

GREEK TURKISH FORUM (GTF) STATEMENT

Athens, 14 January 2020

The Greek Turkish Forum (GTF) met in Athens on 13 and 14 January 2020 in the midst of tension between Greece and Turkey over the Eastern Mediterranean and in the absence of a resolution of the Cyprus issue.

The GTF noted the rise of tension in bilateral relations with respect to developments in the Eastern Mediterranean and urged all sides to exercise maximum restraint, refrain from inflammatory statements as well as actions, and open a new dialogue. The GTF has registered with concern the degree of mutual mistrust and misinformation and urged governments and the press to work actively in reversing this trend. The GTF agreed that no littoral state should be excluded from efforts to promote regional economic cooperation and that international law should constitute the basis for all such efforts. The GTF reiterated its view on the need to resume the exploratory talks between Greece and Turkey as soon as possible.

The GTF welcomed the reaffirmation of the commitment and determination of the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities to achieve a settlement based on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality. This was stressed again at the 25 November 2019 informal meeting of the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot leaders with the UN Secretary General in Berlin. The GTF welcomed the commitment of both leaders to the Joint Declaration of 11 February 2014, the prior convergences, and the six-point framework presented on 30 June 2017 with a view to achieving a strategic agreement paving the way forward for a comprehensive settlement.

The GTF also agreed that the current status quo is not sustainable and that reaching a settlement to the Cyprus issue within a foreseeable horizon is of utmost importance not only to Cypriots, but also to Greeks, Turks, and the European Union. It is clear that peace, stability and economic cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean would be boosted by a settlement.

The GTF commended the work of the joint Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage and reiterated the necessity of proposing and implementing additional CBMs. The GTF also expressed its support for the proposal submitted for the introduction of Turkish language to the list of the official languages of the European Union.

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