

# Nicosia to reject Turkish natural gas proposal



A proposal by Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci for a committee that would jointly administer natural gas affairs is expected to be rejected by the government and party leaders when they meet on Tuesday. President Anastasiades received the proposal through the UN and shortly after Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu expressed the view that until Greek Cypriots adopt the proposals set out by Akinci, Turkey would continue its drilling “with determination and without change”. According to an official statement President Anastasiades received over the weekend in Limassol the head of the office of the Special Representative of the UN in Cyprus Sergiy Illarionov who presented to the President Akinci’s proposal. The President called a meeting of the National Council for July 16th to inform political leaders on the details of the proposal. Sources say the plan involves the establishment of a committee under the coordination of the UN with an equal number of representatives from both sides and an independent observer. The proposal also includes details on the

composition, establishment and operation of the hydrocarbons fund. News reports citing diplomatic sources said that the plan is similar to an earlier proposal submitted by former Turkish Cypriot leader Eroglu. The move comes as the EU is set to adopt a number of punitive measures against Turkey for its illegal activities off Cyprus. Cyprus had hoped for targeted EU sanctions against the Turkish Petroleum Company in order to dissuade Turkey from drilling in its EEZ. Analysts argue that the geography of the Eastern Mediterranean leaves Turkey with limited marine area while the status quo of divided Cyprus is seen as a leverage to gain a foothold in the potentially resource rich East Med basin.

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