posing threats to people around the world, policymakers needed to think outside the usual boxes.

In this way, he argued, “we might develop the mutual trust which alone can create a safer, happier, and better world for our children and grandchildren.”

“Consider the possibilities if Greece, Türkiye, and Cyprus became de facto – or de jure – partners in a pipeline carrying East Med gas to consumers in Bulgaria, Romania, and Italy,” he said. “Imagine a future in which Israeli and Lebanese gas companies were similarly – but independently – reliant on the same Cypriot LNG plant for 10-20%, or even more, of their respective countries’ GDPs.”

He also envisioned bilateral cooperation scenarios between Greece and Turkey and Syria and Turkey, as well as a regional interconnection that would provide backup energy for multiple coastal states.

“Instead of accepting certain ideas as permanently impossible, we ought to be thinking ahead and laying the groundwork,” Baroudi said. “For Greece and Türkiye – as for other pairs of coastal states in the region – a good starting point would be to emulate the Maritime Boundary Agreement agreed to by

Lebanon and Israel in 2022.”

Stressing the potential for cooperation to address both energy requirements and the stability required for stronger growth and development, Baroudi – whose books include a 2023 volume about the Lebanon-Israel deal and a forthcoming one urging other East Med countries to do the same – called on the EU to take up the challenge.



“Using dialogue and diplomacy to expand energy cooperation would benefit not just the countries of the East Med but also the entire European Union and much of its surrounding ‘neighborhood’,” he told an audience of energy professionals and key government officials. “That level of promise more than merits the attention of Brussels, the allocation of support resources, and even the designation of a dedicated point-person tasked with facilitating the necessary contacts and negotiations.”

“This is how we need to be thinking if we want to get where we need to go,” Baroudi said. “Instead of allowing ourselves to be discouraged by the presence of obstacles, we need to be investigating new routes that go around them, strengthen the

rule of law – especially human rights law – as a basis for the international system, and promote lasting peace among all nations. Only then can we declare victory over what the 18th-century Scottish poet Robert Burns called ‘man’s inhumanity to man’.”

The Case for a European Public-Goods Fund



Mar 4, 2024 AGE BAKKER, ROEL BEETSMA, and MARCO BUTI

With the European Union’s pandemic recovery fund set to end in 2026, there is an urgent need for more durable financial mechanisms to support its long-term objectives. Fortunately, a new investment fund could both enhance the EU’s growth potential and ensure compliance with its new fiscal rules and shared values.

AMSTERDAM – Following weeks of intense negotiations, the European Union has agreed to revise its fiscal rules. The new rulebook will replace the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) –

which has been suspended since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic – and modernize the bloc's 25-year-old fiscal framework.

While the SGP featured a one-size-fits-all model that ultimately undermined its credibility, the updated fiscal rules allow for a differentiated approach. The goal is to maintain the existing deficit and public debt limits while still encouraging member states to invest in green and digital technologies. Member states will be granted extended adjustment periods of up to seven years to reduce their debts to sustainable levels, provided they commit to reforms and investments that support this double (green/digital) transition.

But while the EU's efforts to strike a balance between fiscal discipline and growth incentives are commendable, national budgets alone will not be enough to finance the EU's ambitious double transition. The European Commission estimates that an annual investment of roughly €650 billion (\$700 billion) is needed to meet the 2030 targets of producing at least 42.5% of the bloc's energy from renewable sources and reducing greenhouse-gas emissions by 55%.

Under the new fiscal rules, funding for digital and green investments can be sourced from the €800 billion NextGenerationEU fund, which was established in 2020 to help European economies recover from the COVID-19 shock. But since the NGEU is scheduled to end in 2026, there is an urgent need for more durable financial mechanisms to support the EU's long-term objectives.

As matters stand, the NGEU's focus on national investments has left transnational projects such as high-speed railways and hydrogen infrastructure severely underfunded. Moreover, the US Inflation Reduction Act has widened the investment gap between Europe and the United States. To restore its strategic autonomy, European leaders should build on the success of the

NGEU.

In a forthcoming paper, we propose the establishment of a \$750 billion EU public-goods fund aimed at bridging funding gaps in crucial areas like renewable energy and digital infrastructure. The primary focus of this fund would be to catalyze cross-border investments and support projects that struggle to secure funding without EU-level financial support. By making access to this fund contingent on compliance with the new fiscal rules, the EU could maintain fiscal discipline among member states.

The public-goods fund, which would cover the 2026-30 period, is intended to align seamlessly with the EU's climate goals. Building on the successful precedents established by previous EU borrowing initiatives, it would be financed by issuing EU bonds, backed by pooled national guarantees, the EU's budget (bolstered by sufficient revenue streams), or both. Its proposed size represents roughly one-fifth of the bloc's total investment needs through 2030, and the remaining investments would be financed through contributions from member states and the private sector.

By focusing on cross-border investments, the fund would underscore the EU's unified approach to tackling European challenges. At the same time, the requirement to comply with the new fiscal rules would broaden the conditional framework established by the NGEU program, which linked fund access to the rule of law in recipient countries.

Similarly, the proposed conditionality regime would tie access to the new fund to domestic fiscal discipline, thus aligning with the EU's revised fiscal guidelines. Rather than facing penalties for non-compliance, as was the case under the previous SGP, countries would be incentivized to demonstrate fiscal responsibility.

Thus, the conditionality regime would simultaneously boost the

EU's growth potential, uphold the integrity of the new fiscal rulebook, and encourage fiscal sustainability among member states. Moreover, increased debt issuance at the European level could be offset by reduced debt issuance at the national level.

Once the fund is established, countries would be encouraged to submit comprehensive investment proposals for transnational projects. The European Investment Bank would determine whether they are eligible to access the fund's resources based on their alignment with the EU's double-transition targets and the potential for positive cross-border spillovers. Meanwhile, the European Commission would ascertain that the countries proposing these projects comply with fiscal rules.

The fund's proposed design aligns with the trend of using EU funds to achieve broader policy objectives. By relying on the successful model of the pandemic recovery fund and the bloc's current conditionality regime, it would empower the EU to meet crucial climate targets while upholding its shared values.

G20 finance meeting to set aside geopolitics, focus on economics



With their countries deeply divided over Israel's attacks on Gaza, finance officials from the Group of 20 major economies are poised to set aside geopolitics and focus on global economic issues when they meet in Sao Paulo, Brazil this week.

Brazil, keen to ensure a productive session that delivers consensus on key economic priorities, has proposed a much shorter closing statement than seen in recent years – a move already negotiated with other members, according to a Brazilian government source and two sources familiar with the draft.

The South American country is the current G20 president.

The latest draft, still being finalized, mentions the risks of global fragmentation and conflicts in general terms but omits any direct reference to Russia's invasion of Ukraine or the Israel-Gaza war, the sources said.

Finance officials and central bankers from the U.S., China, Russia and the world's other largest economies will meet in Sao Paulo to review global economic developments at a time of

slowing growth, the growing strains of record debt burdens, and worries that inflation may not yet be tamed, which are keeping interest rates high.

The International Monetary Fund last month said the chance of a “soft landing” in which inflation falls without triggering a painful global recession had increased, but warned that overall growth and global trade remained lower than the historical average.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine almost exactly two years ago roiled the G20, exposing long-simmering fault lines within the group and thwarting efforts by G20 officials to reach consensus on a final statement, or communique, after their meetings.

India and Indonesia, which held the G20 presidency before Brazil, opted for chair statements summarizing areas of agreement and noting dissenting voices – namely Russia – but even that could prove difficult given the bitter divisions over the four-month war in Gaza. The war erupted when the ministers last met in Marrakech, Morocco in October, intensifying divisions between the United States and its Western allies, and non-Western countries in the G20.

Brazil, Saudi Arabia and South Africa have been outspoken critics of Israel’s relentless assault on Gaza since the Oct. 7 surprise attack in which Palestinian Islamist group Hamas killed around 1,200 people and seized 253 hostages, one G7 source said. The retaliatory attacks have killed more than 29,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza health ministry.

The U.S., meanwhile, last week vetoed a draft United Nations Security Council resolution on the Israel-Hamas war, blocking a demand for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and pushing instead for a temporary ceasefire linked to the release of the remaining hostages held by Hamas.

The deep differences over Gaza necessitated a different

approach this year, the Brazilian official said, adding, "If the topic is included, there will be no consensus."

To prevent differences over Gaza from derailing progress on economic issues, Brazil proposed a shorter statement with no specific mention of either war. Washington argued against language holding Israel accountable, which South Africa and others had argued was needed if the statement mentioned and condemned Russia's war against Ukraine, a G7 source said.

G7 finance officials, also meeting in Sao Paulo, will be forceful in their condemnation of Russia and its war, a second G7 source said.

'BROADER ETHOS'

Brazil wants to focus this week's discussions on ending inequality and hunger, reforming international taxation, addressing sovereign debt distress and working toward sustainable development. Reforms of multilateral banks and climate finance will feature more prominently at the spring meetings of the IMF and World Bank in Washington in April, the Brazilian source and a G20 source said.

Mark Sobel, the U.S. chair of the Official Monetary and Financial Institutions Forum (OMFIF), said stripping geopolitics from the communique made sense for a group that had historically focused on economic and financial issues.

"Yes, it reflects fractiousness, but it also reflects this broader ethos of the finance ministers and central bankers to focus on economic and financial matters in a technical way," he said.

One G7 official said the statement would likely be "concise and ambiguous, only mentioning issues where there's no contention."

U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen plans to underscore the

importance of the G20 body, highlighting collaborative efforts to address global challenges such as sovereign debt and the COVID-19 pandemic, a senior U.S. official said.

Yellen will meet with Brazilian Finance Minister Fernando Haddad to celebrate 200 years of U.S.-Brazil relations, an event the Brazilian official said was designed to highlight the South American country's "interest in not embracing a divisive approach, but focusing on constructive efforts."

One unresolved issue is to what extent the U.S., Japan and Canada will prevail in demanding a mention of the economic impacts of geopolitical conflicts in the communique, the first Brazilian official said.

But the failure of G20 foreign ministers to include the issue sent a strong signal, the official said.

"The outcome of the sherpas meeting strengthens our understanding that the topic (of geopolitics) should not be included in the communique."

Eric Pelofsky, a former senior U.S. official now with the Rockefeller Foundation, said there was value in meeting in configurations like the G20, despite clear differences.

"Sometimes talking without success is still talking. Maybe that means that at the end of the day, somebody has a coffee that they weren't supposed to have and they find a bit of common ground that they weren't supposed to know existed."

Source: Reuters