

Workshop Between Greek and Turkish Academics on Second-Track Diplomacy, December 1, 2023, Izmir

Bullet Points and Workshop Report

Rationale of the Workshop: The participating academics to explore and discuss (brainstorm) how the second track diplomacy could be used as a method of solving issues which concern the societies of both countries. The aim, therefore, is not to resolve the bilateral political issues that divide the two countries but to look for specific areas of cooperation between the societies of both two countries that can potentially be discussed by NGOs and other stakeholders, such as research centers/institutes, municipalities, and academic organizations. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed among the Yasar University (The Center for Mediterranean Studies), Izmir and the Institute of International Economic Relations, Athens.

1. Collaborate Beyond regions, non-state actors

By strategically engaging and motivating these non-state actors, the workshop aims to create a more inclusive, impactful, and sustainable platform for academic collaboration, contributing to the broader objectives of second-track diplomacy dialogue between Greek and Turkish academics.

- 1.1. **Community Engagement Strategies:** Foster active involvement of local communities in both Greece and Turkey. Organize outreach programs, local council meetings, and interactive sessions to understand and address the concerns and perspectives of the people directly affected by diplomatic issues. Encourage dialogue between community leaders, grassroots organizations, and academics to create a platform for shared understanding.
- 1.2. **Strengthen Research Centers and Institutes:** Establish collaborative research projects that involve scholars from both regions, focusing on areas of common interest and shared challenges. Facilitate joint publications, academic exchanges, and research partnerships to build a network of experts committed to fostering peaceful relations. Provide funding and resources to support interdisciplinary research initiatives addressing the socio-political, economic, and cultural aspects of bilateral relations.
- 1.3. **Empower Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs):** Identify and support NGOs working on peacebuilding, cultural exchange, and conflict resolution in both countries. Facilitate networking opportunities for NGOs to share best practices, lessons learned, and successful strategies. Explore potential collaborations between academic institutions and NGOs to bridge the gap between theoretical insights and practical, on-the-ground efforts.
- 1.4. **Promote Civil Society Initiatives:** Encourage the active participation of civil society organizations in the process of second-track diplomacy. Organize forums, seminars, and workshops where representatives from civil society can interact with academics and policymakers to contribute their perspectives. Recognize and celebrate the

positive contributions of civil society in fostering understanding and building bridges between communities.

- 1.5. **Macro Region Approach:** Advocate for a macro-regional approach that considers the interconnectedness of various regions and their impact on bilateral relations. Emphasize the importance of collaboration not only between Greece and Turkey but also within the broader regional context to address shared challenges. Explore opportunities for joint projects, initiatives, and policies that benefit all the regions next to the borders of the macro-region concerned, fostering stability and cooperation.
- 1.6. **Capacity Building Programs:** Develop capacity-building programs that empower local communities, NGOs, and civil societies to actively participate in and contribute to collaborative efforts. Provide training sessions, workshops, and resources to enhance the skills of individuals and organizations involved.

2. **Public discourse:** Enhancing Communication with the Public; transformation in public; not only high politics; social media effect

By expanding our focus beyond high politics and engaging with the public through these various avenues, we aim to catalyze a transformation in public discourse that goes beyond conventional diplomatic channels, fostering a more nuanced and constructive dialogue between Greek and Turkish academics, NGOs from both countries and the wider community.

- 2.1. **Communication Strategies:** Explore innovative communication strategies to bridge the gap between academia and the public. Consider effective ways to disseminate research findings and insights to a wider audience, ensuring that complex diplomatic concepts are presented in a digestible manner.
- 2.2. **Transformation in Public Perception:** Investigate the potential for transforming public perceptions of diplomatic efforts. Examine how academic insights can contribute to reshaping narratives and fostering a deeper understanding of the issues at hand among the general public.
- 2.3. **Beyond High Politics:** Emphasize the importance of broadening discussions beyond traditional high politics. Encourage academics to delve into societal issues, cultural nuances, and everyday experiences that contribute to the larger diplomatic landscape. Highlight the role of second-track diplomacy in addressing these broader aspects.
- 2.4. **Navigating Social Media:** Recognize the impact of social media on public opinion and discourse. Explore the challenges and opportunities presented by platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram in shaping narratives around Greek-Turkish relations. Discuss strategies for academics to leverage social media responsibly to disseminate accurate information and counteract misinformation.
- 2.5. **Interactive Workshops:** Consider incorporating interactive elements within the workshop that simulate public engagement scenarios. This could involve role-playing exercises, mock interviews, or collaborative projects aimed at translating academic findings into accessible formats for public consumption.

3. **Campaign for Universities:** Projects for formulating collaboration that will familiarize for example Greek students with the Turkish University System.

By implementing these initiatives under the umbrella of the "Campaign for Universities," the workshop aspires to create a robust framework for sustained collaboration between Greek and Turkish academic institutions. Through these collaborative efforts, we hope to not only enrich the academic experiences of students but also contribute to the broader goals of fostering mutual understanding and goodwill between our nations. In addition, we aim to bridge the educational and cultural gaps between Greek and Turkish students by formulating strategic collaborations that go beyond mere academic exchanges.

- 3.1. **Student Exchange Programs:** Establishing comprehensive student exchange programs between Greek and Turkish universities will be a cornerstone of the campaign. This initiative seeks to facilitate cultural immersion, enhance language skills, and encourage meaningful interactions among students from both nations. By breaking down barriers at the grassroots level, we aim to build a foundation for enduring friendships and collaborative academic pursuits.
- 3.2. **Joint Research Initiatives:** Encouraging collaborative research endeavors between Greek and Turkish universities will be another integral aspect of the campaign. By identifying common research interests and pooling resources, academics from both nations can work together to address shared challenges. This not only promotes academic excellence but also fosters a sense of shared purpose and mutual respect.
- 3.3. **Cultural and Educational Expositions:** Organizing cultural and educational expositions in both Greece and Turkey will provide a platform for universities to showcase their strengths, specialties, and unique contributions to academia. These events will not only serve as networking opportunities for educators but also allow students to explore educational prospects in the neighboring country, breaking down stereotypes and fostering a sense of unity.
- 3.4. **Municipal Partnerships:** Recognizing the role of municipalities in shaping educational policies, the campaign will actively engage with local governments. Collaborating with municipalities, we aim to develop initiatives that support educational exchanges, encourage intercultural dialogue, and create a conducive environment for students to explore academic opportunities across borders.
- 3.5. **Digital Platforms for Collaboration:** Embracing the potential of technology, the campaign will leverage digital platforms to facilitate ongoing collaboration. Virtual classrooms, webinars, and online forums will provide students and academics with opportunities to engage in real-time discussions, share knowledge, and collaborate on projects, transcending geographical boundaries.

4. Mapping: Listing Best Practices of NGOs & Creating A Database

This comprehensive approach to mapping best practices aims to create a valuable resource for academics and practitioners, fostering a culture of continuous improvement in the field of second-track diplomacy between Greece and Turkey.

- 4.1. **Facilitating Collaborative Initiatives:** Fostering partnerships between Greek and Turkish NGOs to encourage joint projects and initiatives in the realm of second-track diplomacy, promoting cross-cultural understanding and cooperation.
- 4.2. **Resource Sharing:** Establishing a platform for the exchange of resources, research findings, and educational materials among participating NGOs to enhance the effectiveness of their collective efforts in promoting peace and dialogue.

- 4.3. **Capacity Building:** Organizing training sessions and workshops aimed at enhancing the capabilities of NGOs involved in second-track diplomacy, equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate complex diplomatic landscapes.
- 4.4. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implementing mechanisms for continuous monitoring and evaluation of ongoing projects and initiatives, ensuring accountability, transparency, and the identification of areas for improvement.
- 4.5. **Networking Opportunities:** Creating forums and events that facilitate networking among Greek and Turkish academics and NGOs, fostering a community of practitioners dedicated to advancing second-track diplomacy in the region.
- 4.6. **Cross-Border Initiatives:** Encouraging collaborative, cross-border projects that address shared challenges and promote mutual understanding, thereby contributing to the development of sustainable peace-building efforts.
- 4.7. **Digital Repository:** Developing a centralized, accessible digital repository that archives relevant publications, research papers, and case studies, serving as a comprehensive resource hub for academics and practitioners engaged in second-track diplomacy.
- 4.8. **Policy Advocacy:** Engaging with policymakers and relevant stakeholders to advocate for policies that support the objectives of second-track diplomacy, emphasizing the importance of grassroots initiatives in building bridges between communities.
- 4.9. **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Designing and implementing public awareness campaigns to highlight the positive impact of second-track diplomacy on regional stability, dispelling misconceptions, and garnering support from the wider community.

5. Funding to initiate new projects:

Securing financial support to kickstart collaborative initiatives will be a crucial aspect of our workshop discussions. We aim to facilitate dynamic dialogues that go beyond theoretical frameworks to practical implementation. By exploring funding opportunities, we can identify sources to launch joint research projects, exchange programs, and cultural initiatives that foster sustained engagement between Greek and Turkish academics. This includes seeking grants from international organizations, governmental bodies, and philanthropic foundations that share our vision for promoting cross-border understanding and cooperation. Through interactive sessions, participants will gain insights into effective grant writing, project management, and successful collaboration models that leverage financial resources for the collective benefit of both academic communities. The workshop will also provide a platform for networking, enabling participants to form partnerships and consortia for joint funding applications, ensuring the sustainability of collaborative efforts beyond the initial stages.

5.1. Funding ideas:

Heinrich Böll Stiftung – <https://tr.boell.org/en>

Climate Network for Social Scientists (CSSN) – <https://cssn.org>

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) – <https://www.ebrd.com/home>

World Bank – <https://www.worldbank.org/en/home>

6. Research Prospective-Specific Area: Climate and Energy Policies

This research perspective aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between climate and energy policies, fostering a nuanced discussion among Greek and Turkish academics during the workshop.

- 6.1. **Local Experiences:** Explore the localized impact of climate and energy policies in both Greek and Turkish communities. Analyze case studies highlighting successful local initiatives promoting sustainable practices and the challenges faced in implementation. Consider the role of grassroots movements, community engagement, and public awareness in shaping local responses to climate and energy policies.
- 6.2. **EU Effect on Turkish-Greek Relations:** Investigate the influence of European Union (EU) climate and energy policies on the dynamics of Turkish-Greek relations. Examine the areas of collaboration and potential conflicts arising from the alignment or divergence of national policies with EU standards. Assess the impact of shared environmental goals on fostering cooperation and dialogue between Greece and Turkey within the broader EU context.
- 6.3. **Comparative Studies on State Policies/Efficiency/Consumption/Green Energy Transition:** Conduct a comparative analysis of the climate and energy policies adopted by Greece and Turkey, considering their effectiveness and efficiency. Evaluate the energy consumption patterns in both countries and their strategies for transitioning to green and sustainable energy sources. Examine the role of governmental institutions, regulatory frameworks, and policy implementation in achieving environmental objectives. Investigate the economic and social implications of green energy transition, considering factors such as job creation, industry adaptation, and societal resilience.

7. Progress: Follow-up Workshop on Climate/Energy Studies – September 2024

This workshop will be followed by another workshop on climate and energy studies to be held in Athens in September 2024. The following ideas will be discussed during the workshop:

- 7.1. **Establishment of a Joint Research Initiative:** Collaborative projects between Greek and Turkish scholars in the field of Climate and Energy Studies. Increased Participation: A growing number of academics and researchers from both countries engage in ongoing dialogues and collaborative efforts. Academic Exchanges: Facilitation of academic exchanges, fostering a deeper understanding between Greek and Turkish scholars through joint research, conferences, and workshops.
- 7.2. **Publication Opportunities:** Encouraging joint publications and articles that contribute to the global discourse on climate change and sustainable energy, showcasing the collaborative efforts of Greek and Turkish academics.

- 7.3. **Broader Regional Impact:** Initiatives expanding beyond the workshop framework, reaching out to neighboring countries to create a more inclusive and impactful regional network on climate and energy issues.
- 7.4. **Strengthening Academic Ties:** Demonstrable progress in fostering stronger ties between Greek and Turkish academics, contributing to the larger goal of promoting peace and cooperation through academic collaboration.
- 7.5. **Student Involvement:** Integration of students from both countries into collaborative research projects, promoting intercultural understanding and nurturing the next generation of scholars committed to cross-border cooperation.
- 7.6. **Increased Sponsorship and Support:** Attracting more funding and support from international organizations, governments, and private institutions interested in promoting peacebuilding initiatives through academic collaboration in the region.
- 7.7. **Networking Opportunities:** Enhanced networking channels for academics, policymakers, and practitioners, facilitating ongoing communication and cooperation beyond formal workshops.
- 7.8. **Long-term Sustainability:** Implementation of strategies to ensure the sustainability of the collaborative efforts, including the establishment of a permanent platform for ongoing dialogue and cooperation between Greek and Turkish academics in various fields.