

[The Governments of Greece and the United States held the second Greece-United States Strategic Dialogue](#) in Athens, Greece, on October 7, 2019. Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikos Dendias and U.S. Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo launched the Strategic Dialogue, which included high-level interagency representation from both countries.



The Strategic Dialogue is a testament to the two countries' intensive and constructive engagement, and highlights the strength of the bilateral relationship, confirming the mutual desire of the United States and Greece to deepen cooperation in the areas described below.

Regional Cooperation

Greece and the United States shared views on the Eastern Mediterranean, Black Sea, and the Western Balkans, noting their common vision for a peaceful and prosperous region. They reiterated their resolve to support the integration of the countries of the Western Balkans into European and transatlantic institutions, according to the choice of their peoples. They acknowledged that good neighborly relations and peaceful settlement of disputes are key to attaining this goal. Accordingly, the two governments confirm their intent to support the rule of law and democratic institutions in the region. **They also committed to promote a culture of compromise and reconciliation.** They highlighted Greece's efforts to this end, noting the entry into force of the Prespes Agreement, while underscoring the importance of its consistent implementation in good faith. They discussed their efforts to strengthen regional integration and noted Greece's relevant initiatives to this end. They also noted their shared interest in Black Sea issues.

Both governments shared views on the reemergence of the Eastern Mediterranean as a dynamic and geopolitically critical region, with important opportunities in the economic and energy sectors. Greece discussed its trilateral partnerships in the Eastern Mediterranean, which can help anchor regional stability and security. Greece and the United States, stressing the need to respect the territorial integrity of the countries of the region, noted with concern unlawful and provocative actions that raise tensions in the region, as well as malign influence being exercised in the area. The two governments underlined the importance of respect for international law and the peaceful resolution of differences as a guiding principle to good neighborly relations. They also dedicated themselves to enhancing their close cooperation, using all appropriate means at their disposal, in order to safeguard stability and security in the wider region.

The two sides have reiterated their desire to continue and strengthen their cooperation in various sectors in the framework of the 3+1 format (Greece, Cyprus, Israel, and the United States), which was launched in Jerusalem in March 2019, as this partnership can contribute to the promotion of peace, stability, security and prosperity in the Eastern Mediterranean and the wider region. The United States supports Greece joining the Three Seas Initiative and related efforts to strengthen Europe's North-South interconnectivity.

Defense and Security

Greece and the United States reaffirmed their desire to further enhance their strategic defense and security partnership, which greatly contributes to the security of both nations. They also underlined their desire to further enhance their cooperation towards promoting stability and prosperity in the Eastern Mediterranean, as well as address common security concerns in the broader region. **Towards this goal, both sides intend to assist each other in maintaining strong, capable, and interoperable militaries.** The United States expressed appreciation that Greece has continued to meet the 2014 Wales Summit pledge made by all Allies to spend at least 2 percent of GDP on defense, and encouraged Greece to work toward allocating 20 percent of defense spending on major equipment. The recent Greece-U.S. agreement to amend the Annex of the Mutual Defense Cooperation Agreement reflects the further enhancement and expansion of our defense cooperation to the benefit of both nations and to regional stability. The two governments **welcomed the recent increased tempo of bilateral exercises** and affirmed their desire to continue to evolve their multifaceted defense relationship in order to **better meet the needs of both countries** and to more effectively address regional and global security challenges.

Law Enforcement and Counterterrorism

The two governments highlighted significant results of their extensive cooperation on law enforcement and counterterrorism since the first U.S.-Greece Strategic Dialogue in 2018, including the seizure of more than five tons of Captagon pills, the largest seizure of Captagon pills on record. They noted progress achieved in enhancing information exchange and border security, including signing a Memorandum of Cooperation regarding the implementation of the Hellenic Passenger Name Record Legislation. They also recognized the important progress in the implementation of the 2016 Joint Statement on Greece's participation in the Visa Waiver Program that allowed the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to restore the full validity of the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) issued to Greek citizens traveling to the U.S. for business or pleasure for stays up to 90 days. The two governments confirmed their intent to increase cyber security cooperation, to further enhance border security cooperation, and to strengthen their counter terrorism cooperation according to international standards.

Trade and Investment

The United States welcomes recent positive developments in Greece's economy and the momentum for a sustainable growth path. The United States considers Greece an important economic partner, with an expanding role as an energy, transport, and commercial hub in the region, and reaffirms its support of Greece's efforts to improve its investment climate to spur economic growth. Greece welcomes U.S. interest in investment in various fields and, more particularly, **in innovation and start-ups, including through two new centers for innovation in northern Greece launched by U.S. companies.** The two sides used the strategic dialogue to discuss specific areas related to Greece's continued efforts in strengthening intellectual property rights protection and enforcement. The United States will work with Greece as it develops an investment screening process and mechanisms for its critical infrastructure. The two countries will also work together to advance women's economic empowerment internally and globally.

Through the Trade and Investment working group, the two sides intend to continue cooperation in key sectors, such as energy, IT, tourism, space, entertainment, and infrastructure. The working group also intends to address trade challenges, discuss public tender opportunities in Greece and measures for dealing with the practice of "clawbacks" in the healthcare sector, as well as explore ways to make Greek companies aware of opportunities into the U.S. market. **The United States welcomes Greece's initiative to privatize key infrastructure, including shipyards and ports such as at Elefsina and Alexandroupoli.** The two governments welcomed the recent decisions of U.S. corporations to invest in Greece. They also noted with pleasure the interest shown by two U.S. companies for the casino licenses as part of the former Hellinikon airfield investment.

Energy

Greece and the United States discussed their expanding energy cooperation, reiterating that diversification constitutes a common priority. They highlighted the first imports of U.S. LNG to Greece and expressed their readiness to support future energy infrastructure projects designed to diversify energy routes and supplies and expand regional connectivity, to include the planned FSRU Terminal in Alexandroupoli. **The Greek and U.S. governments acknowledged the potential of the proposed EastMed gas pipeline to contribute to the energy security and diversification of energy sources and routes in the Eastern Mediterranean.** They also discussed the progress of the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) and the Interconnector Greece-Bulgaria (IGB), as well as Greece's intention to explore opportunities for further expanding energy networks with its neighbors in S.E. Europe, thus contributing to regional energy security and South-North interconnectivity. **Greece and the United States acknowledged that the discovery and future exploitation of significant hydrocarbon fields in the Eastern Mediterranean are of vital importance for the stability of the region and can actively contribute to the EU's energy diversification strategy.** They noted the results of the 3+1 dialogue on energy cooperation among Greece, Cyprus, Israel, and the United States and their plans to pursue it, with a view to support regional cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean, explore opportunities to provide support to energy projects, and **encourage necessary investments from the private sector.** The United States welcomed Greece's efforts to privatize energy infrastructure. The two sides also discussed renewables and **the important role of natural gas as a bridge fuel to a greener future.** The two governments expressed their support for the exploration and exploitation of potential energy resources in the Greek maritime zones, and **the United States applauded Greece's parliamentary approval of exploration rights in two blocks off Crete for a joint venture that includes a U.S. energy company.**

People-to-People Ties

The governments recognized that further enhancing the historic people-to-people ties between the two countries will remain an indispensable part of the bilateral relationship. They recognized joint achievements since the 2018 Strategic Dialogue that have increased mutual understanding and resulted in strengthened cooperation between museums, as well as creation of new student exchange and English language programs. The United States expressed appreciation to the Greek government for resuming its contribution to the Fulbright Program and encouraged continued future contributions to this key binational exchange program. The two governments identified further areas of educational, cultural, and scientific cooperation, including planning for U.S. programming to support Greece's commemoration of the 2021 Bicentennial and the presence of the United States as the honored country at the Thessaloniki International Book Fair the same year. They plan to support the continuing enhancement of relationships between Greek and U.S. museums and **foster greater cooperation on science and technology by facilitating Greek participation in the International Science and Engineering Fair in the United States.** They confirmed that Greece intends to build on successful previous cultural heritage cooperation by securing ratification of the 2016 Renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding for the Protection of Cultural Heritage. They acknowledged the progress made on cooperation between the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Greek government on sharing archives and confirmed the intention to intensify cooperation, including in a joint effort to retrieve personal items belonging to Jewish refugees from the 1946 Athina shipwreck for inclusion in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's permanent collection. The two sides continued the discussions of the implementation framework of their bilateral agreements and the Sustainable Development Goals, UN Agenda 2030, aiming to identify further areas of educational, cultural, and scientific cooperation. The governments also affirmed their desire to expand cooperation to share educational best practices, support professional development in contemporary culture and creative sectors, expand English language learning opportunities, and further increase student exchange.