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**6th GREEK-TURKISH YOUNG LEADERS SYMPOSIUM**

**Held ONLINE**

**3-10 DECEMBER 2020**

**Brief Post-Symposium Report**

**The Center for International and European Studies (CIES)** in partnership with the Thessaloniki-based **Navarino Network** organized the 6th Greek-Turkish Young Leaders Symposium (GTYLS), for the first time as an online forum, to provide a forum for study, dialogue, and networking for young Greeks and Turks between **3 and 10 December 2020.** The 6th GTYLS was co-sponsored by **NATO’s Public Diplomacy Division** and the **Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Liberty, Turkey Office**. 31 participants (17 Greeks and 14 Turks) joined the 6th GTYLS.

Considering the current circumstances due to the Covid-19, the 6th GTYLS was organized online via the Zoom and Miro platforms. The Symposium was opened by Professor **Dimitrios Triantaphyllou**, Director of the CIES, Professor **Dimitris Keridis**, Member of the Hellenic Parliament and Founding Director of the Navarino Network, and Dr. **Ronald Meinardus**, Director of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Liberty, Turkey Office.

The thematic sessions were designed to present different aspects of Greek-Turkish relations and to encourage reflection and debate. The first thematic session was on **“Greek-Turkish Relations: The State of Play”** with introductions by Professor **Mustafa Aydın** and Ms. **Paulina Lampsa**, both longstanding members of the Greek-Turkish Forum. The second thematic session on **“The Role of NATO”** was led by Ms. **Ino-Despina Afentouli** from NATO’s Public Diplomacy Division while the third session on **“The Introduction of Liberal Values and Their Application”** was facilitated by Mr. **Sven Gerst** from the International Federation of Liberal Youth. The Symposium also included two sessions led by alumni of previous editions of the GTYLS: **“Youth and Peace-building: A conceptual Framework”** facilitated by Dr. **Pınar Sayan** of Beykoz University and Dr. **Athanasios Grammennos** of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Liberty, Greece Office; and **“Young Leaders and Civic Engagement”** led by Ms. **Gülçin Sınav** of FNF Turkey and Dr. **Angelos Kaskanis** of the Tactics Institute for Security and Counter Terrorism. Another theme that was explored was the role of the media and the need for fact-checking. The aforementioned themes were in the sessions on **“Communicating Greek-Turkish Relations”** led by Associate Professor **Eylem Yanardağoğlu** from Kadir Has University and Professor **Christos Frangonikolopoulos** from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and “**Fact Checking Priorities and Challenges”** led by Mr. **Koray Kaplıca** from Izlemedeyiz, a fact-checking venture based in Istanbul.

In addition to thematic sessions, an online version of the **Peer-to-Peer Workshop** was led by Dr. **Andreas Kotelis** from the University of Malta and Assistant Professor **Cihan Dizdaroğlu** from Kadir Has University. They were supported by three CIES-affiliated facilitators: Ms. **Simla Yavas**, Dr. **Emre Metin Bil**giner, and Mr. **Abdullah Arslan**. The participants brainstormed on the triggers that foster positive change in Greek-Turkish relations in a series of workshop sessions. They worked in groups and developed four action plans on media literacy, fact-checking, culinary fairs, and youth exchange programs which were presented on the last day of the Symposium following a roundtable discussion of the lessons learned and the way forward at the end of the Symposium.

Apart from being held as an online Symposium for the first time, this edition of the GTYLS was unique in that participants from previous editions were allowed to take part. This allowed the organizers to build upon the acquis of this initiative and develop a core group of committed young Greek and Turkish future leaders that seek dialogue at a time of extended tensions between the two countries.

Two new initiatives related to the GTYLS were announced at the end the event. The first is the expected launch of a dedicated website for the Greek Turkish Young Leaders Symposium to be launched in January 2021 with the co-sponsorship of NATO’s Public Diplomacy Division. The second was a launch of the first Mico-Grants for collaborative Greek-Turkish Study Projects. This new initiative between the **Center for International and European Studies (CIES) at Kadir Has University; the Department of International, European and Area Studies at the Panteion University of Athens, and the Istanbul office of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom** aims to encourage and support young Turkish and Greek scholars and journalists and others to develop and write together a research/policy paper which will highlight an area of common ground and cooperation between Greece and Turkey. Three micro-grants of € 1000 each will be given in 2021.

It was also announced that the intention of the organizers is to continue with this project in 2021 with at least two meetings – one online version in the first half of 2021 and an in-person meeting in Athens in the second half of the year. The organizers are also exploring holding an online Greek-Turkish workshop on media literacy.

**Dimitrios Triantaphyllou**

**Istanbul, 22 December 2020**