

DIPLOMACY: Nicosia to host first trilateral summit of Cyprus, Greece and Lebanon leaders



Nicosia will host the first trilateral summit between the leaders of Cyprus, Greece and Lebanon later this year to review progress that has been achieved and map out further cooperation.

Cypriot Foreign Minister Nikos Christodoulides is in Beirut, where he participated in the first official tripartite Ministerial meeting between Cyprus, Greece and Lebanon, with Lebanese counterpart Gebran Bassil, and Greece's Georgios Katrougalos.

He said it was the start of a "trilateral journey", with the three partners having to work to make their cooperation tangible in the agreed areas.

Pointing out that cooperation of the three was based on a

positive agenda and was not directed against any other country, Christodoulides stressed Cyprus' intention was to turn this promising mechanism into a productive framework of interaction that would be beneficial for all.

He briefed his Lebanese counterpart on the decision to establish a Permanent Secretariat in Nicosia, with the aim of improving the effectiveness and coordination within the tripartite cooperation mechanism with a vision to make the Eastern Mediterranean a region of peace, security and cooperation, despite the many challenges it faces.

With regard to EU-Lebanon relations, Christodoulides said Cyprus would continue to work and actively assist in further strengthening them and said the EU must continue to show keen interest and activity in the region through its neighbourhood policy and its partnership priorities.

In a Joint Statement, the three Ministers recognize inter alia, the importance and value of the tripartite cooperation mechanism and reaffirm their strong commitment to further expanding and deepening their countries cooperation in this context, and to identify synergies in various areas of common interest, to the benefit of the societies and the citizens of the three countries.

According to the Joint Statement, the three Ministers also agree that this tripartite cooperation is based on respect for international law and the aims and principles of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the United Nations.

The statement also defines the initial priority areas for cooperation as Tourism, Higher Education, Culture, Economy and Trade, with agreement to submit specific programs for these areas before the first Trilateral Summit, which was agreed to take place in Cyprus during 2019.