

Cyprus building relations for regional stability



The government's main objective was the development of the island's hydrocarbon resources to benefit all Cypriots and future generations, President Nicos Anastasiades said on Tuesday, and its policy was to build relations that led to regional stability and peace.

Addressing the 7th Mediterranean Oil and Gas Forum in Nicosia, the president said Cyprus' policy has traditionally been based on regional cooperation and the establishment of good and long lasting relationships with all of our neighbours.

"After all, economic partnerships enhance political partnerships," he said. "Cooperation in the hydrocarbons sector can feed into the political relations between countries in the region, building the foundations for regional stability and peace."

The need for energy partnerships, he said, can ease tensions, freeze, and even put an end to political conflict.

"The reason for this is simple: countries will need to maintain open channels of communication at the political level, in order to be able to successfully cooperate in the energy sector."

Anastasiades said regional cooperation was of paramount

importance, as he noted the significance of the three high-level meetings held between Cyprus, Egypt and Greece.

“The overall volatile situation in the area, conflicts with regards to the delimitation of maritime zones, the instability in Syria and the continuation of traditional animosities, are just some of the issues that create uncertainties in our efforts to develop the region’s hydrocarbons wealth,” he said.

Cyprus has its own problems with Turkey, which occupies the northern part of the island.

Turkey disputes the Republic’s right to explore for hydrocarbons, claiming that Turkish Cypriots should also have a say. It has repeatedly tried to disrupt the Republic’s exploration programme.

Anastasiades had said in the past that the Cyprus problem needed to be solved first before Turkish Cypriots could get involved.

But he has also said that the island’s natural resources belonged to all Cypriots.

“Our main objective is the optimal and sustainable development of the island’s hydrocarbon resources that will benefit all Cypriots and future generations,” he said on Tuesday.

What was urgently required in most cases, he said, was to build trust and “this essentially translates to all parties respecting international law, as well as the sovereignty and the sovereign rights of neighbouring countries.”