



## **STATEMENT OF THE GREEK TURKISH FORUM**

December 18, 2023

The recent meeting on December 7, 2023, between President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis in the framework of the High-Level Cooperation Council between the two countries successfully achieved a step forward in the new chapter of relations between Greece and Türkiye. It was the fifth meeting of the High-Level Cooperation Council established on the 14th of May 2010.

We welcome the signing of the Athens Declaration on Friendly Relations and Good-Neighbourliness and 15 other documents (See the Addendum) covering a wide range of issues.

We note both leaders' statements during the joint press conference, promoting political dialogue by expanding confidence-building measures and believing in the existence of a way to solve even the most challenging issues.

As GTF, we believe that this new era of Greek-Turkish relations opens a window of opportunity for creating a resilient Positive Agenda, building on the lessons learned from the previous historical acquis. This is also relevant at the level of exploratory talks, where the progress achieved over the years and remaining thorny issues should be assessed.

We believe that building trust is a lengthy process that needs consistent efforts and crisis prevention mechanisms at different levels. An assessment of interests -common interests to start with, but each state's particular interests in the long run- is vital in building trust. This requires unambiguous political support from both sides and practical and realizable objectives.

We believe that any agreements signed need concrete and systematic follow-up. In this context, setting up an ad-hoc task force at the High-Level Cooperation Council meeting to follow up on the agreed-upon items of the positive agenda would be helpful. Implementing some flagship projects will solidify the foundations of the current rapprochement.

We consider that the agenda of cooperation that both sides have developed through the agreements signed extends to a wide range of sectors with tangible benefits for both societies. Awareness of public opinion to this fact can amplify support for this ongoing effort.

We wish to emphasize the importance of media and social media in creating misinformation that can easily poison bilateral relations and misguide public opinion. Therefore, opinion leaders are vital to any rapprochement process. Journalists and bloggers can play an essential role in helping to understand the different perceptions, and in this respect, it is helpful to promote the exchange of visits and in-depth briefings.

The Greek Turkish Forum

## **Addendum: The fifteen bilateral agreements signed between the Government of the Hellenic Republic and the Government of the Republic of Türkiye**

1. Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Vocational Education and Training between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of the Hellenic Republic.
2. Protocol on Sport Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of the Hellenic Republic.
3. Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Industry and Technology of the Republic of Türkiye and the Ministry of Development of the Hellenic Republic in the field of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises.
4. Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Social Services between the Ministry of Family and Social Services of the Republic of Türkiye and the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family Affairs of the Hellenic Republic.
5. Memorandum of Understanding between Power Transmission Operator (ADMIE) of the Hellenic Republic and the Electricity Transmission Company of Türkiye (TEIAS) for the Implementation of the Project "New AC 400 kV interconnection line Türkiye-Greece".
6. Memorandum of Understanding between the Investment Office of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye and Enterprise Greece on Investment Promotion Cooperation.
7. Memorandum of Understanding between Türk Eximbank and Export Credit Greece.
8. Memorandum of Understanding between the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye (TOBB) and Enterprise Greece in the Investment/Business Sector.
9. Joint Statement for the Enhancement of Customs Cooperation between the Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Türkiye and the Independent Authority for Public Revenue of the Hellenic Republic.
10. Joint Declaration between the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Türkiye and the Ministry of Rural Development and Food of the Hellenic Republic in the Field of Rural Development.
11. Joint Declaration for Cooperation in the field of Tourism between the Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye and the Minister of Tourism of the Hellenic Republic.
12. Joint Statement on the Organization of a Virtual Hackathon with the Participation of Turkish and Greek Students and Young Start-up Communities.
13. Joint Statement on the Construction of a Second Border Crossing Road Bridge between Türkiye and Greece in the Area of the Kipi-İpsala Border Crossing between the "General Directorate of Highways" and the "Egnatia Odos S.A."
14. Joint Statement to hold the Sixth Session of the Joint Economic and Trade Commission (JEC-JETCO) on February 2, 2024, in İstanbul, Türkiye.
15. Joint Declaration of Intent on Cooperation in Science and Technology between the Ministry of Industry and Technology of the Republic of Türkiye and the Ministry of Development of the Hellenic Republic.