

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January 21, 2022

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
United States Secretary of State  
U.S. State Department  
2201 C St NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

We write in stark opposition to the Biden Administration's change of course on the EastMed pipeline project. Since 2019, the United States played a critical role in the establishment of the 3+1 framework and the Eastern Mediterranean energy development discussions. Digressing from that course is fraught with national security concerns. By undermining the EastMed pipeline project, the Biden Administration undercuts our allies and their hopes for energy independence and economic prosperity. The sting of the reversal is made worse by the Administration's continued tacit approval of Russia's Nord Stream 2 pipeline, deepening Europe's energy dependence on an adversary.

Europe is facing an unprecedented increase in energy prices, spurred on by a number of political, geographic, and market forces. A significant cause of the spiking energy prices is the short supply of natural gas. Natural gas is the primary energy source for European residential heating and cooking, making the price increases particularly noticeable to European consumers. The acute sensitivity of Europe to natural gas shortages and price volatility this past year has made it clear that European reliance on natural gas is not just a thing of the past but something that will probably last for decades.

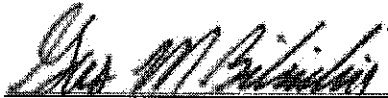
Despite Europe's decades long push towards green and renewable energies, the surge in energy prices has ironically led to the increased use of coal to meet demand. Since natural gas is a cleaner energy option over other fossil fuels, it is a crucial energy source for government policies seeking to transition into greener energies. The European Union recognizes this and has even declared the pipeline a special project. The EastMed pipeline project would not only alleviate future shortages of natural gas to Europe but would promote energy independence and economic prosperity for our strategic allies of Greece, Israel, and Cyprus.

The reversal on the EastMed pipeline becomes only more hypocritical and offensive given the fact that President Biden continues to clear the path towards completion of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. Biden's announcement last May to suspend sanctions on the Russian pipeline and his continued fight against sanctions shows clear preference towards Russia over our allies. Sadly, we are seeing the fallout. Putin is once again using Europe's reliance

on Russian gas to seek concessions from Europe, and there is no coincidence that Russian President Vladimir Putin is preparing to invade Ukraine in the middle of winter when energy demand is the highest. It is not hard to imagine a severe waning of European resistance to a Russian invasion of Ukraine if Russia decides to restrict gas flows to Europe.

We hope you and President Biden recognize the significant national security implications the United States and our European allies are facing because of European reliance on Russian gas. The EastMed pipeline project must be priority. It is a viable alternative to the Nord Stream 2 pipeline and European dependence on Russian natural gas. We strongly urge you to reconsider your opposition to the EastMed pipeline project and support energy independence for our allies in the Eastern Mediterranean and Europe.

Sincerely,



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Gus M. Bilirakis  
Member of Congress



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Nicole Malliotakis  
Member of Congress