



**GÜNEYDOĞU
GAZETECİLER
CEMİYETİ**

**THE SOUTHEASTERN
JOURNALISTS
ASSOCIATION**

**MEDIA'S MEMORY IN PEACE
PROCESSES:**

A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

FINAL DECLARATION

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16 MAY 2026

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

**THE SOUTHEASTERN JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION (GGC)
MEDIA'S MEMORY IN PEACE PROCESSES: A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE**

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At the panel titled “*The Media’s Memory in Peace Processes: A European Perspective,*” organized by the Southeastern Journalists Association (GGC) in Stockholm, Sweden, the concerns, expectations, criticisms, and recommendations of the Kurdish diaspora living in Europe regarding the ongoing process were discussed in depth.

Journalists, academics, politicians, diaspora representatives, and other participants on the panel emphasized that the current peace process should be addressed not only through a security lens but also through its historical, social, and democratic dimensions.

Based on the shared views expressed throughout the discussions, the following assessments and conclusions were reached:

1. *Diaspora’s Perspective*

Many participants emphasized that the Kurdish issue cannot be reduced solely to a matter of disarmament or security. They underlined that the Kurdish issue is historical, political, and social, and no lasting solution can be achieved without addressing demands related to identity, language, culture, and political status.

2. *Diaspora Views on the Current Process*

One of the most prominent concerns raised by diaspora representatives was the perceived lack of transparency in the current peace process.

Participants stated that the public has not been adequately informed and has been left to follow developments through limited official statements. Significant concerns were expressed about the lack of clear information on what the process involves, its objectives, and potential democratic gains.

Diaspora representatives stressed that people should be included in the process as active stakeholders. They argued that negotiations conducted without meaningful democratic participation are unlikely to foster public trust or build lasting social confidence.

3. *Expectations on Fundamental Rights*

Throughout the panel, many participants stated that no concrete and confidence-building steps have yet been taken regarding the fundamental rights of Kurds.

The issues most frequently raised were:

- the right to mother tongue education,
- the use of Kurdish in public life,
- constitutional guarantees for cultural rights,
- the situation of political prisoners,
- the appointment of government trustees to elected municipalities,
- the right to democratic representation.

Diaspora representatives emphasized that a climate of trust cannot be established without tangible progress on these issues.

4. Language and Identity

Language and identity emerged as central themes in the discussions.

Participants noted that the limited presence of Kurdish in public life has led to significant cultural ruptures within society. While many members of the Kurdish diaspora in Europe continue to make considerable efforts to preserve their language under diaspora conditions, participants stressed that the lack of equal status for Kurdish remains a serious concern.

Participants also emphasized that Kurdish should be recognized as a language of education and be fully accessible in public life.

5. Concerns Raised by the Kurdish Diaspora

Many diaspora representatives expressed concerns that the current process is advancing largely one-sidedly.

Participants noted that while issues such as disarmament and the cessation of conflict have been brought to the forefront, there has been insufficient progress on the democratic demands of Kurds. They argued that without concrete steps toward democratization, legal safeguards, and political rights, the process will struggle to generate broad public support.

Participants also stressed that the continued imprisonment of political detainees, the situation of seriously ill prisoners, the appointment of government trustees to elected municipalities, and ongoing restrictions on democratic space undermine public trust in the peace process.

6. Diaspora as an Integral Part of Kurdish Collective Memory

Panel participants emphasized that the Kurdish diaspora should not be viewed merely as an observer from abroad but as an important actor in preserving Kurdish language, culture, and collective memory.

The diaspora was recognized as making significant contributions to the preservation and promotion of the Kurdish language, the continuation of cultural initiatives, the development of democratic spaces for discussion, and efforts to raise international awareness.

Participants further emphasized that the diaspora should be actively included in the current process.

7. The Language and Approach of the Media Are Critical to Social Peace

Journalists and media representatives engaged in a comprehensive discussion of the media's role during periods of conflict.

Participants noted that years of reporting characterized by polarizing rhetoric, stigmatization, and hate speech have deepened social divisions and exacerbated existing wounds. In contrast, they emphasized the need to strengthen peace journalism and argued that the media should foster dialogue between communities rather than reinforce hostility.

The panel also highlighted that journalists serve as witnesses who preserve society's collective memory, and that making the truth visible is essential for any democratic resolution process.

8. Calls for Legal Reforms

Throughout the panel, participants stressed that strengthening the legal and democratic foundations of the current process is essential for its progress. Diaspora representatives and speakers in particular argued that discussions focused solely on disarmament would be insufficient, and that meaningful democratic progress requires concrete legal reforms.

Participants called for the adoption of a clear, transparent, and legally binding framework law governing the disarmament process. They also emphasized the need for special legislation and transitional legal arrangements to safeguard those involved in the process.

The panel further stressed that individuals who lay down their arms should be covered by appropriate legal guarantees and protections. Participants argued that the Kurdish issue should be addressed not only through the lens of security policies but also from the perspective of democratic and political resolution.

Finally, they emphasized that any legal reforms should be developed on the basis of broad social consensus to avoid repeating the mistrust and shortcomings experienced in previous peace processes.

9. Social Consent and an Inclusive Peace

Participants emphasized that a lasting peace can only be achieved through broad social consent and a genuine process of reconciliation.

They stressed that a shared future must be shaped through steps that are accepted in good conscience by not just Turks and Kurds, but all those in Turkey who have been directly or indirectly affected by this longstanding issue, who have suffered from it, been concerned by it, or felt a sense of responsibility toward its resolution.

Participants agreed that a genuine social consensus can only be achieved by taking into account the sensitivities, experiences, and consent of all segments of society affected by the conflict.

10. Conclusions and Recommendations

At the conclusion of the panel, diaspora representatives, journalists, and participants highlighted the following recommendations:

- 1:**The Kurdish issue should be addressed not only through security policies but also through democratic and political means.
- 2:**The peace process should be conducted transparently, and the public should be informed regularly.
- 3:**Kurdish identity should be constitutionally recognized and protected.
- 4:**The right to mother tongue education should be guaranteed through legal reforms.
- 5:**Barriers to the use of Kurdish in public life should be removed.
- 6:**Legal regulations governing the disarmament process should be designed to foster public trust.
- 7:**The practice of appointing government trustees to elected municipalities should be ended, and the democratic will of voters should be respected.
- 8:**Democratic and legal measures should be taken regarding political detainees and seriously ill prisoners.
- 9:**The principles of peace journalism should be strengthened, while hate speech and polarizing forms of media coverage should be abandoned.
- 10:**Diaspora representatives should be actively included in discussions on democratic solutions.
- 11:**Efforts to confront past human rights violations and preserve collective memory should be supported.
- 12:**The return of individuals who were forced to leave the country for political reasons and continue to live in exile within the diaspora should be addressed as part of the process, with the necessary legal arrangements put in place.
- 13:**Social consent should be prioritized as a cornerstone of lasting peace. Any steps taken should be acceptable not only to Kurds and Turks, but also to all those who have been affected by the conflict and its consequences.

As the Southeastern Journalists Association (GGC), we respectfully reaffirm our commitment to supporting democratic dialogue, truth, and independent journalism in pursuit of a future in which all peoples can live together in peace, equality, and freedom.



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