

Greek Turkish Forum Statement 23 February 2017

The Cyprus chapter of the Greek Turkish Forum (GTF) appreciates that leadership has been essential to the progress achieved to date in the Cypriot-led peace process. The Cypriot leaders have demonstrated both leadership and vision in progressing to this stage. The progress made up to this point is unprecedented in the history of Cyprus peace talks that span half a century.

However, we are very concerned to see the interruption of the negotiations. The Greek Turkish Forum encourages both leaders to overcome the current crisis and move on to the final stage of the negotiations of what could indeed be a historic moment, the significance of which cannot be overstated. A comprehensive settlement in Cyprus promises to pave the way for social and economic prosperity of the communities on the island, as well as wider regional peace. The alternatives are unfathomable and wrought with uncertainties.

As members of the Greek-Turkish Forum and its Cyprus Chapter, we will continue, in collaboration with other civil society organisations, to support a negotiated settlement for Cyprus in our respective societies. We believe that a new vote on the issue of school commemorations by Greek Cypriot members of the Parliament could provide the opportunity to restart the negotiations with a renewed spirit of trust.

We also encourage both leaders to seize the initiative and implement measures proposed by the Bicomunal Technical Committee of Education, as a means to overcome the current crisis of confidence. It is at crucial junctures and in crisis that leaders make history. May future generations recall and commemorate the leadership of your generation in steering out of a crisis onto a path of sustainable peace.