

South EU summit to focus on migration and energy



The fifth Southern EU countries (MED7) Summit which will convene on January 29 in Nicosia will discuss migration, Brexit, eurozone reform, Europe's energy security, climate changes and the 2021-2027 EU Multiannual Financial Framework.

The states participating in the summit are France, Spain, Portugal, Malta, Italy, Greece and Cyprus.

Ahead of the summit, President Nicos Anastasiades will hold bilateral meetings with the prime minister of Portugal Antonio Costa – who is arriving on January 28 for an official visit to Cyprus – and with French President Emmanuel Macron and Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte.

Speaking during a press conference on Wednesday, Foreign Minister Nikos Christodoulides underlined the importance of the summit, adding that discussions will focus on issues which concern the EU.

Christodoulides also described Anastasiades' bilateral meetings with Costa, Macron and Conte as very important, adding that a lot of issues of mutual interest are expected to be discussed.

Responding to questions about the energy issues, Christodoulides said that with energy companies Total and ENI actively participating in operations in Cyprus Exclusive Economic Zone possible expansion of their operations was likely to be one of the issues discussed during the bilateral meetings which Anastasiades will have.

Referring to the issue of Europe's energy security, Christodoulides said the seven countries would discuss how the EU can enhance its energy autonomy and independence.

With regard to Anastasiades' meeting with Macron he noted that when the foreign minister of France Jean-Yves Le Drian visited Cyprus in September, the two countries agreed to begin discussions on concluding bilateral agreements on energy, defence, security and other issues.

Responding to a question about Brexit, the foreign minister said that the EU27 have a common approach on this issue.

"We are following developments in Britain very closely. The issue is continuously being discussed at the European level and it is very important that the EU27 have a common approach on it," Christodoulides stressed.

To another question about the different approach of France and Italy as regards the migration issue, Christodoulides said that migration has a bigger impact on the EU Mediterranean countries than on the other EU member states, and the aim of the discussion that will take place is to outline very concrete suggestions and positions.