



Greek Turkish Forum (GTF) Statement

Istanbul, 23 February 2026

Having met in İstanbul on 20–21 February 2026 at a time when the international system is undergoing profound and accelerated transformation, the members of the Greek Turkish Forum (GTF) feel that the pace of geopolitical, economic, technological, and security developments in our shared neighbourhood -spanning the Balkans, the Black Sea, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Middle East- calls for adaptation to these challenging circumstances.

In this context and following the successful 6th High Level Council meeting that was held in Ankara on February 11, the GTF members underscore the value of enhanced cooperation and structured collaboration between Greece and Türkiye. A strategic vision that goes beyond traditional paradigms and builds on the positive agenda the two governments have pursued in recent years, is not only necessary, but it can also be instrumental for securing peace and stability in the coming period.

The GTF, as always, welcomes the continuation of high-level political dialogue and emphasizes that the agreements already signed should now be decisively implemented. Monitoring mechanisms and follow-up procedures are essential to ensure that these agreements produce tangible, measurable outcomes that benefit the citizens of both countries and can be clearly communicated to the public.

Political dialogue at all levels -governmental, parliamentary, institutional, and civil society- must be strengthened to manage rapid global transformation and regional instability effectively. Sustained communication reduces misperceptions, enhances predictability, and fosters strategic trust.

The GTF wishes to highlight education, vocational training, economic and trade links, investments, tourism, and culture as priority areas that offer immediate and mutually beneficial returns. We welcome the signing and the renewal of bilateral programs in these fields. In particular, the visa facilitation scheme implemented for twelve Aegean islands has proven effective in promoting people-to-people contacts and economic activity. Its continuation and possible expansion in the coming years would further consolidate positive momentum.

Connectivity initiatives should also be accelerated. The anticipated ferry line between İzmir and Thessaloniki represents not only a symbolic bridge but a practical mechanism to enhance tourism flows, commercial interaction, and third-country visitor mobility. Its timely activation would send a strong signal of forward-looking cooperation.

While business-to-business engagement has shown encouraging progress, substantial room for expansion remains. Trade, investment partnerships, joint ventures, and sector-specific cooperation require sustained facilitation and institutional backing. The GTF stresses the importance of consistency and continuity in this domain.

Beyond the business sector, collaboration in combating forest fires, coordinating earthquake relief efforts, and responding to other natural disasters represents not only humanitarian solidarity but also a strategic investment in resilience.

Finally, the GTF underscores the shared responsibility of Greece and Türkiye in contributing to regional stability. The Black Sea basin, including the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, developments in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the broader dynamics of the Middle East, all underline the necessity of sustained dialogue. In a rapidly transforming world, structured communication between Athens and Ankara is not just a added value but a strategic imperative.

The GTF reaffirms its commitment to constructive engagement, practical cooperation, and a forward-looking vision that strengthens bilateral relations and contributes to peace and stability in our wider region.