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ABOUT GLOBAL RELATIONS FORUM (GRF)

Global Relations Forum (GRF) is an independent, non-profit membership association committed to being a platform for engaging, informing and stimulating its members and all interested individuals in all matters related to international affairs and global issues.

GRF was founded with the enthusiastic support of 40 accomplished Turkish figures who have assumed prominent roles in international fora and have received international recognition for their efforts throughout their careers. The founding members include former ministers, university presidents, senior military officers, central bank governors, a European Court of Human Rights judge, and retired ambassadors, as well as leading business leaders, scholars, artists, and journalists. GRF was officially registered on May 11, 2009, and held its first General Assembly on November 9, 2009. Today, GRF has 384 individual members and 31 institutional members.

GRF intends to advance a culture that rewards the fertile tension between passion for intellectual diversity and dedication to innovative and objective synthesis. It nurtures uninhibited curiosity, analytic inquiry, rational debate and constructive demeanor as the elemental constituents in all its endeavors. It contributes to the shared understanding of and aspiration for humanity's path to peace, prosperity and progress as an accessible, inclusive and fair process for all.

Founders of GRF

Founded in 2009, GRF was established by a distinguished group of individuals, including Vural Akışık, Piraye Antika, Pekin Baran, H. Edip Başer, Aslı Başgöz, Feyyaz Berker, Gülsün Bilgehan, Fatih Birol, Hanzade Doğan Boyner, Yılmaz Büyükerşen, Yavuz Canevi, Hikmet Çetin, Hasan T. Çolakoğlu, Salim Dervişoğlu, Ömer Dinçök, Ali Doğramacı, O. Turgay Durak, Bülent Eczacıbaşı, Tarhan Erdem, Metin Fadılloğlu, Cemal Kafadar, Hayati Kamhi, Memduh Karakullukçu, Üner Kırdar, Rahmi M. Koç, Cem Kozlu, Sönmez Köksal, Muhsin Mengütürk, Gülru Necipoğlu, Altan Öymen, H. Ersin Özince, Süher Pekinel, Gülsün Sağlamer, Özdem Sanberk, İlter Türkmen, Rıza Türmen, Tomris Türmen, Solmaz Ünaydın, Volkan Vural, and A. Rona Yırcalı.

GRF Activities

GRF's work is carried out through: (i) Working Groups, (ii) Roundtable meetings, (iii) events featuring high-level guest speakers, (iv) international representation, outreach, and partnerships, (v) reports, analyses, and briefing notes on international politics, diplomacy, and global issues, and (vi) seminar programs for young people.

GRF also contributes to global debates by publishing independent assessments on current developments in world affairs and Turkish foreign policy through its website, social media channels, podcast, and YouTube channel.

Through the cooperation and partnerships it has established with other international institutions and organizations, GRF continues its work in support of the national interest. Its activities include participation in annual conferences, joint events with partner institutions, and the development of programs, analyses, reports, and policy recommendations.



GRF Activity Areas

GRF's work includes a wide range of original outputs, such as independent “Task Force” reports that bring together GRF members and subject-matter experts on topics ranging from diplomacy and technology to the climate crisis and international trade; interviews with national and international opinion leaders; and commentary pieces written by its members. GRF also shares selected content from leading institutions abroad, both in its original language and in Turkish translation.

- Working Groups
- Track II Diplomacy Initiatives
- International Projects
- GRF Special Reports
- Annual GRF Global Outlook Report
- Monthly Newsletter – “GİF Gözüyle”
- Roundtable Meeting Series on Security, International Trade, the European Union, the Transatlantic connections, Climate, Technology, Asia, Ambassadors, and Diplomacy
- GRF İlder Türkmen Diplomacy Seminars
- GRF Young Professionals Program
- GRF Young Academics Program
- GRF Young Fellows Program
- GRF Visiting Researchers Program



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members of the Global Relations Forum,

It is with great pleasure and honor that I share with you our Activity Report for 2025. At a time of mounting global uncertainty, deepening geopolitical tensions, and rapid transformation of the international system, GRF has continued to place analytical thinking, constructive dialogue, and high-quality discussion at the center of its work.



Throughout 2025, we carried out activities spanning a wide range of fields under the GRF umbrella. We took steps to strengthen engagement among our members and — to the extent our resources allowed — to raise our profile internationally. Over the course of the year, we organized **32 in-person and online meetings and panels**, as well as gatherings with our members and community. These events gave us the opportunity to examine global and regional developments through a broad lens, with particular attention to foreign policy, security, economics, and diplomacy.

Our Youth Programs remained one of GRF's most dynamic and forward-looking areas of work this year. We successfully completed the 2024–2025 cycle of the Young Professionals Program and held a four-day program in Ankara as part of the 2025 İlder Türkmen Diplomacy Seminars. Through these programs, we continued to support the knowledge and analytical capacity of younger generations in the field of international relations.

Publishing also held an important place in our 2025 activities. As always, we prepared meeting summaries to keep members who could not attend informed of the discussions. **In all, 19 publications**, including briefing notes, our monthly newsletter GİF Gözüyle, and the Global Outlook 2024 and EU reports prepared this year, were made available to our members and wider audiences.

In addition, **19 podcast episodes** covering a range of topics allowed us to share GRF's perspectives with a broader audience.

Our membership also grew in 2025. With **29 new individual members and 1 new institutional member** joining over the year, the GRF family continued to expand in both quality and reach.

I would like to thank all our members, speakers, and supporting stakeholders who contributed to these activities. I am confident that the Global Relations Forum will continue to bring its constructive, independent, and in-depth analyses to international debates in the period ahead.

Ambassador (R) Selim Yenel
President

FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dear Members of the Global Relations Forum and Esteemed Stakeholders,
I am pleased to present our activity report covering the work we carried out in 2025.

As the following pages and the introductory message from our President, Ambassador (R) Selim Yenel, make clear, we have completed a highly active year, one that mirrored the intensity of the global agenda itself.



How history will ultimately judge this year, and how historians will narrate what unfolded on the international stage, only time will tell. What is already clear, however, is that this was a year of structural shifts, and even ruptures, that went well beyond anything we had known, absorbed, or tracked until now.

We have witnessed not merely the end of a period, but the end of an era, and we now stand on the threshold of a new one. Yet none of us can confidently claim to see what lies ahead or to make reliable projections about what comes next.

The words of the Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci, which Ambassador (R) Yenel quotes in his assessment of 2025 and outlook for 2026, confront us once again with the situation in all its starkness: “The old world is dying, and the new world struggles to be born: now is the time of monsters...”

Power politics and imperial reflexes, forces we believed belonged to a distant past, have returned to the international system in full force. Rules, norms, and principles such as institutional governance, diplomacy, negotiation, dialogue, empathy, and mutual understanding have eroded. What will take their place remains, for now, an open question.

Against this backdrop, GRF has sought to make sense of the world as it is, to produce outputs in various formats, to put forward ideas and perspectives, and to foster informed discussion. The world of 2009, when we were founded, was a very different place. Today, we operate in a fundamentally changed environment.

Despite this, I believe we largely fulfilled our mission in 2025. The frequency of our meetings, the quality of their content, and the open, analytical environment of discussion have been a source of pride for all of us. We produced more outputs in more formats, and we had the opportunity to share them more widely, both with our members and with the younger generation.

When I consider the international networks in which we are represented, the meetings to which we are invited, the publications we are asked to contribute to, and the individuals and institutions we engage with, I am proud to say that the knowledge, analysis, and intellectual effort generated within GRF are now receiving greater recognition from peer institutions at both the national and international levels.

Looking ahead to 2026, we will continue to build on our work, coming together more with our members, our boards, our young participants, and our stakeholders; thinking together more deeply; offering understanding and perspective on a rapidly changing world; and, in an age where meaning is fading, continuing to search for it.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the valued colleagues with whom I have the honor of serving on the Board of Directors, to our esteemed members who support our work, to the stakeholders who walk this path with us, to our President, Ambassador (R) Selim Yenel, and to the Secretariat working under his leadership.

Above all, I want to say that being part of the GRF family — learning, growing, and progressing together — is for me a source of great pride and honor.

Zeynep Bodur Okyay
Chair of the Board of Directors

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

GRF Board of Directors consists of 15 full and 14 substitute members. The board members are elected for three-year terms, with one-third of the members being renewed each year.

2025 Board of Directors

Zeynep Bodur Okyay

Chair

Fusun Türkmen

Vice Chair

Tayfun Bayazıt

Vice Chair

Ayşe Canan Ediboğlu

Secretary-General

Taşkın Osman Aksoy

Treasurer

Gözde Küçük Adıyaman

Sibel Asna

Gülay Barbarosoğlu

Murad Bayar

Altuğ Bilgin

Mehmet Tevfik Nane

Özgehan Şenyuva

İpek Cem Taha

Doğan Taşkent

Rona Yırcalı

2025 GRF EXECUTIVE STAFF



Ambassador (R) Selim Yenel
President



E. Ruşen İnceoğlu
Secretary General



Ata Mert Aladağ
Program Director



Fulya Kocukoğlu
Program Director



Sude Zoraloğlu
Associate
(since November 2025)



Ecem Ocüşler
Program and Research Assistant



Maxine İmer
Administrative Coordinator



Çiğdem Şimşek
Administrative Assistant
(until July 2025)

2025 IN NUMBERS



32
Meetings

In-person and
online meetings
and panels; member
and community
convenings

Policy briefs, *GİF*
Gözüyle newsletter,
and reports

19
Publications



7
Youth
Programs

Young Professionals Program
(2024-2025 term)
İlter Türkmen Diplomacy
Seminars (2025 term)

19
Podcast
Episodes

GRF Podcast
and *Global*
Perspective: 2024 and
Beyond series



30
New
Members

29 individual
members
1 corporate
member

ACTIVITIES

Roundtable on “Systems, Societies, and the Individual: Overcoming Challenges in a Transforming World” with Prof. Ufuk Akçigit, Istanbul

January 3, 2025

Online Meeting on “National Perceptions, Global Attitudes: State of Public Opinion(s)” with Jacob Poushter, Director of Research, Pew Research Center

January 15, 2025



Panel on “Russia and the Middle East: Tracking the New World Order”, organized in partnership with the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), and the Global Relations Forum (GRF), Istanbul

Speakers: Prof. Özlem Tür, GRF Member and Professor of International Relations at Middle East Technical University, and **Max**

Bergmann, Director of the Europe, Russia, and Eurasia Program at CSIS

January 21, 2025

Consultation with GRF Corporate Member Representatives, Istanbul

January 27, 2025

Online Meeting on “Terra Mobilis: Migration and Refugees in an Age of Crisis and Fragmentation” with Dr. Marie McAuliffe, Head of the Migration Research and Publications Division, International Organization for Migration (IOM)

January 28, 2025

GRF 17th Annual General Assembly, Istanbul

February 5, 2025

Dinner with Prof. Fawaz Gerges, Professor of International Relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), Istanbul

February 5, 2025

Dinner with Sibylle Katharina Sorg, Germany's Ambassador to Turkey, Ankara
March 11, 2025

CEPS–GRF EU Special Report Launch, Brussels
March 18, 2025

Closed Roundtable Hosted by TÜSİAD EU-Brussels Office on GIF EU Special Report: “Revitalising Türkiye-European Union Relations on the 20th Anniversary of Accession Negotiations: A New Roadmap”, Brussels
March 19, 2025



Roundtable Discussion on “The Current State of Turkey–South Korea Relations and the Outlook Ahead” with Yeondoo Jeong, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Turkey, Istanbul
March 26, 2025

Dinner on “CEO Network, Strategic Cooperation and Leadership” in Partnership with TÜRKONFED, Istanbul
April 15, 2025

Online Meeting on “The World According to Trump” with James H. Webb, former Secretary of the Navy (1987–1988) and Virginia State Senator (2007–2013)
April 24, 2025

Seminar titled “Turkey–EU Relations in Light of Global Turbulence” at Yaşar University, İzmir
May 8, 2025

Panel on “Security in the Eastern Mediterranean at the Threshold of Global Transformations”, Istanbul

Speakers: **Prof. Luigi Narbone**, Director, Mediterranean Platform, School of Government, Luiss Guido Carli University; **Ambassador (R) Mithat Rende**; **Prof. Serhat Güvenç**, Dean, Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences and Professor of International Relations, Kadir Has University; and **Deniz Tekin Apaydın**, Faculty Member, Faculty of Law, Boğaziçi University

Moderator: **Ambassador (R) Selim Yenel**, GRF President
May 12, 2025

Panel on “Global Economic Developments and the Turkish Economy”, Istanbul
Speakers: **Prof. Fatih Özatay**, Faculty Member, TOBB ETÜ, and **Murat Üçer**, Economist
Moderator: **Tayfun Bayazıt**, Vice Chair, GRF; former Chair of the
Board, Yapı Kredi Bank
May 14, 2025

Online Meeting on “Defense Industry, Global Defense Spending, the International Arms Trade, Security, and Geopolitics” with Dan Smith, Director, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)
May 28, 2025



Roundtable on “Poland’s EU Council Presidency and the Future of Relations with Turkey” with Maciej Lang, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Turkey, Istanbul
May 29, 2025

Online Meeting on “The Scientific, Technological, and Economic Implications of Large-Scale Research Infrastructure” with Esen Ercan Alp, President, Turkish American Scientists and Scholars Association (TASSA) at Argonne National Laboratory
May 30, 2025

Online Meeting on “Americans’ Perceptions of the Trump Administration’s First 100 Days” with Hannah Hartig, Senior Researcher, Pew Research Center
June 2, 2025

GRF Track II Diplomacy Workshop on “Syria’s Future: Reconstruction and Pathways to Stability”, Ankara
June 17, 2025

Online Meeting on “The Israel–Iran Conflict and Its Potential Regional Implications” with Dr. Ezgi Uzun Teker, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Yeditepe University
June 19, 2025

Lunch with Lord William Waldegrave, Member of the UK House of Lords, Istanbul
June 27, 2025

Hybrid Meeting on “Human Development Report 2025: A Matter of Choice – People and the Possibilities in the Age of AI” with Dr. Pedro Conceição, Director, Human Development Report Office, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),
Istanbul - Online
July 21, 2025

Breakfast Roundtable with Dr. Fatih Birol, Executive Director, International Energy Agency,
Istanbul
August 20, 2025

Roundtable Discussion on “Artificial Intelligence, Geopolitics, and the Economy” with Cenk Sidar, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Enquire AI, Istanbul
September 2, 2025



Roundtable on “Turkey–Canada Relations in the Shifting Global Order” with Kevin Hamilton, Ambassador of Canada to Turkey,
Istanbul
October 7, 2025

Panel on “Managing Key Aspects of EU–Turkey Relations”, organized in partnership with Carnegie Europe, Istanbul
Speakers: **Ambassador (R) Selim Yenel**, President, Global Relations Forum; **Dr. Rosa Balfour**, Director, Carnegie Europe; and **Ignacio García Bercero**, Bruegel Senior Fellow and former Director-General for Trade, European Commission
October 9, 2025

GRF İlter Türkmen Diplomacy Seminars 2025 Program, Ankara
October 13–16, 2025

Roundtable on “Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary: What Remains in an Ambassador’s Memory” with Ambassador (R) Volkan Vural, Istanbul
October 21, 2025

Roundtable on “The World Bank’s Development Strategies and Economic Outlook for Turkey” with Dr. Humberto López, World Bank Country Director for Turkey, Istanbul
November 12, 2025



Roundtable Discussion on “The Future of International Organizations and Turkey–Italy Relations in the Changing Global Order” with Ambassador Giorgio Marrapodi, Ambassador of Italy to Turkey, Istanbul
November 24, 2025

Book Talk with Ambassador (R) Sönmez Köksal on “Baghdad Diary: Critical Years for Turkey, the Middle East, and the World, 1986–1990”, Istanbul
November 27, 2025

GRF Communities London Gathering, London
November 27, 2025

Track II Meeting on “Geopolitical Tensions in the Asia-Pacific” with the Institute for National Defense and Security Research (INDSR), Istanbul
December 1, 2025

First Meeting of the GRF Defense, Security, and Industry Discussion Group, Istanbul
December 3, 2025



Roundtable on “Recent Developments in the South Caucasus and Relations with Turkey” with Ambassador Nairi Petrossian, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Armenia to the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), Istanbul
December 4, 2025

COP30 Evaluation Meeting, Istanbul
December 9, 2025

Online Report Launch: “Perceptions and Attitudes Toward Artificial Intelligence Worldwide,” with Jacob Poushter, Director of Research, Pew Research Center
December 16, 2025

GRF Communities New Year Meetup, Istanbul
December 22, 2025

YOUTH-ORIENTED ACTIVITIES

GRF's youth-oriented activities bring together bright young minds, providing them with the opportunity to learn and discuss long-term trends, policy options, complex global issues, the socio-economic implications of future-shaping technologies, and many other thought-provoking topics alongside expert GRF members. These programs are organized under two main categories: "GRF Community Programs" and "Other Activities for Young People." GRF Community Programs form the foundation of our youth-oriented activities, and those who complete these programs become part of the GRF Communities. GRF Communities consist of over 300 young individuals from diverse age groups, disciplines, and career paths.

GRF COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

GRF YOUNG FELLOWS PROGRAM



The GRF Young Fellows Program was created to provide undergraduate students studying at the leading universities from Turkey and the world with a platform where they can analyze and discuss global issues in a free, rational and constructive manner. The meetings are organized in three sections:

The first section of the program brings together students and GRF members in an interactive exchange. Invited as guest speakers, GRF members share their insights on international affairs, selecting topics that align with their career paths and areas of expertise. This provides students with a unique opportunity to learn from the experiences and perspectives of GRF members—leaders who have represented Turkey on international platforms and have played, and continue to play, an active role in shaping events in Turkey and around the world. At the same time, members benefit from the fresh perspectives, questions, and concerns of students on contemporary global issues. In essence, this section fosters a dynamic intergenerational dialogue centered on knowledge- and experience-sharing.

The second section consists of in-depth discussion sessions led by GRF and GRF Community members with expertise in the chosen subjects. Acting as speakers or moderators, they guide students through discussions based on articles written by leading global academics and intellectuals. These sessions require active and sustained student participation, encouraging them to make broad, analytical connections across different dimensions of the global agenda—ranging from economics and technology to law and politics. A key objective of this section is to equip students with the intellectual tools necessary to engage with critical debates about the world's future while also helping them refine their professional aspirations and their vision for contributing to their countries and humanity at large.

In the third section, students work in groups of two or three to prepare and deliver a Book Review Presentation on a GRF-selected book addressing global issues. Following the presentation, each student is required to submit an individual written book review, demonstrating their understanding and critical analysis of the text.

Upon successful completion of the program—through active participation in discussions, presentations, and book reviews—students will join the GRF Community as Young Fellows, gaining access to a broader network of like-minded individuals committed to global engagement and intellectual growth.

GRF YOUNG PROFESSIONALS PROGRAM



The GRF Young Professionals Program was launched to build GRF's practical competence by incorporating young decision-makers into GRF studies. The program is targeted at young professionals who are equipped with the resolve, background, and experience to contribute to the future of Turkey and the world.

Participants of the GRF Young Professionals Program are individuals for whom it is second nature to think comprehensively, to share their opinions with modesty, and to consider the opinions of others with curiosity. It is crucial for the diversity of the group that participants in the program have different educational backgrounds and pursue different career paths. Participants are expected to have a minimum of four years of work experience and be no older than 38. Each year, a maximum of two qualified participants can be selected for the program without meeting the work experience requirement.

The program is conducted through discussions on the interaction between technological developments and global issues, as well as participant presentations on these topics. Participants have the opportunity to benefit from each other's knowledge and experiences.

GRF YOUNG PROFESSIONALS PROGRAM 2024-2025 TERM

Participants:

- **Umur Cem Akbaş** – Co-Founder & CTO, FINRIX
- **Merve Cıplak** – Consulting Programs Director, Bain & Company
- **Doğa Can Coşar** –Lawyer & Founder, İstanbul Gençlik Platformu Kurucusu
- **Engin Çangal** – Loyalty Program Manager, İşBank
- **Mehmet Can Erim** – Data & AI Chapter Manager, ING Hubs Turkey
- **Çağatay Geçko** – Senior Manager, Bain & Company
- **Aslıhan Begüm Gökçınar** – Director of Corporate Communications and Brand Management for Municipal Subsidiaries, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality
- **Fulya Güray Muhtar** – Climate Change and Sustainability Manager, TSKB
- **Arda Helvacılar** – Founder, Sertifier
- **Can Karaçengel** – Planning Manager, Pegasus Airlines
- **Ayşegül Kula** – Research Assistant, Koç University
- **Seyran Onay Kılıç** – Assistant Manager, IS Investment
- **Arda Onkök** – Public Affairs & Communications Manager, Novonesis
- **Sercan Posacı** – Account Manager, AVEVA
- **Gökhan Sır** – Senior Performance Engineer, Midea Group

Meetings for the 2024-2025 term of the program revolved around presentations and discussions about the changing dynamics brought on by technological advancements and how they may shape the established social, economic, and political structures. The themes covered, speakers hosted, and books evaluated throughout 2025 within the scope of the program are as follows:

Third Meeting – April 12, 2025

Topic: The Future of Technology and Growth

Books:

- *Growth: A Reckoning* - Daniel Susskind
- *Power and Progress: Our Thousand-Year Struggle Over Technology and Prosperity* - Daron Acemoğlu & Simon Johnson

Moderator:

Ata Mert Aladağ – Program Director at GRF

Guest Speaker: Prof. Füsün Türkmen – Emeritus Professor of International Relations at Galatasaray University, Vice Chair at GRF

Fourth Meeting – May 10, 2025

Topic: Climate Crisis, Technology, and Blockchain

Books:

- *Speed & Scale: An Action Plan for Solving Our Climate Crisis Now* - John Doerr & Ryan Panchadsaram
- *How to Avoid a Climate Disaster: The Solutions We Have and the Breakthroughs We Need* - Bill Gates
- *The Blockchain and the New Architecture of Trust* - Kevin Werbach
- *Blockchain Revolution: How the Technology Behind Bitcoin and Other Cryptocurrencies Is Changing the World* - Don Tapscott & Alex Tapscott

Moderator:

Prof. Levent Kurnaz – Professor of Physics at Boğaziçi University, Director at Center for Climate Change and Policy Studies

Guest Speaker:

Akın Ünver – Associate Professor of International Security & Data Science at Özyeğin University

Fifth Meeting – December 20, 2025

Topic: Digital Order, Data Sovereignty, and Governance

Books:

- *The Digital Republic: On Freedom and Democracy in the 21st Century* – Jamie Susskind

Moderator:

Zeynep Ayata – Senior Scholar at Istanbul Policy Center



GRF YOUNG ACADEMICS PROGRAM

Global Relations Forum launched the Young Academics Program to engage with academics who are willing to contribute to national and international policy discussions by drawing on their strong academic and theoretical backgrounds. Through this ever-expanding network of promising young academics, GRF hopes to contribute to bridging the divide between policy circles and academia.

While the overarching aim of all GRF Community programs is to advance a culture of intellectual diversity, constructive debate and analytic coherence, the Young Academics Program has an additional objective as it is uniquely designed to culminate in the preparation of a policy, or an analysis paper authored by each participant. These papers are then published as part of the Policy Paper Series or the Analysis Paper Series. While both series are concerned with thoroughly analyzing a topic of interest related to global systemic issues, the former additionally, proposes policy recommendations.

The Young Academics Program is open to applications from academics of all disciplines, and the articles published within the scope of the program is prepared with a wide readership in mind. GRF invites all young academics who are currently pursuing their studies or have completed their doctorates within the last three years to apply.

As part of the program, applicants are periodically joined by GRF members who have taken leadership positions in academia, governmental institutions or business circles in order to give their expertise and provide direction in ensuring the papers are well-developed and applicable within the field of study.

The program is designed around two meetings. First meeting brings together all participants and enables them to clarify and improve their research topics based on the feedback they receive from their peers. During this stage, participants are expected to deliver a presentation on their topic of choice, followed by a discussion after each presentation.

The second meeting is organized individually for each participant. At this stage, the expertise of GRF members comes into play more explicitly as GRF assembles a different commission for each participant. These commissions are made up of a select group of at least three GRF members with knowledge and expertise in the participants' chosen topics. Participants present the first drafts of their papers to their commissions and receive detailed feedback.

OTHER YOUTH ACTIVITIES

GRF İLTER TÜRKMEN DIPLOMACY SEMINARS

The GRF Diplomacy Seminars serve as a dynamic platform designed to connect senior undergraduate and graduate students with distinguished academics and practitioners, including diplomats and policymakers. This initiative fosters an environment where participants can engage in critical discussions and in-depth examinations of global diplomatic challenges.

The program is dedicated to facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experience, guiding young individuals in shaping their career aspirations, and enhancing their analytical thinking, debate, and policy-making abilities. Participants are encouraged to explore both contemporary and future global challenges within the program's designated themes, broadening their perspectives on international affairs. Through direct engagement with experts, they gain invaluable insights into the distinctions between academic discourse and its practical application in real-world diplomacy.

Beyond immediate policy concerns, participants are expected to analyze long-term structural transformations that impact society, the private sector, and public institutions. By engaging with pressing topics in international politics, they develop a deeper understanding of the evolving global landscape and its implications for governance and diplomacy.

In honor of the legacy of İlter Türkmen, a founding member of GRF and former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador, the program was held under the name "İlter Türkmen Diplomacy Seminars" for the first time in 2024, paying tribute to his contributions to Turkish diplomacy and international relations.



GRF İlter Türkmen Diplomacy Seminars 2025 Program

The 2025 program took place from 13–16 October at the TÜSİAD Ankara Office. This year's Diplomacy Seminars focused on regional developments, global power competition, international organizations, and multilateral diplomacy. Within these themes, expert diplomats and academics led discussions on a wide range of topics, from the European Union and the Middle East to climate diplomacy and NATO. Alongside sessions led by academics and retired ambassadors, speakers from international organizations, civil society, and public affairs shared their career journeys and professional experiences with students.

As in previous years, the program included a simulation exercise designed to sharpen participants' ability to think collaboratively, debate, and develop solutions. Modeled on a United Nations Security Council session, the exercise gave students considering careers in international relations and diplomacy a realistic chance to observe and practice high-level decision-making.

Representing country delegations on the Ukraine case, participants conducted a full day of diplomatic negotiations and ultimately reached consensus on a peace agreement, adopting a model UN Security Council resolution.

Participants of the 2025 Program

Azra Acar	Bilkent University	Political Science & Public Administration
Kaan Avcı	Galatasaray University	International Relations
Zeynep Budak	Başkent University	Political Science & International Relations
Sude Çimen	Sabancı University	Political Science & International Relations
Mitra Çıkışır	Orta Doğu Teknik Uni.	Political Science & Public Administration
Mustafa Emre Demir	Koç University	Law & International Relations
Simge Naz Ertem	Başkent University	Political Science & International Relations
Eda Naz Gezer	Bilkent University	Political Science & Public Administration
Semanur Işıksay	Orta Doğu Teknik Uni.	International Relations
Ozan Işıldak	Yaşar University	International Relations
İsmail Furkan Kahlık	Koç University	International Relations & Economics
Turan Kerem Öktem	Koç University	International Relations & Economics
Ilgın Sabuncu	Ankara University	Political Science & Public Administration
Ethem Sönmez	Orta Doğu Teknik Uni.	Economics
Sevgi Şahin	Orta Doğu Teknik Uni.	International Relations
Rana Tekin	Luiß Guido Carli Uni.	Economics
Zeynep Elif Turgut	Dokuz Eylül University	International Relations
Zeynep Sena Uzunboy	Koç University	International Relations
Aral Çağan Yurtseven	Bilkent University	International Relations
Hatice Erva Yüksel	Galatasaray University	International Relations



List of Speakers

Prof. Feride Acar – Professor of Political Science and Public Administration, Middle East Technical University

Assoc. Prof. Dilaver Arıkan Açar – Faculty Member, Department of International Relations, Yaşar University

Ambassador (R) Ertuğrul Apakan – Former Chief Monitor, OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine

Ambassador (R) Bozkurt Aran – Former Permanent Representative to the World Trade Organization; Director, Trade Studies Center, TEPAV

Murad Bayar – Board Member, IC Holding; Former Undersecretary for Defense Industries; Board Member, Global Relations Forum

Ambassador Mehmet Kemal Bozay – Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs; Former Permanent Representative of Turkey to the European Union

Ambassador Zeki Levent Gümrükçü – Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs; Former Permanent Representative of Turkey to NATO

Prof. Pınar İpek – Faculty Member, Department of Political Science and International Relations, TOBB University of Economics and Technology

Ambassador (R) Selim Kuneralp – Former Permanent Representative of Turkey to the European Union and the World Trade Organization

Ambassador Malena Mård – Ambassador of Sweden to Ankara

Zeynep Özkan – Officer, Private Sector and Financial Partnerships, World Food Programme

Prof. Özgehan Şenyuva – Chair, Department of International Relations, Middle East Technical University; Board Member, Global Relations Forum

Ambassador (R) Namık Tan – Former Ambassador of Turkey to Washington and Tel Aviv

Prof. İlter Turan – Emeritus Professor of Political Science and Former Rector, Istanbul Bilgi University

Prof. Özlem Tür – Faculty Member, Department of International Relations, Middle East Technical University

Prof. Füsun Türkmen – Emerita Professor of International Relations, Galatasaray University; Vice Chair, Board of Directors, Global Relations Forum

Barış Urhan – Ankara Representative, TÜSİAD

Gözde Ülküer – Digital Communications Officer, UNICEF

Selin Ünal – Press Director and Spokesperson, UNHCR

Prof. Haldun Yalçınkaya – Chair, Department of Political Science and International Relations, TOBB University of Economics and Technology

Ambassador (R) Selim Yenel – President, Global Relations Forum; Former Permanent Representative of Turkey to the European Union; Former Undersecretary, Ministry for EU Affairs

Barçın Yinanç – Journalist

GRF VISITING RESEARCHERS PROGRAM

The GRF Visiting Researchers Program offers undergraduate and graduate students coming to Turkey through Erasmus+ or similar grant schemes the opportunity to conduct research at GRF for up to four months.

The program is designed to strengthen participants' research, analytical, and policy-writing skills on contemporary issues in international relations and geopolitics. It also gives them first-hand exposure to the inner workings of an internationally active civil society organization and the chance to engage with GRF members from a wide range of professional backgrounds.

Up to five visiting researchers are admitted at any given time. GRF supports them throughout the program with a structured research framework that includes expert meetings, mentoring, and institutional guidance.

By the end of the program, each researcher is expected to produce an analytical or policy-oriented article of 2,500–3,000 words. Topics may reflect the participant's own interests or be drawn from GRF's thematic priorities, and the final paper typically takes a comparative or contextual approach centered on the researcher's home country and Turkey. To close out the program, participants are expected to host a roundtable, ideally with their respective embassies in attendance, where they present their work.

GRF Visiting Researchers Program 2025–2026 Term

Visiting Researchers

- **Thomas Germenot** — Erasmus student at Galatasaray University (MA in International Relations, Université Libre de Bruxelles)
- **Alina Azhar** — MA student in Political Science and International Relations, Istanbul Bilgi University
- **Selena Wynne-James** — MA student in International Relations, Université Libre de Bruxelles (Erasmus exchange at Galatasaray University)

The following expert meetings were held during the 2025–2026 term:



First Meeting – October 22, 2025

Topic: Current Trends in International Relations

Speaker: Ambassador (R) Selim Yenel, President of the GRF

Second Meeting – November 3, 2025

Topic: International Education Experience and Career Management

Speaker: Gözde Küçük Adıyaman, Board Member and Deputy General Manager, Elit Çikolata

Third Meeting – December 4, 2025

Topic: Migration, Global Mobility, and Socio-Economic Impacts

Speaker: Dr. Müge Dalkıran, Postdoctoral Researcher, Migration Research Center at Koç University (MiReKoc)

PUBLICATIONS

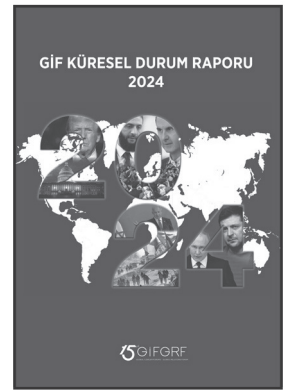
GRF shares the knowledge of its members and the research of its expert staff with its members in the form of periodical and non-periodical publications. While meeting notes and monthly newsletters are shared only with members, reports, articles, podcasts and viewpoints are published on the website as open-access sources.

Monthly Newsletter (Turkish)

The monthly newsletter, published exclusively for GRF members, is prepared by GRF's team of experts. The newsletter includes a recap of the activities conducted in the past month, a preview of upcoming events, highlights of GRF members' publications, a synopsis of noteworthy issues and events, analyses on international politics, diplomacy and economics, as well as book, article and report recommendations.

GRF Global Outlook Report 2024 (Turkish)

Since 2020, the Global Outlook Report has been regularly published, bringing together assessments on global agenda issues from the preceding year by GRF members who are experts in their respective fields into a cohesive annual publication



GRF 2024 Activity Report

Published annually in both Turkish and English, GRF's activity reports provide detailed information on the Forum's activities, publications, structure, and operations.

Revitalising Türkiye-European Union Relations on the 20th Anniversary of Accession Negotiations: A New Roadmap

Marking the 20th year of accession negotiations, this special report sets out a broad roadmap and framework for cooperation aimed at breaking the stagnation in Turkey–EU relations and rebuilding dialogue and mutual trust.



VIEWPOINTS

- United States Expansion: What Next? — Ambassador (R) Selim Yenel, January 16, 2025
- A Divided West Must Stand Firm — Ambassador (R) Selim Yenel, February 26, 2025
- A Year of Climate Crisis: Key Events in 2024 and Developments in Climate Action — Fulya Kocukoğlu, February 27, 2025
- Repercussions of Israel's Attack on Iran — Ambassador (R) Selim Yenel, June 14, 2025
- How Afraid Should We Be of Russia? — Ambassador (R) Selim Yenel, September 1, 2025

PODCAST SERIES

President of GRF, Ambassador (R) Selim Yenel, hosts a different guest in each episode of our podcast series, discussing key topics on the global agenda.

- Global Perspective: 2024 and Beyond – II: “*A View from the United Kingdom*” with **Ambassador (R) Ümit Yalçın** — January 3, 2025
- Global Perspective: 2024 and Beyond – III: “*Technology and Global Affairs in 2025*” with **Ussal Şahbaz**, Founder and Managing Partner, Ussal Consulting — January 6, 2025
- Global Perspective: 2024 and Beyond – IV: “*U.S. Politics, the Trump Era, and the Future of Turkey–U.S. Relations*” with **Ambassador (R) Namık Tan** — January 8, 2025
- Global Perspective: 2024 and Beyond – V: “*Syria Today and Outlook for the Future*” with **Ambassador (R) Ömer Önhon** — January 15, 2025
- Global Perspective: 2024 and Beyond – VI: “*The Future of the Fight Against Climate Change in Light of Shifting Global Dynamics*” with **Prof. Levent Kurnaz** — January 20, 2025
- Global Perspective: 2024 and Beyond – VII: “*A View from France*” with **Ambassador (R) Engin Soysal** — January 27, 2025
- Global Perspective: 2024 and Beyond – VIII: “*Shifting Dynamics in the Middle East and Iran*” with **Dr. Ezgi Uzun Teker** — January 31, 2025
- Global Perspective: 2024 and Beyond – IX: “*The Future of NATO*” with **Ambassador (R) Fatih Ceylan** — February 7, 2025
- Global Perspective: 2024 and Beyond – X: “*Global Energy Trends, Geopolitics, and Turkey*” with **Ambassador (R) Mithat Rende** — February 12, 2025
- “*Trump 2.0: An Assessment of the First 50 Days*” with **Prof. Füsun Türkmen**, Emeritus Professor of International Relations, Galatasaray University; Vice Chair, GRF Board of Directors — March 14, 2025
- Global Perspective: 2024 and Beyond – XI: “*The Recent Attempted Constitutional Coup in South Korea in Historical Context*” with **Ambassador (R) Ersin Erçin** — March 21, 2025

- Global Perspective: 2024 and Beyond – XII: “*A Tour of the South Caucasus in a Turbulent World*” with **Ambassador (R) Alper Coşkun** — April 3, 2025
- “*(The West) and the Rest: The Nature of International Relations and the Search for Direction as the World Is Reconfigured*” with **Assoc. Prof. Tolga Bilener**, Faculty Member, Department of International Relations, Galatasaray University; Director, Galatasaray University Strategic Research Center — June 2, 2025
- “*Assessments on Israel’s Attack on Iran*” with **Ambassador (R) Selim Yenel** — June 13, 2025
- “*Where Is the World Headed? Current Developments and Global Trends*” with **Prof. Çelik Kurtoğlu**, Chair of the Board, Kurtoğlu Consulting Inc. — June 19, 2025
- “*Technology, Global Competition, and Turkey*” with **Fusun Sarp Nebil**, investigative journalist and ICT/telecom specialist — July 22, 2025
- “*Nanoscience and Nanotechnology Policy and Strategy in Turkey at a Time of Global Transformation*” with **Prof. Orhan Güvenen**, Former Undersecretary of the State Planning Organization; Professor of Econometrics, Bilkent University — September 25, 2025
- “*Current Trends in the Defense Industry and Global Security*” with **Arda Mevlütoğlu**, independent defense analyst — September 25, 2025
- “*The Changing World Order, Society, and the Individual*” with **Gündüz Vassaf**, author and psychologist — November 6, 2025

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUES

Throughout 2025, Global Relations Forum pursued an active representation agenda through participation in conferences in Turkey and abroad, as well as through high-level engagements. In this context, GRF met with both international counterparts and domestic stakeholders, holding numerous meetings and bilateral consultations. In addition to its external representation activities, GRF also hosted international delegations and organizations visiting Turkey. Key engagements are summarized below.

- February 25, **Visit by the U.S. Consulate to the GRF Office**, Istanbul (Selim Yenel)
- February 27, **Meeting with Giorgio Marrapodi, Ambassador of Italy to Turkey**, Istanbul (Selim Yenel)
- March 10, **Meeting with Thomas Ossowski, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Turkey**, Ankara (Selim Yenel, Ruşen İnceoğlu, Fulya Kocukoğlu)
- March 10, **Meeting with Ambassador Mehmet Kemal Bozay, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs**, Ankara (Selim Yenel, Ruşen İnceoğlu, Fulya Kocukoğlu)
- March 11, **Meeting with Fuat Oktay, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey**, Ankara (Selim Yenel, Ruşen İnceoğlu, Fulya Kocukoğlu)
- March 17–20, **Brussels engagements under the GRF–EU Special Report: high-level meetings on the future of Turkey–EU relations**, Brussels (Selim Yenel, Ruşen İnceoğlu)
- April 5–9, **Diplomatic Academy of Vienna**, Vienna (Selim Yenel)
- April 10, **Meeting with Isabelle Dumont, Ambassador of France to Turkey**, Istanbul (Selim Yenel, Ruşen İnceoğlu)
- April 15, **Meeting with Mijito Vinito, Consul General of India in Istanbul**, Istanbul (Selim Yenel, Ruşen İnceoğlu)
- May 8, **Meeting with Prof. Levent Kandiller, Rector of Yaşar University**, Izmir (Selim Yenel, Ruşen İnceoğlu)
- May 18–20, **Council of Councils 14th Annual Conference**, New York City (Selim Yenel)
- May 22–23, **Institut du Bosphore “Beyond Geopolitics” Summit**, Istanbul (Ruşen İnceoğlu, Ata Aladağ, Fulya Kocukoğlu)

- May 23, **Galatasaray University Strategic Research Center workshop “BRICS+: Perceptions, Significance, and Limitations,”** Istanbul (Ruşen İnçoğlu, Fulya Kocukoğlu)
- June 24, **Meeting with Nikkei Istanbul Bureau Chief Kana Watanabe, reporter Sinan Tavşan, and columnist Hiroyuki Akita,** Istanbul (Selim Yenel)
- July 23, **Meeting with Pramod Jaiswal, Research Director, Nepal Institute for International Cooperation and Engagement,** Istanbul (Selim Yenel)
- September 4, **Workshop on the “Greek-Turkish Centre of Excellence for Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Culture” with Thanos Mitrelias,** Samos (Selim Yenel)
- September 25, **Meeting with Şükrü Bozluoğlu, Chair of the Board of Bozlu Holding,** Istanbul (Selim Yenel)
- September 25, **Meeting with Dominick Chilcott, former Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Turkey (2018–2022),** Istanbul (Selim Yenel)
- October 6, **European Leadership Network working group meeting,** online (Fulya Kocukoğlu)
- October 8, **Meeting with Ambassador Nairi Petrossian, Permanent Representative of Armenia to the Black Sea Economic Cooperation,** Istanbul (Selim Yenel)
- October 18, **Galatasaray University International Law and Diplomacy Club “2nd Think Tanks” Summit,** Istanbul (Ruşen İnçoğlu)
- October 26–28, **Council of Councils 16th Regional Conference,** Johannesburg (Selim Yenel)
- November 6, **United Nations Country Office technical workshop on the program document titled “UNSDCF 2026–2030 with Non-State Partners,”** Ankara (Ruşen İnçoğlu)
- November 24–27, **European Leadership Network working group meeting,** London (Fulya Kocukoğlu)
- December 9, **European Leadership Network working group meeting,** online (Fulya Kocukoğlu)
- December 16, **European Academy on Youth Work workshop “Future of Youth Work,”** online (Fulya Kocukoğlu)

NEW MEMBERS

Members

Assoc. Prof. Dilaver Arıkan Açar - Faculty Member, Department of International Relations, Yaşar University

Erol Adayılmaz - CEO, Age Group; President, Harvard Club of Turkey

Yasemin Güney Ağırđır - Co-Founder and General Manager, Veri Enstitüsü

Saime Gonca Artunkal - Independent Board Member, Şişecam; Consultant

Berrin Ceylan Ataman - Dean, Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences, Altınbaş University

Sinan Ayhan - Government Affairs Coordinator, Ford Otosan

Duygu Söyler Aytaç - Corporate Communications Manager, Coca-Cola İçecek

Erhun Baş - Head of Public Policy and External Affairs, Amazon Turkey

Nazlı Ümit Boyner - Board Member, Boyner Group

Nuri Berk Çoker - Director of Communications and External Relations, İNGEV

Yonca Dervişoğlu - Vice President, Marketing, Europe, Middle East and Africa, Google

Fatma Pelin Yenigün Dilek - Co-Founder, Sustineo Istanbul; Economic Advisor, TÜRKONFED

Durmuş Ersin Erçin - Ambassador (R)

Yıldırım Gündüç - Government Affairs Manager, Koç Holding A.Ş.

Merve İspahani - Academic Programs Manager, Columbia Global Centers Istanbul; Lecturer, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Kadir Has University

Mehmet Şerif Kaynar - Honorary Chair, Korn Ferry Turkey

Devrim Kodakcı - Government Affairs Coordinator, Koç Holding A.Ş.

Canberk Mersin - Founder and Managing Partner, Sadık Ventures; Board Member, TÜRKONFED

Defne Kocabıyık Narter - Founder and Chair, Borusan Ventures; Board Member, Borusan CAT and Borusan Group

İbrahim Özgür Özdamar - Faculty Member, Department of International Relations, Bilkent University

Yaprak Özer - Founder and Chair, **İndeks İletişim**; Journalist and Author

Aysun Hatipoğlu Potgieter - Corporate Affairs Director, Sanofi Turkey

Deniz Sert - Chair, Department of International Relations, **Özyeğin** University

Zeynep Derya Tarman - Dean, Faculty of Law, Koç University; Professor of Private International Law

Mustafa Tırıs - Deputy Chair of the Board and General Manager, T Dinamik Enerji A.Ş.

Ceren Ünal - Co-Founder, Usluel Ünal **Özbilen** Law Office; Vice President and General Counsel, Digital Goes Green

Laki Vingas - Chair of the Board, Vinder Dış Ticaret ve Pazarlama A.Ş.

Alp Avni Yelkenbiçer - Deputy Chair of the Board, Yelkenbiçer Group of Companies

Sibel Zorlu - Chair of the Board, Mazhar Zorlu Holding; Board Member, TÜRKONFED

Corporate Members

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