

Thriving Together:

Responsibilities, Actions and Solutions

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Session 1



Shared Goals, Shared Gains: Africa's Quest for Stability and Prosperity

While Africa continues its rapid transformation, it faces persistent challenges that hinder its development prospects. Recent events, such as the ousting of the democratically elected President Mohamed Bazoum by a military junta in Niger have not only cast a shadow over the country, but also raised uncertainty for the broader region. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has taken a firm stance against the coup, further complicating the situation. Additionally, ongoing conflicts, such as the civil war in Sudan, could deepen the country's fragmentation, exacerbate political turmoil, and potentially involve neighbouring states, particularly in the Sahel region. Similarly, the peace deal that concluded the civil war in Ethiopia is facing implementation difficulties, heightening the risk of another internal conflict.

Despite the intricate complexities of these conflicts, Africa finds itself at a pivotal juncture, seeking stability and cooperation. This session will delve into the nuanced dynamics of the continent, encompassing both active and frozen conflicts while seeking pathways to their resolution and fostering shared growth and unity. Spotlighting the resilience of African nations, the discussion will explore how collaborative efforts can transcend challenges and conflicts. Furthermore, the session aims to unravel strategies, policies, and unity-driven actions that can pave the way for further development and collective achievements across Africa. Additionally, the session will highlight Türkiye's increasing engagement with Africa and the establishment

of platforms such as TRT Africa, emphasizing the significance of mutually beneficial partnerships and cultural exchange in the continent's progress.

Discussion Themes

- How do shifting global power dynamics, including the intensifying competition between superpowers like Russia and France, and the economic competition between China and the US, impact Africa's political and developmental landscape?
- With the rise of terrorist organizations in various parts of Africa, how can the continent collectively address the challenge of terrorism and prevent its proliferation? What regional strategies and international collaborations can be established to effectively combat terrorist activity?
- How can African nations navigate the intricate web of political dynamics to lay the groundwork for cooperative efforts that drive solutions across the continent?
- Considering Türkiye's increasing engagement with Africa and the establishment of platforms such as TRT Africa, how can such partnerships contribute to Africa's stability, prosperity, and media development? What are the potential areas of collaboration and mutual benefit between Türkiye and African nations in fostering sustainable growth and cooperation?

Session 2



A Tipping Point in the Israel-Palestine Conflict: Where to After Gaza?

Since 7 October 2023, the escalation in Gaza has opened a devastating new chapter in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Prior to this, the exponential growth of illegal Jewish settlements, extrajudicial killing of Palestinians, desecration of holy sites, annexation plans, and the long, illegal blockade of Gaza had already jeopardised any serious attempts at shaping a two-state solution, driving the conflict to a dead end.

Israel's aggression and continuing blockade on Gaza in the middle of a growing humanitarian crisis has put the Israeli-Palestinian conflict back at the top of the international political agenda. The UN and other international organisations are once more impotent, failing to find a solution or alleviate the plight of the victims. The current situation risks turning the entire region into a powder keg.

This session will analyse the consequences of the developments in Gaza and their potential ramifications on regional stability. It also will assess the escalation's impact on the overall Israel-Palestine conflict, discussing the potential scenarios for resolution and viable pathways for achieving peace while examining the mediation initiatives.

Discussion Themes

- What are the domestic implications of developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on Netanyahu's far-right coalition and how will it shape Israeli politics? Can there be a change in the country's approach towards the conflict, peace negotiations as well as the realisation of Palestinian self-determination?
- How will Israel's growing economic and security collaborations with Arab countries, as well as the engagement with other states, be impacted, and how could regional dynamics change? How can mediation efforts, peace talks, commitment to a two-state solution, and the prospect of Palestinian liberation play out?
- How could this situation shape and affect the enduring divisions among Palestinian factions? Can it create momentum to achieve reconciliation and to establish unity within the liberation movement? What could the consequences be for Gaza and its people?
- Given the breakdown of past agreements mediated by the international community, the most notable being the Oslo Accords, what are the remaining viable proposals for de-escalating violence and achieving peace?

Session 3



Türkiye's Century: Reflecting on the Past and Shaping the Future

As Türkiye commemorates its 100th anniversary, the country's regional political engagement has emerged as a key pillar in shaping its foreign policy vision for the future. Demonstrating its commitment to regional stability and security, Türkiye has actively participated in critical diplomatic initiatives and interventions across various regional conflicts, including significant roles in Libya, Nagorno Karabakh, Ukraine, and other key geopolitical hotspots. Within this context, Türkiye's foreign policy outlook has evolved to encompass a proactive stance in addressing complex regional challenges while reinforcing its commitment to cooperative international engagement. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has emphasised the importance of building strategic partnerships and alliances to strengthen Türkiye's regional influence, aligning with its historical legacy and regional responsibilities. Based on these statements and actions, it can be said that Türkiye's foreign policy vision in the new century will build upon long-standing traditions rooted in its geo-strategic position, historical experience, robust institutions, and dynamic economy, signifying a continued enhancement of its agile and independent diplomacy.

This session will elaborate on the past and the current orientation of Turkish foreign policy, and its substantial contributions to regional politics, mapping the country's future trajectory by considering the opportunities and challenges brought by various domestic, regional, and international developments. In doing so, the session will assess the outcomes of Türkiye's diversified and growing relationships across a vast geography spanning from Africa to the Middle East and Central Asia.

Discussion Themes

- How has Türkiye's involvement in key regional conflicts and crises shaped its regional political identity and influence? What lessons can be drawn from these experiences, and how do they inform Türkiye's regional policy outlook moving forward?
- What are the main tenets of Türkiye's independent foreign policy orientation? What setbacks and benefits does this approach present for the country in its region?
- What are the potential strategies and avenues through which Türkiye can use both soft and hard power capabilities to achieve its objectives in regions from Africa to Central Asia in ways that reflect its "Century of Türkiye" vision?
- How does Türkiye's increasing prominence on the world stage affect the existing geopolitical realities in its region and, conversely, how do these regional developments influence Türkiye's position as an international player?

Session 4



New Horizons in the Eastern Mediterranean: Competing Interests and Power Dynamics

Exploring the intricate dynamics and historical legacies of the Eastern Mediterranean can assist in shedding light on both challenges and opportunities on the horizon. The countries of the Eastern Mediterranean, including Türkiye, Greece, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the Greek Cypriot Administration, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, and Libya, struggle with divergent maritime claims, historical narratives, and unresolved conflicts that have hindered collaboration and progress. The tensions revolving around maritime rights and energy resources underscore the multidimensional nature of the conflicts, shaping a dynamic landscape of competing interests. The developments, including the discovery of hydrocarbon reserves and the Libyan civil war, have further heightened tensions, drawing neighbouring countries into a complex web of disputes.

Numerous stakeholders, including international and regional powers such as Türkiye, the European Union, Greece, the United States, Libya, Egypt, and others, play crucial roles in shaping this complex regional landscape. This session aims to explore these nuances, providing a comprehensive and inclusive perspective. The various viewpoints of these stakeholders as they navigate competing interests, promote dialogue, and work towards constructive alliances will also be further analysed.

Discussion Themes

- How have the recent discoveries of hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean influenced the region's geopolitical dynamics, and what are the competing interests among the countries involved? How can these competing interests be balanced to foster cooperation and regional stability?
- What are the key maritime jurisdiction disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean, and how do these disputes impact the potential for cooperation and security in the region? What mechanisms could be set up to resolve multiple crises stemming out of these divergent claims?
- How do various international and regional developments impact the energy and geopolitics nexus among the multiple stakeholders within the Eastern Mediterranean?
- What constructive role can regional and international actors play in resolving these disputes and facilitating dialogue among the parties involved?

Session 5



Europe's Multidimensional Challenges: Revitalising Multilateralism

Europe is at a pivotal juncture, facing a series of profound and historical challenges. As the continent grapples with issues such as migration, energy, climate, security, defence, and digitalisation, these complexities have been further amplified by ongoing regional and international conflicts. Within this framework, multilateralism is not merely a choice but a compelling necessity. To tackle the diverse challenges confronting Europe, a two-fold strategy is indispensable. This approach envisions the reinvigoration of existing institutions to address diverse issues while forging deeper collaborations with like-minded nations to seek global solutions.

Calls for multilateral initiatives have grown stronger, highlighting a need for international cooperation capable of effectively grappling with the problems at stake. This session aims to explore effective strategies to navigate these interconnected challenges, identify avenues to promote peace and stability, and discuss methods to revitalise multilateralism in Europe. The session aims to provide valuable insights and perspectives that can contribute to Europe's trajectory in confronting these dynamic challenges head-on. Ultimately, the discussion will shed light on innovative solutions that can guide Europe toward a more secure, stable, and prosperous future.

Discussion Themes

- What are the implications of the new security landscape in Europe for regional stability, relationships with neighbouring countries, and a broader multilateral framework in the region?
- What role can multilateralism play in de-escalating tensions and facilitating a peaceful resolution? How can European countries and international organisations strengthen multilateral efforts to address the conflict and its consequences?
- In light of recent events such as the Brexit saga and the increasing strain on European unity, how can Europe foster a stronger sense of cohesion and collaboration among its member states, especially considering the diverse interests and priorities of individual nations within the European Union framework?
- What strategies can European nations employ to promote a culture of multilateralism and collaborative decision-making within the framework of the European Union, particularly in light of recent challenges that have threatened the unity and common purpose of the bloc?

Session 6

” Middle East: Between Normalisation and War

In recent years, a region-wide trend of normalisation was in full swing across the Middle East. The resolution of the intra-Gulf rift, the thaw in Türkiye's relations with several Arab and Gulf states, and the restoration of diplomatic ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia were a few cases in point. Economic cooperation occupied a central place in the narrative of this era, while regional actors de-emphasised their previous geopolitical feuds and deescalated tensions in the conflict zones. Moreover, several regional efforts have been put forward as means of paving the way for further cooperation such as the Iraq development road project, the Iraq-Jordan-Egypt cooperation framework, and the Abraham Accords.

However, the eruption of the Palestinian – Israeli conflict has the potential to upend all these dynamics and trends. While, Israel's regional normalisation has largely run its course for the foreseeable future, as illustrated by Jordan's decision, reversal of some of these normalisations are likely. Therefore, once again, the logic and language of security and geopolitics dominates the regional politics and the war also affects the region's relations with external powers. Thus, capitalising on the deepening discontent with the United States and the West, Moscow and Beijing are likely to make further into the regional politics.

Against these contradictory trends, this session aims to comprehensively analyse the evolving Middle Eastern landscape, exploring the impacts of strategic alliances, and examining the multifaceted economic transformations underway, and how the war reshapes the regional dynamics.

While addressing the region's most pressing concerns and the impact of the Gaza invasion on the broader regional politics, it will also elaborate on the prospects and pathways towards achieving stability, terminating the war, and waylay its regionalisation.

Discussion Themes

- How do the regional actors shape the contemporary geopolitics of the Middle East? What role does the involvement of external powers and non-state actors play in the current landscape?
- What were the key drivers behind regional rapprochement efforts of recent years? How do the Gaza invasion, lingering points of contention and divergent positions among the Middle Eastern states impact these initiatives?
- How prospect awaits the erstwhile process of regional reset?
- How is this war redefining relations between regional actors?
- How will this conflict redefine external actors' place in the region going forward?

” Balkans under the Spotlight: Resolving Tensions and Disputes

The escalation of tensions in northern Kosovo, resulting in clashes between the country's Serbs on the one side and security forces and NATO-led peacekeepers on the other, has once again drawn international attention to the disputes among Balkan nations. While these recent flare-ups were primarily the symptoms of unresolved issues in Kosovo, grappling with enduring tensions has been a common feature for all states throughout the region. The institutional crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina related to voting procedures between Bosniaks and Croats in the run-up to the elections, and disagreements in North Macedonia over a constitutional amendment regarding the inclusion of Bulgarian citizens as one of its constitutive people, have been some of the recent incidents in this regard.

Moreover, various challenges, such as the rise of populism, and concerns over the rule of law and governance, add to the increasing precariousness of the status quo. In this situation, with the prospects of EU accession remaining as elusive as ever, advancing regional initiatives appears to be the most viable option for driving positive reforms. These endeavours could facilitate cooperation among Balkan states, ensure sustainable economic growth, and encourage the resolution of ongoing disputes.

This session will explore how Balkan states can collaborate to advance their shared objectives and move beyond divisive politics by revitalising diplomatic

initiatives. It will also examine the challenges in this regard, evaluating the various approaches that could be taken to fulfill the region's potential.

Discussion Themes

- What strategies could be employed to achieve lasting settlements of disputes in the region, shifting away from reactive measures in favour of proactive efforts and longer-term solutions?
- How do regional cooperation initiatives contribute to resolving bilateral conflicts and facilitating economic growth? What are the key obstacles hindering the effective implementation of these endeavours, and how can these be addressed?
- What are the distinct sets of risks and opportunities that arise from the changing regional and international dynamics for Balkan countries, and how can these be leveraged to their advantage?
- How do tensions within the region impact the internal dynamics and foreign policies of Balkan states, and how do these divergent agendas play into the existing conflicts?



Session 8



The Central Asian Chessboard: Seeking Cooperation Amid Competition

Central Asia, comprised of the nations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, is commemorating its 32nd anniversary of independence in a complex and evolving geopolitical landscape. In a world where geopolitical dynamics are transforming rapidly, Central Asia finds itself at a critical juncture. With recent shifts in the region, including the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan and the development of China's Belt and Road Initiative, Central Asia is emerging as a regional weather vane for the changing winds of influence.

The geopolitical significance of the region is profound given its historical role as a key hub for trade. This session aims to delve into the multifaceted challenges facing Central Asia as it navigates a shifting international order, while emphasising the importance of cultural diplomacy and economic cooperation. With multiple global actors, including Russia, China, India, Türkiye, the US, Europe, and others seeking to strengthen their engagement in Central Asia, the region's role in the "New Great Game" has become increasingly prominent. Amidst the diverse interests and opportunities emerging from this web of powers, the session will explore strategies to maintain equilibrium, safeguard sovereignty, and foster regional growth, placing an emphasis on the potential benefits of cultural and economic collaboration. By assessing the distinct engagement approaches of major players, the session will further seek to uncover pathways for Central Asia

to harness its potential for socio-economic progress while effectively managing external pressures.

Discussion Themes

- In the context of the growing prominence of Turkic States, how can Central Asian countries effectively navigate the competing influences of major powers like China, Russia, the United States, and the European Union? What are the key benefits and challenges of this balancing act?
- How can regional cooperation and integration initiatives, such as the Turkic Council, foster development and reinforce prosperity?
- Considering the geopolitical competition in the region, how can Central Asian countries strategically align their cultural and economic ties with Türkiye to bolster their political leverage and assert their influence, while managing the complex diplomatic interactions among key global players in the region?
- How can Central Asian countries utilise cultural diplomacy to foster stability, enhance regional cooperation, and build lasting relationships amidst evolving geopolitical dynamics?

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