

[Home](#) > ... > [Joint Statement on the U.S.-Greece Strategic Dialo...](#)

# Joint Statement on the U.S.-Greece Strategic Dialogue

**MEDIA NOTE**

**OFFICE OF THE SPOKESPERSON**

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The text of the following statement was released by the Governments of the United States of America and Greece on the occasion of the fourth Strategic Dialogue.

## *Begin Text*

The Governments of the United States and Greece held the fourth United States – Greece Strategic Dialogue in Athens, Greece on February 21, 2023. Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikos Dendias and U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken launched the Strategic Dialogue, which included high-level interagency representation from both countries.

The Strategic Dialogue underscores the deepening cooperation between the United States and Greece. The United States and Greece used this opportunity to highlight an ever-stronger bilateral and transatlantic relationship based on shared values and interests and reaffirmed their will to enhance cooperation in the areas described below.

## **Regional Issues**

The United States and Greece renewed their commitment to promoting stability, peace, and prosperity in Europe, particularly in the wake of Russia's war against Ukraine. Both governments expressed their unyielding support for Ukraine and defending the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. The United States applauded Greece's humanitarian and defense assistance to Ukraine, including Greece's efforts to support Ukraine's EU aspirations, Greece's assistance in safeguarding Ukraine's cultural heritage, and host displaced persons from Ukraine in need of protection. The two sides also expressed their distress over the devastating earthquakes in Turkiye and Syria and shared views on their efforts to assist the impacted population. Greece and the United States also discussed developments in the Eastern Mediterranean, stressing the importance of respecting sovereignty, sovereign rights, and international law, including the law of the sea, and resolving maritime disputes and other disagreements peacefully through diplomatic channels. They also reiterated their dedication to enhance their close cooperation, using all appropriate means at their disposal to safeguard stability and security in the wider region. Both parties exchanged views on promoting regional integration and security in the Western Balkans region where Greece plays an important role. The United States and Greece lauded ongoing cooperation and working group meetings of the 3+1 format (Greece, Cyprus, Israel, plus the United States) and welcomed further engagement through parliamentary exchanges. Both governments affirmed the need to protect their borders and uphold international law with respect to the treatment of asylum seekers, migrants, and refugees. The United States expressed its appreciation for Greece hosting asylum seekers and refugees, including Afghans and Ukrainians receiving temporary protection, and highlighted the importance of facilitating integration and meeting basic needs.

## **Defense and Security**

Both governments welcomed the 2022 ratification and entry into force of the second amendment to the Mutual Defense Cooperation Agreement (MDCA), which bolstered the security of both nations and reflects a long-term, deepening and expanding strategic partnership at a critical time in Europe. Both sides reiterated their firm determination to mutually uphold regional security by safeguarding the principles of sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity. The United States underscored the geostrategic importance of the Port of Alexandroupoli, which has transformed into a vital logistical hub for NATO's defensive posture on its eastern flank and will provide critical energy security to the region. Greece and the United States noted the growing number of U.S. forces provisionally deployed in, exercising in, or transiting through Greece, working in solidarity with the Greek armed forces in support of the NATO Alliance. Both parties

emphasized the importance of continued joint exercises and deepening interoperability to enhance regional cooperation in Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Middle East. The United States also welcomed Greece's commitment to exceeding the 2014 NATO Wales Summit Pledge. Both parties highlighted Greece's military modernization efforts and looked forward to continued cooperation on the procurement of defense articles such as F-35s, which will strengthen bilateral cooperation and NATO capabilities. The two sides also welcomed the initial approval of a number of infrastructure improvement projects discussed during the 108th Joint Commission Meeting.

### **Humanitarian Challenges and Disaster Preparedness**

The United States commended Greece's Ministry for Climate Crisis and Civil Protection for its emergency planning and for its preparation to address potentially dangerous wildfires. Greece noted its active participation in the recently upgraded EU Civil Protection Mechanism and the European reserve of resources known as "rescEU," including efforts to stockpile emergency supplies and contribute to an EU reserve firefighting force. Greece expressed its goal to continue making progress in areas such as joint training, emergency equipment procurement, and the modernization of its civil protection protocols, and welcomed additional technical assistance from the United States. The United States welcomed members of the Hellenic Fire Corps to participate in a U.S. study tour organized by the U.S. Forest Service and USAID. Both parties expressed strong interest in updating the Protocol of Intention of Cooperation in Prevention and Response to Natural and Technological Disasters, as well as enhancing cooperation between Greek authorities and U.S. entities such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency and private companies with expertise in emergency preparedness.

### **Energy and Environment**

Greece and the United States underscored the urgency of continued cooperation on energy security and diversification, magnified by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The United States welcomed Greece's progress on projects that will enhance regional energy security such as the operationalization of the Interconnector Greece-Bulgaria, the ongoing planning for the North Macedonia – Greece Interconnector, and Greece's efforts to ensure the Floating Storage Regasification Unit in Alexandroupoli is operational by the end of the year. The United States also welcomed Greece's commitment to explore opportunities to work in partnership with USAID to further integrate the electricity markets of Greece and its neighbors. Greece pointed out the

importance of natural gas discoveries by Israel, Cyprus, and Egypt as potentially valuable sources to diversify the region's energy mix and emphasized its own gas exploration projects off the coast of Crete as important to unlocking the full potential of the Eastern Mediterranean. The United States and Greece further highlighted that advancing projects that could bridge Europe to Africa and Asia, such as several proposed electrical interconnectors, will further provide Europe with desired cleaner energy while supporting the economic growth of the entire region. Greece also reiterated its support for more traditional energy infrastructure projects in the Eastern Mediterranean. Both parties noted the need to continue developing renewable energy infrastructure, and Greece highlighted the inauguration of the country's largest solar park in Kozani. The United States encouraged Greece to continue making progress on its ambitious goal of phasing out coal by the end of 2028.

Greece outlined priority environmental initiatives announced during the COP 26 such as the GR-eco strategy designed to transform key islands into sustainable green destinations and its goal of designating ten percent of its seas as non-fishing zones. The United States welcomed Greece's leadership on the environment and congratulated it on its selection to host the 9th Our Ocean Conference in 2024, which will guide international efforts to address ocean health and security, climate goals, and the blue economy, including efforts to scale up offshore renewable energy and to create a shipping sector that is aligned with the goal to limit global temperature rise to 1.5-degrees C. Both parties underscored the importance of advancing the decarbonization of the shipping sector by 2050 at the latest. The United States welcomed Greece's participation in the Green Shipping Challenge at COP 27. Both countries look forward to continuing to support the Green Shipping Challenge at COP 28.

## **Law Enforcement and Counterterrorism**

The United States thanked Greece for being a strong and reliable partner in law enforcement cooperation, including extraditions. Both parties pledged to continue supporting mutual legal assistance requests and extraditions. Greece and the United States also underscored the continued importance of joint law enforcement training to combat increasingly complex challenges including cybercrime, complex financial crimes, organized crime, and terrorism. The United States lauded Greece's recent decision to issue new biometric IDs, a requirement for Greece's continued participation in the Visa Waiver Program. Both parties also pledged support to the long-term implementation of the Joint Security Program at the Athens International Airport to strengthen mutual aviation security and counterterrorism goals. Greece shared information

on recent legislation passed in accordance with EU directives to combat money-laundering and prevent the early release of convicted terrorists. Both parties committed to redouble efforts to counter Trafficking in Persons. The United States and Greece expressed their commitment to working closely in bilateral and multilateral fora on countering terrorism, including through the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS.

## **Trade and Investment**

Both parties welcomed another strong year of trade and investment between Greece and the United States and underscored the importance of taking stock of the progress achieved by the U.S. – EU Trade and Technology Council. Noting the need to foster trade and secure supply chains, Greece announced its support for the Joint Statement on Cooperation on Global Supply Chains. Both sides plan to convene a kick-off meeting of the U.S. – Greece Science and Technology Agreement. Greece highlighted the importance of bilateral cooperation on sanitary and phytosanitary control systems for the entry of Greek agricultural food products to the United States. The United States noted the progress achieved since the 83<sup>rd</sup> Thessaloniki International Fair, which has helped position Greece as a technological hub and has facilitated growing U.S. and international investment in the areas of technology and renewable energy. Both sides welcomed the 2022 Memorandum of Understanding between Greece and the United States on tourism, and recommitted themselves to promoting tourism, investment opportunities, tourism education, and information exchanges. The United States commended Greece for completing payments of its International Monetary Fund loans early and successfully exiting the EU's enhanced economic surveillance framework, developments that demonstrate Greece's credibility as a destination country for foreign investment. The United States and Greece took note of Greece's ongoing efforts to develop a screening mechanism for foreign direct investment. The two parties plan to continue coordination on key infrastructure projects eligible for U.S. investments and DFC financial support due to their role in promoting energy security such as the revitalization of the Elefsina Shipyards. Both parties recognized the importance of promoting women's economic competitiveness and dismantling systemic barriers to women's economic participation. Greece announced its participation in the International Counter Ransomware Initiative.

## **People-to-People Ties**

The United States and Greece reaffirmed the unshakeable bonds that exist between the people of both countries based on our shared and principled respect for democracy and its institutions, a commitment to innovation, and an appreciation of education and culture as drivers of economic growth, equality, peace, and security. The United States congratulated Greece on hosting the 2022 Pharos Summit, which brought a historic delegation of 30 U.S. university representatives to Greece to explore educational cooperation with their Greek counterparts. Both countries welcomed new opportunities for facilitating exchanges, noting Greece’s ongoing efforts to internationalize its universities and increase opportunities for student mobility with the United States, Greece’s partner of choice in educational cooperation. The two countries affirmed their commitment to promoting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in educational and cultural collaboration. U.S. representatives commended Greece for increasing its annual Fulbright contribution and committed to a similar increase in the U.S. contribution, which will increase the number of students that benefit from exchange programs. The United States reaffirmed its commitment to exchanges such as the TechGirls program, which advances women’s and girls’ empowerment through STEM training, and the BridgeUSA program, which currently counts over 300 exchange visitors from Greece in STEM fields in the United States. Both countries committed to continued implementation of the bilateral cultural property agreement and signed a pledge to cooperate on public outreach to prevent looting and trafficking and to expand opportunities for museum exchange. Greece praised the United States for facilitating the 2022 return of important Greek artifacts. Building on a successful 2022 workshop, both countries expressed interest in organizing a follow-on cultural heritage school in northern Greece, to support the protection of Greece’s rich cultural heritage sites from looting, trafficking, and climate change. The United States and Greece emphasized their shared commitment to promote democracy and fight disinformation, including through the Athens launch of a traveling “Democracy Collection” art exhibit in May 2023.

*End Text*

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## TAGS

Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs

COP26

COP27

Greece

International Security

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Office of the Spokesperson