GLOBAL İLİŞKİLER FORUMU GLOBAL RELATIONS FORUM

GRF İlter Türkmen Diplomacy Seminars 2026

“The Role of Diplomacy in a Transforming International Order”

October 19-22, 2026 · İzmir

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Global Relations Forum

Global Relations Forum (GRF) is an independent, volunteer-based civil society organization and think tank that brings together individuals and institutions engaged with international relations, world affairs, and global policy. GRF was established by a founding board of 40 ambassadors, academics, business leaders, and senior officials who had represented Türkiye on international platforms, and it acquired legal status on May 11, 2009.

GRF seeks to provide a setting where differing views can meet freely and where common ground can be built through analytical thinking and constructive dialogue. Through its working groups, roundtable meetings, annual reports, and youth programs, it produces analysis and policy recommendations on international relations, Türkiye, and the global agenda.

İlter Türkmen Diplomacy Seminars

The seminars are held in memory of Ambassador İlter Türkmen, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and one of GRF's founding members. The program brings senior undergraduate and graduate students together with ambassadors, academics, and practitioners to debate global issues in diplomacy. It aims to guide young people as they define their career goals and to help them develop their skills in analytical thinking, debate, and policy development.

The program runs over four days. Alongside the seminar sessions, it includes a workshop in which participants take part in a simulated trade negotiation.

2026 Theme: The Role of Diplomacy in a Transforming International Order

The international system is changing along several axes at once. Power is shifting toward a multipolar distribution; artificial intelligence and digital technologies are reshaping how decisions are made and negotiations conducted; trade, investment, and supply chains are becoming increasingly decisive instruments of foreign policy; and non-state actors such as cities, civil society, business, and cultural and sports institutions are taking on a larger role in diplomacy.

This year's program asks how diplomacy is being redefined in response to these changes and what new tools it is acquiring. The wars in Türkiye's neighborhood and the NATO Summit held in Ankara in July 2026 have put security and deterrence back at the center of the agenda. Without setting that agenda aside, the program takes a comprehensive view of diplomacy as a multilayered practice that extends from international organizations to trade and from mediation to sports.

İlter Türkmen

Born in Istanbul in 1927, İlter Türkmen graduated from Galatasaray High School and the Faculty of Political Science at Ankara University before joining the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1949. Over the course of his career, he served at Türkiye's permanent missions to NATO and the United Nations, as well as at the embassies in Cairo, Washington, Athens, Moscow, and Paris. He was Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1980 to 1983. After retiring in 1991, he went on to become one of GRF's founding members and served on its Board of Directors from 2009 to 2015.

PROGRAM

Monday, October 19

Venue: **Yaşar University, Selçuk Yaşar Campus**, Kazımdirik, Üniversite Cd. Ağaçlı Yol No: 37-39, 35100 Bornova / İzmir

TIME	PROGRAM	SPEAKER(S)
09:30-16:00	**Hotel Check-in**	
16:00-16:30	**Opening and Introductions**	Ambassador (Ret.) Timur Söylemez Prof. Aylin Güney Gevrek Ambassador (Ret.) Selim Yenel E. Ruşen İnceoğlu
16:30-17:00	**GRF's Vision for Youth and the Future**	Fulya Kocukoğlu Prof. Özgehan Şenyuva
17:00-18:30	**Opening Lecture** *"İlter Türkmen's Approach to Diplomacy and the Role of Diplomacy in a Changing World"*	Prof. Füsun Türkmen Ambassador (Ret.) Selim Yenel
18:30-20:30	**Cocktail Reception and Dinner** *Foyer, Main Conference Hall, Yaşar University*	

Tuesday, October 20

Venue: **İzmir Innovation Center (İzQ)**, Akdeniz, Atatürk Cd. No: 120, 35210 Konak / İzmir

TIME	PROGRAM	SPEAKER(S)
09:30-11:00	SESSION 1 **Regional Conflicts and the Breakdown of Norms**	Ambassador (Ret.) Ertuğrul Apakan Prof. Ali Şevket Ovalı
11:00-11:30	Break	
11:30-13:00	SESSION 2 **Security Architecture and Deterrence after the NATO Summit**	Prof. Sinem Akgül Açıkmeşe Ambassador (Ret.) Fatih Ceylan
13:00-13:45	Lunch	
13:45-15:15	SESSION 3 **The Crisis of Global Governance and the United Nations**	Ayşe Cihan Sultanoğlu Prof. Füsun Türkmen
15:15-15:45	Break	
15:45-17:00	SESSION 4 **Migration and Displacement: Global Trends and Türkiye**	Eylül Başak Tuncel
17:00-17:15	Break	
17:15-18:30	SESSION 5 **Global Food Security and Geopolitics**	Zeynep Özkan
Evening	**Free Time**	

Wednesday, October 21

Venue: **İzmir Innovation Center (İzQ)**, Akdeniz, Atatürk Cd. No: 120, 35210 Konak / İzmir

TIME	PROGRAM	SPEAKER(S)
09:30-10:45	SESSION 1 **Technology and Politics**	Assoc. Prof. Başar Baysal
10:45-11:00	Break	
11:00-12:15	SESSION 2 **Global Income Inequality and Its Social Consequences**	Can Selçuki
12:15-13:00	Lunch	
13:00-14:30	SESSION 3 **A Transforming Asia, a Transforming Diplomacy**	Ambassador Kok Li Peng
14:30-15:00	Break	
15:00-16:30	SESSION 4 **Strategic Goals, Current Realities: Türkiye-EU Relations**	Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas Ambassador (Ret.) Selim Yenel
Evening	**Free Time**	

Thursday, October 22

Venue: **İzmir Innovation Center (İzQ)**, Akdeniz, Atatürk Cd. No: 126, 35210 Konak / İzmir

TIME	PROGRAM	SPEAKER(S)
09:30-10:45	SESSION 1 **International Mediation in a World of Multiplying Conflicts**	Ambassador (Ret.) Timur Söylemez
10:45-11:00	Break	
11:00-12:00	SESSION 2 **Experience Sharing: Reflections from Senior Diplomats**	Ambassador (Ret.) Nick Kay Ambassador (Ret.) Kees Rade
12:00-12:45	Lunch	
12:45-13:45	SESSION 3 **Sports Diplomacy**	Prof. Özgehan Şenyuva Banu Yelkovan
13:45-14:00	Break	
14:00-16:00	SESSION 4 **Trade Negotiations and Economic Diplomacy Workshop**	Daniel Lowe
16:00-16:30	Break	
16:30-18:30	**Report Launch: “Peace and Security Through Diplomacy”** *Global Relations Forum (GRF) and the Diplomats Without Borders (DWB) initiative*	OPENING REMARKS Ambassador (Ret.) Timur Söylemez PANELISTS Ambassador (Ret.) Selim Yenel Ambassador (Ret.) Nick Kay Ambassador (Ret.) Fatih Ceylan CLOSING REMARKS Ambassador (Ret.) Ertuğrul Apakan Ambassador (Ret.) Kees Rade MODERATOR Barçın Yinanç
18:30-20:30	**Certificate Ceremony and Closing Dinner**	

PARTICIPANTS

NAME	UNIVERSITY	DEPARTMENT
İlyas Kayra Ak	TOBB University of Economics and Technology	International Relations
Yusuf Akbalık	Kadir Has University	International Relations
Eren Akkoç	Middle East Technical University	History
Buket Er Akyol	University of Graz	Political, Economic and Legal Philosophy
Özden Gülce Ekecik	Galatasaray University	International Relations
Işıl Ersoylu	Galatasaray University	International Relations
Hazal Öykü Hoca	Galatasaray University	Law
Övgü Kefeli	Middle East Technical University	International Relations
Mustafa Köroğlu	İzmir Katip Çelebi University	Political Science and Public Administration
Yusuf Ahmet Mayda	Manisa Celal Bayar University	International Trade and Finance
Besimali Aptı Memet	Dokuz Eylül University	Political Science and International Relations
Batıkan Sayın	Istanbul University	Political Science and International Relations
Hayal Soğlin	Ege University	International Relations
Muhammed Buğrahan Şekerci	Ankara Medipol University	Political Science and International Relations
Ebru Aleyna Tiyenç	İzmir Katip Çelebi University	International Relations
Gülçin Miray Utku	Ankara Medipol University	Political Science and International Relations
Furkan Ünal	Middle East Technical University	Political Science and Public Administration
Mahir Emir Yeşilbaş	Yaşar University	International Relations