

BOOK REVIEW

CHRISTOS FRANGKONIKOLOPOULOS

The New Eastern Mediterranean Transformed: Emerging Issues and New Actors

ARISTOTLE TZIAMPIRIS, FOTEINI ASDERAKI (EDS.)

Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2021

pp. 264

Table of contents:

1. Front Matter

Pages i-xxvi

2. Greek Foreign Policy in the New Eastern Mediterranean

- Aristotle Tziampiris

Pages 1-29

3. The EU in the Eastern Mediterranean: Multilateral and Bilateral Relations

- Foteini Asderaki

Pages 31-67

4. The Instrumentalization of Euroscepticism in the Eastern-Mediterranean

- Sharon Pardo, Neve Gordon

Pages 69-85

5. EU-Israeli Relations in the Field of Higher Education, Lessons for the Latest Developments in the East Mediterranean Area

- Hila Zahavi

Pages 87-104

6. Testing the Waters, Pushing the Boundaries: Turkey's Ambitions in the Eastern Mediterranean

- Nukhet A. Sandal

Pages 105-117

7. Legal and Geopolitical Aspects of Energy Development in the Eastern Mediterranean and the EU's Strategic Involvement

- Pavlos I. Koktsidis, Costas M. Constantinou, Joseph Joseph

Pages 119-137

8. The Energy Security Evolution of the Eastern Mediterranean: The Rise of, Turkish Revisionism, Its Counter-Coalitions and the Geopolitical Significance of the East Med Gas Pipeline

- Theodoros Tsakiris

Pages 139-158

9. The European Perspective on the Energy Developments in Eastern Mediterranean and South East Europe

- Athanasios Dagoumas

Pages 159-177

10. The Securitization of Migration and the 2015 Refugee Crisis: From Words to Actions

- Foteini Asderaki, Eleftheria Markozani

Pages 179-198

11. The European Union's Response to Mass Migration Through Mediterranean: A Shift from Humanitarian Foreign Policy Actor Towards a Pragmatist Foreign Policy Actor?

- Anna Molnár, Lili Takács

Pages 199-217

12. Beyond EU Borders, Beyond EU Responsibility: The Protection of Asylum-Seekers' Rights In and Outside the EU. Reflections on the X. & X. and Al Chodor Cases

- Sara De Vido

Pages 219-238

13. Refugees' Inclusion Issues: The Social Work Frameworks

- Marilena Sinigaglia

Pages 239-255

14. Back Matter

Pages 257-264

In the last decade, the Eastern Mediterranean has been faced with significant challenges (disputes on energy resources, great migration flows, civil wars, terrorism). This edited volume examines and analyses these challenges, investigating the position and the significance of the Eastern Mediterranean (EM) in global politics. In so doing, it encompasses the role of the EU, the legal and geopolitical aspects of energy development, the problem of migration flows, and, last, but not least, Greece's and Turkey's competing and conflictual agendas in the region.

Foteini Asderaki in her contribution explores the EU's policy outcomes and responses -diplomatic, economic, security, and military- as those have developed

within multilateral and bilateral arrangements. Regional dynamics following the Arab uprisings, wars, and the security and migration crises, are also analysed as factors behind the EU's priorities and policies. In particular, she examines how:

- The EU has abandoned regionalisation through multilateral frameworks (EMP/UfM, ENP) and has promoted bilateral differentiated arrangements based on the EU's and Eastern Mediterranean countries' specific priorities.
- The short-term and mid-term goals, such as security and stability, have negative effects on longer-term objectives, such as development, democracy, and human rights.
- The securitisation agenda fuelled by the migration crisis, prioritised the EU-Eastern Mediterranean cooperation in justice, security, and borders management, through European and national agencies, transnational networks, and collaboration in defence missions.
- The Libyan and the Syrian crises in the Eastern Mediterranean, the security and instability threats, the US withdrawal, the geopolitical and revisionist tensions generated by complex multipolarity, trigger EU strategic responses as a multifaceted actor (diplomatic, economic, humanitarian, security, and defence), in close cooperation with the UN.
- The energy discoveries have offered new opportunities for regional cooperation, but also pose new threats.

Bearing that in mind, Pavlos Koktsidis, Costas Constantinou, and Joseph Joseph, concentrate on the discovery of significant oil and gas deposits in the exclusive economic zones (EEZ) of Israel, Egypt, and Cyprus, and the alleged deposits in Greece, and on how such discoveries could potentially provide the EU with an additional energy source that could contribute to the diversification,

security, and resilience of Europe's energy supplies. Moreover, they highlight that energy developments in the region have raised a number of legal and geopolitical challenges, mirroring the antagonistic and often turbulent relations among states in the region. The EM, they argue:

... needs to be perceived and analysed as a regional security subsystem with highly interconnected security dynamics. A strategic territorial block characterised by distinct vulnerabilities, commonalities and differences. The European Union has a vital interest in developing a policy that utilizes energy reserves in the region with the aim to diversify energy supplies, reduce external dependence, and increase energy security. This can be achieved by fostering regional cooperation among EU and non-EU states, providing incentives and assistance to potential regional partners to integrate their energy reserves and create conditions of mutual security and trust in the region.

In that direction, the EU should:

- Alleviate insecurity and support inclusive energy programmes.
- Encourage regional actors to join in collaborative projects on the premises of fairness as well as compliance with international law, shared rules and commonly agreed principles.

- Actively participate in the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum, coordinating, regulating and overseeing relations between regional actors.
- Support long-term and deep-impact interregional projects that could help increase the overall connectivity between regional states and the EU, including the establishment and promotion of trading and manufacturing and the development of technical committees that will exchange capacity-building.

Athanasios Dagoumas addresses regional activities, such as the establishment of the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum by the energy ministers of seven countries. He presents the European perspective on the energy developments in the Eastern Mediterranean and Southeast Europe, highlighting the importance of Projects of Common Interest. Significantly, he also provides insights on the suitability of cost benefits analysis, building on a review of alternative approaches and proposing an optimisation model for an integrated natural gas and power systems planning. The model identifies if there are bottlenecks among the different regions in the EU and provides useful insights to the decision makers, involved companies and market participants on the bankability and viability of critical infrastructure. The model requires comprehensive data, towards robustly identifying the regions where the Projects of Common Interest (PCIs) could meet European energy union targets.

Following that, Theodoros Tsakiris discusses the supply and transit diversification for the EU, and the role of Cyprus as the only EU member state in the region which has the potential to emerge as a net gas exporter is analysed in detail. In his analysis, he takes into account Cyprus' foreign policy vis-a-vis the other players in the Eastern Mediterranean and the potential relevance of

monetising Cypriot hydrocarbon resources for the resolution of the Cyprus problem and the rise of regional cooperation. Despite the increasing aggressiveness of Turkey's spoiler tactics in the Eastern Mediterranean, he argues, Ankara's ability to decisively dictate the terms for the monetisation and exportation of the region's natural gas reserves remains limited. Turkey's privatisations, as he rightly notes, underestimate the counter-coalitions it has motivated, thereby facilitating her self-exclusion from the region's energy integration.

Foteini Asderaki and Eleftheria Markozani shift the context of the discussion, by analysing the EU's securitisation of irregular migration, beginning with the securitisation of European discourse and reaching the militarisation of European policy. They argue, and rightly so, that the militarisation of the European policy towards irregular migration has been correlated with the intensive securitisation of EU institutions speech, which legitimised extraordinary measures against the migration and refugee flows. In so doing they examine how:

- the EU has securitised the subject of irregular migration and, consequently, how its policies are designed to construct a 'European fortress' through military security methods aiming at averting irregular migrants and protecting the internal security
- the extensive use of military tactics in processes related to migration have supported the securitisation of policy through practices
- the 'militarisation' of the external border controls does not allow taking into account humanitarian aspects that contribute to the acceleration of irregular migration

- the extensive irregular migration boom in the Mediterranean triggered the EU to use more aggressive tactics, using institutional instruments of the CSDP and endorsing the support of NATO fleets for the protection of southern European borders
- identification of irregular migration as a security threat has and will continue to be a constant variable in EU policy-making agenda.

Anna Molnr and Lili Takcs analyse Frontex operations Triton and Themis, CSDP operations EUBAM Libya, and EUNAVFOR MED Sophia and Irimi. Main focus, firstly, is on examining how the normative principles of the EU have been sidelined by security and stability concerns, and how they have facilitated a shift from normative power towards a pragmatist power. Secondly, to discuss the effectiveness of these operations. As they argue, effectiveness:

... can mean different things to different actors. It is undeniable that the overall number of sea crossings have decreased, but death rate increased significantly. If the EU defines itself as a humanitarian power, defines saving lives at sea as priority, the reduced number of migrant deaths (with increased death rate) can indicate a successful policy? If we take the EU as a pragmatist actor within the international arena, whose priority is to prevent the arrival of refugees and migrants? Can its policy be evaluated as a success, taking into consideration that the number of arrivals started to decrease only after one of its member states (Italy) made a deal with Libya? As long as EU talk and action remain decoupled regarding tackling mass migration, these questions remain unanswered.

In line with this reasoning, Sara De Vido analyses the application of human rights to migrants and asylum seekers outside and inside the borders of the EU. Borders, as she rightly argues, can no longer be conceived as rigid and immutable to the detriment of the protection of human rights. In fact:

...the margin of appreciation States legitimately have cannot contradict the effet utile of EU norms, including the protection of human rights. Leaving all in the hands of EU Member States has been causing a race to the bottom in the protection of human rights, preventing third country nationals to legally enter the EU, where the entry is the only way to enjoy human rights protection.

And what about the competing and conflictual priorities of Turkey and Greece in the EM? In her chapter, Nukhet Sandal argues that:

Turkey is a critical actor in the Eastern Mediterranean. It will continue to reassert itself and try to find its way to the existing energy cooperation arrangements; not doing so risks missing a momentous opportunity that is happening very close to its own borders. Given the fragile economy and contentious regional politics, energy independence is a critical goal to pursue; even if Erdoğan was not in power, any other Turkish leader would push the boundaries and test

the waters in the Eastern Mediterranean. The main challenge with Erdoğan is not having many institutional constraints on his behaviour and his discourse; his steps mostly depend on the insecurities and threats he personally perceives.

Despite that, his belligerent discourse, she also stresses, has leaned towards pragmatism in practice. This can quickly change, especially if he feels that the end to his rule is near. As she rightly stresses:

It would not be wise for Turkey to go to a full-blown war against Greece; neither its economy nor its domestic politics can handle the pressure and the costs of such a step. The best scenario would be to find a space for Turkey in the energy arrangements and platforms through negotiations. This is challenging due to the differing understandings of borders and zones, but it is not altogether impossible. Especially given how Turkey and Greece have co-existed so far despite all the tensions and crises, there is reason for hope that the problem will be managed -if not resolved- peacefully. It is costly to alienate Turkey altogether, but Erdoğan will also likely -and hopefully- continue to recognize that the 'game of chicken' needs to be played very carefully, both for his own tenure and Turkey's as well, as the region's overall future.

Aristotle Tziampiris, on the other hand, analyses Greek foreign policy based on three main pillars. First, closer economic, military, security, and political relations with Israel, supported by the launching of trilateral initiatives with Israel and Cyprus and Egypt and Cyprus. Second, a deepening military and political relationship with the USA, as evinced by signing of the Mutual Defense Cooperation Agreement in 2020 and passing of the Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act of 2019 by the US Congress. Third, the pursuit of energy projects such as the EastMed natural gas pipeline and participation in regional energy organisations like the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum. Greece's EM strategy, he argues:

...enjoys wide bi-partisan and popular support. It is non-revisionist and aims to prove Greece a reliable pillar of stability in a turbulent region. Athens, while remaining close to Cyprus, seems poised to expand its alliance and cooperation plans with countries such as the US, Israel, Egypt, France and (increasingly) the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, ultimately partaking in an emerging Greater Eastern Mediterranean that will incorporate several Arabian Gulf and Mediterranean countries linked by common interests and threats.

So, big challenges and choices lie ahead for the EM. It offers a vast opportunity for natural gas development and regional integration, but it is also a hub of political uncertainty, economic instability, and military conflict. New producers and consumers, climate change constraints, new green energy

initiatives, volatile prices, declining hydrocarbon investments, and heightened tensions, all play a role in prompting us to think in different terms about the region. With that in mind, the volume edited by Aristotelis Tziambiris and Foteini Asderaki is a valuable source of objective information and sound analysis for experts, policymakers and the public interested in the issues of the Levant and the Eastern Mediterranean as a whole.

Christos Frangonikolopoulos