

**Address by the President of the Republic Mr Nicos Anastasiades at the inauguration of the new building of the Embassy of the State of Qatar, today, on the National Day of Qatar**

**Nicosia, Monday, 13 December 2021**

I am delighted to join you this evening on the occasion of the National Day of the State of Qatar, as well as the inauguration of the new Qatari Embassy in Nicosia.

The National Day of Qatar, also known as Founder's Day, celebrates the rise of Sheikh Jassem as the father and founder of the State of Qatar and it is a pleasure to honour the history and identity of Qatar and to commemorate those who have worked and continue to work to make Qatar a great nation.

Over the past years, political and economic relations between the Republic of Cyprus and the State of Qatar have witnessed significant development and continue to grow.

I fondly remember my visit to Qatar in 2014, and the warm hospitality I received by His Highness, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir of the State of Qatar.

During that visit we signed a number of bilateral agreements in several fields of collaboration, which were indicative of our common desire to strengthen our bonds of friendship and provided the framework for our future relationship.

The magnitude of the investment in the new impressive premises of the Embassy of the State of Qatar, which we are officially opening today, is a testament of the deepening and widening of our partnership ever since the said visit.

Moreover, there is no better proof of the synergies which can build upon than the participation of Qatar Petroleum in Cyprus' exclusive economic zone and in particular in Block 10 in the consortium with ExxonMobil that is proceeding with the resumption of its drilling program in a few days.

Further, the recent licensing to the consortium in Block 5 constitutes yet another very important development and a vote of confidence to Cyprus' energy strategy.

I have no doubt that the combination of these developments will positively support our efforts in ensuring that our relations and cooperation, not only in the political and energy field, but also in the economic one, will flourish to their full potential for the benefit of our countries and peoples.

I should be amiss not to highlight that the enhancement of relations with Qatar and the Gulf region as a whole constitutes a strategic objective for my Government and a core foreign policy priority.

To this end, Cyprus is a devoted proponent of deepening EU-Qatar relations, as well as between the EU - Gulf Cooperation Council, as we see the merits of a more enhanced partnership and the importance of coordinating with Qatar and the Council in addressing common challenges.

As this is a day that commemorates the unification and independence of Qatar, I wish to take this opportunity to refer to the Cyprus problem and express our appreciation to Qatar's principled position, in support of our efforts to reach a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue.

In this regard, I wish to once more convey my personal commitment for the resumption of negotiations in the framework of the UN Secretary General's Good Offices mission, with the aim of reaching a functional and viable solution, fully in line with UN Security Council Resolution and the EU acquis.

A solution that will reunite Cyprus and its people and safeguard the island's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence, free from any foreign dependencies, troops or rights of guarantee.

Let me at this point also add that my Government will continue to demonstrate a policy of clear inclusiveness towards the Turkish-Cypriots, ensuring that all Cypriots, regardless of ethnic, religious or other background, will co-exist peacefully and achieve their shared destiny as citizens of a modern country that will continue to be a Member State of the European Union.

On this auspicious occasion, I would like to once again congratulate you on the National Day of Qatar and convey my best regards and wishes to His Highness, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, for every success, peace and prosperity to the State of Qatar and its friendly people.

Last, but not least, I would like to yet again stress that I look forward to intensifying contacts at all levels and I would be delighted to host the Emir of the State Qatar in Cyprus in the near future.

---

RM