

Small States Regional Cooperation

Cyprus

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Regional Cooperation - Introduction

- **Overview:** Independence, 1960, tradition of RC in Mediterranean, Near Middle East, EU, Council of Europe.
- **Aspects: Political, Economic, Military**
 - Economic: trade, financial cooperation and services, tourism, oil & gas
 - Political/Military: Alliance with Greece against Turkey; Regional geopolitical games around oil & gas
- **Drivers of regional cooperation**
 - Economic interdependencies; opportunities for trade
 - Cyprus problem permeates everything
 - Search & rescue; Police; migration; asylum & civil society

Small States Regional Cooperation - Introduction

Round table discussion Amb.
of Greece Fotopoulos,
Ambassador of Israel Revel
and High Commissioner of
India Raghava Krishnaswami
Raghavan



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Regional Cooperation - Introduction

- “The Eastern Mediterranean is the only region in the world without a regional organization and this is something that we have to work on”, Cyprus Foreign Minister N. Christodoulides (20/9/2019).
- “Hydrocarbons can become the new coal and steel, in a new regional context.”
- “A viable solution is a feasible goal and would amplify Cyprus’ bridging capacity”.

Trilateral schemes (mostly after 2014)

- Cyprus, Greece and Israel
- Cyprus, Greece and Egypt
- Cyprus, Greece and Jordan

Small States Regional Cooperation: Oil & Gas and Security Policies



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Regional Cooperation: Oil & Gas and Security - Institutions

- Cooperation occurs at executive level: Government-driven & decisions taken at a political level
 - Started as matter of international relations: Multilateral cooperation
 - Meetings at ministerial level
 - Businesses for oil & gas exploitation
 - Interparliamentary meetings
 - Tourism cooperation
 - Municipalities twining
 - 'Institutionalized' by developing cooperation with its own institutions
 - Regular interaction between states/regions as well as business people

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Oil, Gas and Security in the Eastern Mediterranean

- Oil and gas potential for conflict
 - Turkey & Turkish Cypriots v. RoC (Greek-Cypriot dominated)
 - Tensions between Lebanon and Israel over use of resources - Cyprus might get dragged into.
- RoC and Israel cooperation energy/security: repercussions & crises
 - Conflicts more likely
 - Turkish EU accession talks is strongly affected by the Cyprus dispute
 - EU an important actor in the Cyprus question.
- Gas as catalyst and/or a curse?
 - Catalyst in reconciliation process: Conflict prevention local and regional levels strengthening of the peace process, addressing all relevant actors.
 - utilization of the resources is the promotion of good governance and best practice.
 - Environmental and social disaster? Tourism and natural habitat

Small States Civil Society Regional Cooperation



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Civil Society Regional Cooperation Institutions

- Cooperation occurs at individual and organisational level : local initiative-driven & decisions taken by consensus & alliance-building
 - Local organisation first that sought European partners
 - Started with some projects & common interests
 - Meetings for projects; pursuing similar/same goals
 - Training support, expertise
 - Exchange of ideas
 - Institutionalized by developing cooperation
 - Regular interaction at EU, Council of Europe projects & civil society initiatives

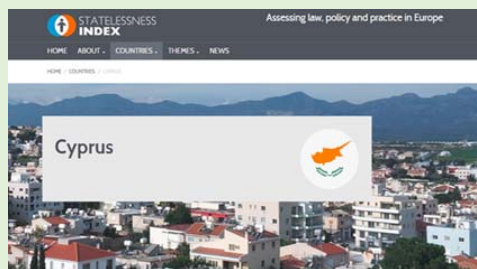
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Cyprus Refugee Council/ECRE: Enhancing rights and enriching Democracy

- The Cyprus Refugee Council: Civil society regional cooperation:
 - Part of European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE): Alliance of 105 organisations in 40 countries - Secretariat in Brussels
 - Aim: to promote the rights of refugees, asylum-seekers and other forcibly displaced persons in Europe and in European external policies.
- CyRC safeguard, support & advocate for the rights of vulnerable groups in Cyprus
 - Promoting their effective integration into the host society.
 - Focusing on refugees, asylum seekers, detainees, trafficking victims and survivors of torture, CyRC works closely with the local society in order to provide quality services at the individual, community and policy level.
- Crucial regional network: information, training, expertise, support

Small States – Cyprus Refugee Council: Reporting

- Alternatives to Detention of Third Country Nationals in Cyprus
- The Statelessness Index: The first tool to provide comprehensive and accessible comparative analysis of European countries' efforts to address statelessness
- CCyprus the Asylum Information Database (AIDA) coordinated by the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE).



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Cyprus Refugee Council: Monitoring authorities

- The first pushback: A fishing boat carrying 175 Syrians – 30 women, 69 children and 76 men, was denied access to the Republic of Cyprus on March 21.
- Police spokesperson: “The police acted according to the ministerial decisions, which ban entry into Cyprus, as part of the protection measures due to the spread of coronavirus (Covid-19)”.



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Conclusion on regional cooperation

- Regional cooperation perceived crucial for Cyprus:
 - Political alliances either to survive, maintain conflict or to overcome it:
 - Greece v. Turkey plus EU
 - Wider geopolitical game: Russia, USA and regional actors
 - Regional peace-keeping & peace-making
 - Economic & financial cooperation
 - Cultural factors in eastern Mediterranean
 - Environmental concerns: sea pollutions; Climate change
 - Population movements, migration and refugees
- All above crucial for a divide island state as benefits of RC

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Conclusion on regional cooperation

- Outlook: Challenges for future regional cooperation
 - Global instabilities after COVID-19 crisis
 - Tackle climate change, global crises; EU's growing need for imported gas
 - Without solution & collaboration between the two communities for hydrocarbon exploration highly, RC subjected to the conflict realities
 - Gas-hungry Turkey; autocratic President and conflicts with Greece & EU
 - Middle Eastern turmoil; war in Syria and other regions
 - Cyprus economic vulnerabilities & attempt to monetize resources asap
 - Israel's political crisis and coming crisis & accentuation of conflicts
 - New refugee crises; civil society initiatives for peace & cooperation