

## **GREEK-TURKISH FORUM**

### **STATEMENT**

The Greek-Turkish Forum (GTF), having met in Ankara on 6-7 May 2019, decided to release the following statement to the attention of the public in Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus.

The GTF welcomes the positive atmosphere registered during the recent high-level contacts between Turkey and Greece towards enhancing friendship links and close cooperation in issues of mutual interest.

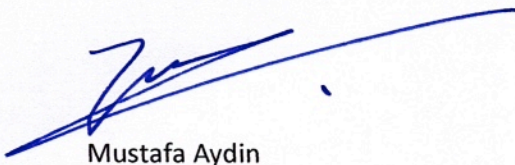
The GTF further underlines the necessity of the resumption of the negotiations for achieving a fair and viable permanent solution of the Cyprus problem on the basis of a bizonal bicomunal federation and political equality of both communities living on the island, as summarized in the latest report of the UN Secretary General. To this end, the GTF reaffirms the paramount importance of more civil society engagement and the building of mutual trust between the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities. More specifically, the GTF welcomes the already agreed confidence building measures, expresses the necessity of their full implementation and urges the two leaders to propose additional ones in order to increase and support trust building. The GTF believes that direct inter-communal contacts encouraged by UNSC resolutions, advising new methods for building trust between the two communities through direct contacts, should be promoted to this end.



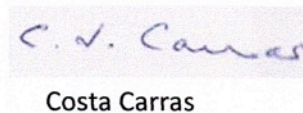
In this context, the GTF expresses the belief that there is a need to recognize and disseminate the important achievements of the existing technical committees, established in the framework of the bi-communal negotiations on the island. The inspiring results of these committees underline the potential for further work in this direction. Improved cooperation between the two sides will reinforce, among others, solution to problems arising from crimes committed throughout the island. Further cooperation in the fields of education, culture, economic and social issues should be enhanced.

The GTF urges all the parties involved to consider the natural resources issue in the Eastern Mediterranean as a source of mutual interest and cooperation rather than tension.

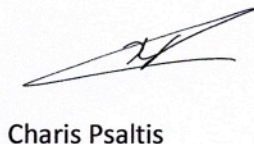
Finally, the GTF stresses the importance of avoiding counterproductive and inflammatory statements on the island, and preventing tensions in Greek-Turkish relations. It further reiterates the urgent need to resume the exploratory talks between Greece and Turkey which were interrupted a year and a half ago. This will pave the ground for the resolution of the outstanding Greek-Turkish disputes for the benefit of both countries, and also create a positive atmosphere conducive to resolving the Cyprus issue.



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