



By: TA | AP Brief

Greek and Turkish leaders to hold talks in Ankara to ease tensions



Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis is visiting Turkey on Wednesday as part of an effort to **sustain dialogue** at a time when tensions between the two long-time rivals are rising.

Mitsotakis, who is expected to be accompanied by a delegation of senior ministers, will meet President Recep Tayyip Erdogan during the so-called High-Level Cooperation Council — a fence-mending initiative that was launched to improve ties between the two NATO allies.

Greece and Turkey remain at odds over a series of issues, including maritime boundaries, **Cyprus**, and drilling rights in the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean seas.

Turkey has also voiced unease over a growing **defense and energy** cooperation between Greece, Israel, and Cyprus that sidelines Ankara and which some view as an effort to counter Turkey's influence in the region.

Greece and Turkey have come to the brink of war several times over the last half-century. A dispute over energy exploration rights in 2020 led to the two countries' warships facing off in the **Mediterranean**.

In recent weeks, Greek officials have reaffirmed Greece's right to extend its territorial waters in the Aegean to 12 nautical miles (22.2 kilometers) from the current six. Turkey — whose parliament in 1995 declared such a move as a "cause of war" — has criticized the comments as unacceptable and argues that the extension of the territorial waters would violate its rights, severely restricting its maritime access.

Positive agenda

The high-level talks in Ankara are expected to concentrate on a "positive agenda" — cooperation in trade, energy, education, and cultural ties — and no progress is expected on any of the contentious matters.

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Both countries are also locked in a dispute over Cyprus, divided since 1974 between its ethnic Greek and Turkish populations.

For the past seven years, Turkey has rejected a long-standing agreement for a reunified Cyprus under a federal system.

Instead, Ankara and the Turkish Cypriot administration, which is only recognized by Turkey, have proposed a two-state solution.