

**JOINT STATEMENT  
BY THE MINISTERS FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY**

German-Greek relations are rooted in a longstanding common tradition. They are marked by mutual respect, partnership and friendship. Our democratic and pluralistic system of values, our common European values and our common European destiny bind and commit us to finding common answers to the current challenges in Europe. At the same time, we are aware that German-Greek relations have gone through difficult phases recently. Together we seek to renew our relations and agree to develop a German-Greek Action Plan in order to expand and further intensify the cooperation between our two countries and Governments:

- We seek closer and regularly occurring exchange in the fields of foreign, European and security policy, and want to step up our joint struggle against terrorism and extremism. Our countries are being directly affected by the largest refugee and migration crisis in decades—Greece as a country of first admission and Germany as a country of destination. We want to respond to this together through solidarity-based European migration and refugee policy and establish an ongoing bilateral dialogue on migration.
- Germany and Greece highly value their longstanding and reliable partnership in the defence sector as well as their cooperation in the framework of EU Common Security and Defence Policy and of NATO, highlighted among others by the successful and ongoing NATO Activity in the Aegean Sea to protect European borders as well as the ongoing strategic works in the EU. We vow to continue and further develop cooperation in this field.
- Through concrete forms of economic and technological cooperation, we wish to establish environmentally sustainable growth as well as foster innovation and creative entrepreneurship, also in order to provide prospects for young people and the long-term unemployed. In doing so, special attention should first be paid to intensifying cooperation in the areas of renewable energies, export promotion and tourism.
- We underscore our intention of further intensifying and cultivating our cooperation in the area of science, culture and education. The bilateral Cultural Agreement of 1956 is to be revitalised in order to promote our languages and make closer cooperation between our educational institutions possible. We will continue our successful cooperation in research and vocational training, enhance exchange between cultural institutions and promote contemporary art as well as joint efforts to combat illicit trafficking in cultural property.
- A central concern is supporting cultural and civil society exchange between our peoples especially conveying the values of European unification to young people.

In order to intensify our cooperation in these different areas, both sides have agreed on an Action Plan. The Action Plan is conceived as a living document. Both sides encourage to further expand the Action Plan in the near future, taking into account the number of proposals that were not included in the present version. The Action Plan consists of the following four pillars (cf. Annex):

- I. Political cooperation;
- II. Economic and technological cooperation;
- III. Scientific, cultural and educational cooperation;
- IV. Cooperation at a societal level.

Within the scope of their regular meetings, both Ministers for Foreign Affairs will promote the advancement of the Action Plan and provide for further steps towards the future. Coordination of the implementation of the Action Plan will take place through yearly meetings of the participating Ministries at State Secretary or Deputy Minister level. Both sides will each designate a central contact at State Secretary/Deputy Minister level, who will combine and pool the activities of the respective Government. In order to facilitate ongoing cooperation, define concrete aims, and ensure the best possible implementation of the agreed measures, both sides also agree to establish a common working group (task force). Regularly updating the Action Plan will ensure that priorities are adjusted and developed in a targeted way and that the thematic areas of cooperation can be expanded. Both sides agree to use a common software (programme) in order to monitor the implementation of each action mentioned herein (initiation, responsibility, financing, progress of implementation).

**ANNEX.**  
**ACTION PLAN FOR BILATERAL**  
**COOPERATION**  
**BETWEEN GREECE AND GERMANY**

**PILLAR I**

**POLITICAL COOPERATION**

Aware of multidimensional challenges, and with the aim of strengthening the European contribution to global stability and security, both sides agree to intensify consultations between both Foreign Ministries. Both countries strive for closer coordination within the framework of international organisations and forums of regional cooperation. This also encompasses closer coordination between the Foreign Ministries in the case of candidacies for international and regional organisations.

1. It is agreed that consultations will take place annually, alternating between the two countries, at the level of Secretary General on the Greek side and State Secretary on the German side of the respective Foreign Ministries. The consultations will take place in the run-up to or subsequent to the annual meetings of the Ministries of both sides that are involved in coordinating the implementation of the Action Plan.
2. It is additionally agreed that regular yearly consultations will be conducted at the level of the Political Director as well as the Directors in the fields of security policy, disarmament and conventional arms control, the Western Balkans, Russia policy, Asia policy and Middle East policy. Where necessary and expedient, the Heads of Division of the affected divisions are also to take part in these consultations. In the further course of the consultations, both sides will strive to identify additional areas for intensified foreign policy cooperation.
3. Both sides agree to cooperate intensively in the area of European policy. To this end, yearly meetings of the European Director-Generals of both Foreign Ministries will take place. This cooperation will especially include the areas of the future of the EU, enlargement policy and issues concerning the future EU financial framework.
4. The refugee and migration crisis has illustrated the importance of coherent policy among the EU Member States to manage the crisis adequately and effectively. To this end, the establishment of an ongoing dialogue on migration policy has been agreed. Both parties express their conviction that the refugee and migration crisis is a European responsibility.
5. Both sides will develop a concept for cooperation between the diplomatic academies of the Foreign Ministries.

6. Both sides agree on the need for closer cooperation on issues that concern combatting terrorism, terrorist financing, violent extremism and radicalisation, as well as the need for cooperation in the areas of cybersecurity/cyberdefence, European border protection and fighting the root causes of migration. The challenge of volatility in the Mediterranean and neighbouring regions underlines the geostrategic importance of Greece in the MENA region. Existing fora within the EU framework should also be used with the purpose of enhancing ongoing cooperation between Agencies and Ministries of the two countries.
7. In the area of labour market policy, both sides agree to continue open dialogue and exchange of experience through the respective Ministries and welcome the ongoing efforts of the respective national employment services relating to labour market reforms.

## **PILLAR II**

### **ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION**

Both sides reaffirm their will to continue and expand their activities within the framework of the Greek-German partnership under the coordination of the responsible Ministries. The primary focus is on establishing framework conditions that foster an attractive and stable investment climate for private enterprise in Greece, and above all to provide long-term future prospects for small and medium-sized enterprises in the real economy (responsible in Germany: the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy). Our common goal is to strengthen economic growth in an environmentally sustainable, socially just manner and to create jobs, especially for young people. This concerns the promotion of cooperation both in innovative fields and in traditional sectors. Creative entrepreneurship is to be strengthened and private sector dialogue is to be intensified.

1. The cooperation on renewable energies that was reaffirmed between the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy and the Greek Ministry for Environment and Energy on 1 July 2016 aims to develop pilot projects through which a future-oriented energy supply with high shares of renewable energies can be demonstrated. As initial pilot projects, a Greek island that is not connected to the mainland power grid as well as public buildings are to be identified proving technological feasibility and economic advantages of renewable energies. Both sides agree on the suitability of promoting bilateral cooperation in the areas of renewable energies as well as energy efficiency. Both sides reaffirm their commitment to continue the very fruitful existing technical assistance cooperation between Greece, Germany, represented by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, as well as the Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) of the EU Commission within the ongoing Technical Assistance Project for Renewable Energies and Energy Efficiency (TARES+). Furthermore, we refer to the Greek-German research and innovation cooperation programme of both Research Ministries (pillar III) which finances collaborative projects of applied research, development and innovation in the energy sector.

2. Projects to strengthen the capacities of the Greek administration are envisaged within the framework of the export promotion cooperation that was agreed by both Economy Ministers on 1 July 2016 and which is supported by the Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) of the EU Commission. Proven instruments of the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy, such as the SME market development programme and the energy export initiative, can make valuable contributions to bilateral cooperation in the area of export promotion. The development of the ProGreece electronic portal for Greek and German companies serves to promote exports.
3. The significance of the Greek tourism sector offers major potential for successful cooperation in view of the large number of German tourists who visit Greece each year. The “tourism innovation pact” initiative approved by the German Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy will launch cooperation between leading tourism companies and scientific institutions. The initiators are the German-Greek Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Greece, the C.I.S.T. (Center for Innovation & Sustainability in Tourism) research platform and the Federal Association of the German Tourism Industry.
4. Further projects will be identified step-by-step during regular contacts and put into practice.

### **PILLAR III**

#### **SCIENTIFIC, CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION**

1. Both sides affirm the continuation of the Greek-German research and innovation cooperation programme by the German Ministry of Education and Research and the Greek Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs for three more years and connecting it with the initiatives and courses of action of the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020). The aim is to pursue a broad spectrum of research cooperation—health, the bioeconomy and energy, the humanities and social sciences, digital technologies and key enabling technologies—through synergies in the scope of both countries’ flagship initiatives. We will strive to strengthen cooperation between industry and science in these fields as well as to support junior scientists.
2. The signing of the joint declaration on educational cooperation is to be implemented by the end of the year. Both Education Ministries will jointly explore the progress of the dual vocational training system in both countries. The MENDI (Mentoring Dual International) programme, which is already running, will be evaluated. As needed, programmes will also be carried out in other fields of knowledge. A feasibility study on the dual vocational training system in agriculture is being implemented.
3. The bilateral Cultural Agreement of 1956 states that “a close cooperation between the two countries will serve the common cause of the European Civilization”. In the spirit of this Agreement, the joint standing committee will

be convened in 2017 in accordance with Article 14 of the Agreement. This committee is to make it possible to address and to give impetus to a wide array of cooperation issues.

4. Both Foreign Ministries express their will to promote literary exchange and increased translations of literary works between the two languages. In cooperation with the Goethe Institute and the Greek Culture Foundation, translator workshops and publishers tours could be initiated.
5. Both sides intend to promote cooperation in the area of contemporary art as well as joint efforts to combat illicit trafficking in cultural property. This cooperation may encompass, inter alia, the areas of film promotion, young artists' events, and interlinking of artists, as well as cooperation in the preservation of historical monuments and cultural heritage, archaeology and in exchanges between supporters of the arts and museums. Concrete projects are, with the inclusion of intermediary organisations if applicable, to be identified and implemented bit by bit within the scope of regular contacts.
6. Both sides affirm their support for "documenta 14: Learning from Athens", which will be carried out in 2017 as an exhibition project, equally and simultaneously in both Kassel and Athens.

#### **PILLAR IV**

##### **COOPERATION AT A SOCIETAL LEVEL**

1. Recalling the September 2014 declaration of intent to found a Greek-German youth exchange institution, both sides welcome the perspective to establish a Greek-German Youth Office.
2. Both sides underscore the importance of a closer interlinking of our civil societies. Concrete proposals for the expansion of civil society contacts are to be developed. Moreover, the cooperation of municipal administrations shall be increased. The work of the Greek-German Assembly (DGV) can offer a framework for cooperating at local and regional level, e.g. by sharing best practices. In addition to the DGV, both sides encourage the establishment of a mix-and-match mechanism of offers and demands of cooperation between the Greek and the German municipal administrations.
3. Both sides affirm their desire to work towards a shared culture of remembrance through concrete gestures and signs of reconciliation. Here public awareness must be raised, especially among young people, about the occupation of Greece by the German Wehrmacht and the crimes against the Greek civilian population. Both sides underline the importance of including the aspects of the German occupation of Greece during World War II in the curricula of the secondary education, in order to develop a common culture of remembrance for younger generations.
4. Both sides encourage the increased inclusion of the Greek community in Germany and the German community in Greece in order to promote mutual

understanding between the two societies and to dismantle prejudices and stereotypes in both countries.

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