

## JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

### **Greek-German Bilateral Action Plan:**

#### **2nd meeting at State Secretary level, Athens, 21 September 2018**

The Action Plan on Bilateral Cooperation signed by the Greek and German Foreign Ministers in Athens on 4 December 2016 is a milestone in the relationship between Germany and Greece. In line with the Action Plan, the second round of consultations at State Secretary level took place in Athens on 21 September 2018. Reaffirming their commitment to working together to build a united and stronger Europe, the Greek and German competent Ministries for Foreign, Interior, Economy, Energy, Labour & Social, Education & Research, Youth and Cultural Affairs acknowledged the good progress in bilateral cooperation and agreed on the below list of results so far, as well as on perspectives for the work ahead, with the aim to continue and intensify cooperation in their respective domains.

#### **I. Political Cooperation**

##### ***Consultations between Foreign ministries***

With the aim of enhancing Europe as an international player and strengthening the European contribution to global peace and security, consultations between Ministries of Foreign Affairs were held on a range of topics over the last two years (inter alia Balkans, Turkey, Asia, Near and Middle East). They will be continued and extended, including on foreign policy issues related to energy supply.

Both sides will look into further enhancing the successful cooperation between both diplomatic academies.

##### ***Cooperation on security issues and migration***

The two sides, while remaining committed to their cooperation on internal security, confirm the progress that has been made in this field, especially regarding border protection and express their willingness to speed up the response capacity in the field of fight against terrorism and violent extremism.

##### ***Cooperation on better managing refugee situations and migration***

The German-Greek Migration Dialogue, held three times so far, continues to provide a highly valuable forum for all migration related issues within the national and the European context. The two sides will further intensify

bilateral exchanges and cooperation on a series of issues, encompassing asylum, border management, return policy, integration and labour market as well as on the European migration agenda, also by making use of the focal points, which have been established at experts' level. The two parties remain committed to the reform of the Common European Asylum System and the implementation of European Council conclusions of 28 June 2018. They convene to coordinate their views and support each other, in order to reach solutions within the Europe migration agenda on the basis of mutual solidarity, shared responsibility and fair burden sharing. The parties agreed that the next round of migration dialogue will take place in Berlin, in spring 2019.

## **II. Economic and technological cooperation**

With the aim of contributing to Greece's ongoing economic recovery after the successful completion of the support program, both sides will continue to promote investment and business cooperation.

### *Export promotion*

Within the framework of the EU Commission's Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS), a project to improve the export promotion of Greek products and services was successfully completed and necessary measures have been identified. As a follow up to the aforementioned technical support project, a new proposal entitled "Export Promotion Plus" has been approved by the European Commission/SRSS, with a view to starting its implementation in November 2018. The Greek government aims at focusing the new project on the deliverables of the previous one :

- Development of a mid-term National Action Plan in the field of export promotion, as part of the National Growth Strategy 2021 (recently approved by the Greek Government)
- Capacity building for the improvement of export related public services and export business skills
- Advisory to support the implementation of activities under the "Export Promotion Action Plan 2016-2018".

Both sides aim at continuing the fruitful cooperation in this field.

The Greek side took note of the German Central Innovation Programme for SMEs (ZIM) and its possibilities to financing SMEs and both sides are willing to explore possibilities for bilateral co-operation in this field.

Both sides welcome exploratory talks between the Greek government and the German Sparkassenstiftung on potentials for a future cooperation.

## ***Energy***

Also within the framework of TARES++/SRSS, cooperation in the field of renewables and energy efficiency in Greece has been intensified. Steps have been made to develop initiatives in the above mentioned fields as well as in the area of electricity systems.

Both sides agree to enable attempts in order to mobilize additional clean investments in order to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Both sides encourage further collaboration on innovative technologies and knowledge exchange in the field of RES (i.e. transport, local added-value from enhanced cooperation in the fields of circular economy and energy production in local communities), Energy Efficiency (i.e. smart cities concept) and smart sustainable forms of increasingly green energy production. Also Cooperation shall be expanded in research and development (R&D) in the abovementioned fields, with the aim of promoting ideas for innovative projects. With regards to the EU framework, both countries agree to exchange views and, where possible, work on the creation of a common understanding. We reaffirm our joint commitment to continue, with the aim to further expand, the so far fruitful cooperation.

## ***Tourism***

Acknowledging that the cooperation in the field of tourism is considered as a priority for both countries, the two sides:

- reiterated their willingness to strengthen and further enhance their support to cooperation at the level of the tourism industry,
- expressed their willingness to increasingly enhance the mutual tourism flows,
- welcomed the possibility of exchanging know – how and best practices, in the field of tourism investments at the level of the tourism industry,
- expressed their readiness to boost partnerships among tourism businesses of the two countries.

Both sides welcomed the possibility of enhancing their mutual co-operation at working level within the framework of E.U. (Tourism Advisory Committee of the European Commission), and tourism – related international organisations (UN World Tourism Organization Regional Commission for Europe and the OECD Tourism Committee)".

### **III. Scientific, social, cultural and educational cooperation**

#### ***Research and academic Cooperation***

Aiming at the strengthening of science and innovation, the successful research and innovation cooperation program will be continued. In the framework of the current bilateral co-operation programme 24, projects have been selected through an open call for proposals and peer review and will be jointly funded with up to € 18 million for 3 years. Topics cover a wide range of sectors from health and energy to bio-economy and key enabling technologies. The two sides agreed to closely follow the implementation of the joint projects and welcomed the organization of a midterm-meeting in Greece in the second half of 2019 and of a final conference in Germany in the first half of 2021.

Both sides have expressed their support to explore further potential for exchange and cooperation in the field of knowledge and technology transfer, between German and Greek universities, research organisations, platforms and institutes and connecting them with start-ups and the business world. In the framework of the research and innovation programme both sides appreciated that training measures will be jointly organized in Greece in summer 2019.

They welcomed that the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation will continue their strong engagement in bilateral academic and scientific exchange.

Cooperation in the field of vocational and educational training (VET) will continue. Both sides are ready to cooperate in exchanging best practices for a system that is quality and demand driven and ensures transitions from education to decent jobs and lifelong learning. In addition both sides will cooperate in the field of Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) especially delivering training.

#### ***Labour and Social affairs***

Fighting unemployment and giving a job perspective to young people is a priority for both parties. Exchange about topics such as labour market integration of the long-term unemployed, youth unemployment, professional training for differently enabled people, brain drain, social partnership/European Social Model and combating undeclared work as well as programs targeting the integration of refugees and migrants has been started.

The cooperation between the OAED and the German BA to build up Labour Market Capacities is successful and will be continued with a focus on the

integration of the long term unemployed into the labour market. The two sides agree to start an intensive dialogue, on which opportunities and challenges are being perceived with regard to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (upward convergence, minimum solidarity income and minimum wages in Europe).

### ***Cultural Cooperation***

Both sides remain strongly committed to updating their bilateral Cultural Agreement concluded in 1956 since it no longer accommodates the increased necessities, especially with regard to the status of cultural institutions active in both countries. In order to initiate the negotiations they welcomed that the joint standing committee according to article 14 of the agreement is to be convened before the end of this year.

The German side expressed the strong will to negotiate a bilateral School Agreement in order to put cooperation in the field of education on a solid legal basis and to enhance further cooperation. The Greek side took note of the German proposal and will examine it further.

Both sides reiterated the importance of promoting bilateral exchanges of scientific personnel and technological know-how, as well as the organization of seminars and workshops about the promotion of the so called creative industries. They also exchanged views on the possibilities of establishing a think – tank/network of personnel and enterprises, acting in the sector of cultural/creative industry. They also exchanged views on the importance of innovative scientific-research projects on climate change and its consequences on monuments, as well as on immigration and the integration of refugees into the social and cultural life of each country.

Both sides welcomed that the Goethe Institute in Greece offers specialized German classes and encouraged interested parties to take advantage of these offers. They welcomed any initiative to increase these services, if the demand so requires.

Both sides exchanged views on the merits of presenting the Greek and German cultural heritage as well as contemporary Art. They encouraged cooperation in the fields of sharing of knowledge and experience on issues concerning research, study, preservation and protection of Cultural Heritage, through the competent Greek authorities and the German Archaeological Institute. They confirmed their willingness to further enhance the fight against illicit trafficking in cultural goods, which is also to be reflected in the future, updated Cultural Agreement. They expressed their desire to cooperate closely in the negotiations on EU-import regulation for cultural property from third states which currently underway at European Council level. They welcomed bilateral exchanges to that effect between their delegations, in the run up to meetings in Brussels, work and social contribution fraud, as well as programs targeting the integration of refugees and migrants has been started.

#### ***IV. Cooperation at societal level***

Both sides encouraged projects to promote mutual understanding between the two societies and to dismantle prejudices and stereotypes.

Negotiations on the agreement of establishing a Greek-German-Youth Office have greatly advanced. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to overcome remaining issues in time to finalize the agreement by the occasion of a high-level bilateral encounter before the end of the year.

Both sides commend the efforts of the Greek-German Assembly (DGV) and welcome it to restructure its work and to closer coordinate its projects, mainly focused on the local and regional level, with the Greek Government. The annual conference of the Greek-German Assembly taking place in Hersonissos on Crete (1-3 November 2018) offers a forum for continuing and deepening this exchange.

#### ***V. Follow-up***

The two sides remain committed to reviewing the implementation of the Action Plan in the framework of follow-up meetings to be held in the coming months in Athens and Berlin. The next round of consultations at State Secretary level will take place in Berlin in the second half of 2019.

*Athens, 21 September 2018*