

# Annual Report



# 2017

## ANNUAL REPORT 2017

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in collaboration with Friedrich Naumann Stiftung



In the loving memory of Bulut Öncü

1989 - 2017

### Freedom Research Association

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## FOREWORD

Dear Friend of Liberty,

We left a busy year behind as Freedom Research Association as we've seen many tense events in 2017.

The year of 2017 started with a terrorist attack on the 1st of January. This attack was the first signal of the upcoming crises and political change.

The most significant political development was the Constitutional Referendum on 16th of April which introduced a new system called the "Turkish-type" Presidential System. Holding a referendum under the state of emergency has caused serious disputes and concerns about the fair and competitive elections the freedom of speech and the rising power of the executive branch. Repealing the parliamentary system which has efficient checks and balances system and implementing the Turkish type of the Presidential System without clearing any kind of checks and balaneces mechanism was at the top of the domestic agenda before and after the referendum.

The crises between the Netherlands, Germany and the USA has created tough times for our country and for our people. This crises put on more troubles for our foreign policy and also they have been used as populist tools in the domestic policy.

10 human rights activists taken into the custody while they having a sem-

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inar on “digital security and the data control” in the Princes’ Island. Then one of the most prominent business man and civil society representative Osman Kavala taken into custody without any accusation. Lastly, the Governor of Ankara has banned all the LGBT activities within the border of Ankara city. This custodies and bans have caused a enormous pressure on the civil society in Turkey.

A new era has begun for the populist movement and leaders when Donald Trump has become the new president of the USA. Trump’s populist decisions about economic, political and social matters have showed us a really challenging international relation has been ahead of us.

Since we established the principle of rule of law in Turkey it is one of the most important issues in our agenda. Indeed all these crises have shown us to that we are utmost right to care this principle. The establishment of the principle of the rule of law as soon as possible is one of the most important preconditions for us to have a democracy functioning in universal standards.

We have been examining the principle of the rule of law in comparatively with the good examples from the world, and contributing to discussions in this realm with experts in the field. In the one-and-a-half-year “Rule of Law Academy Project” that we have launced in the last months of 2017, we will organize trainings with more than eighty doctoral and graduate students and lawyers in the pursuit of raising liberal generations.

Also, we have been continuing our projects under the Economic Liberties Center, Civil Liberties Center and the Democracy and the Rule of Law Center with the purpose of preparing the public policy reforms for the establishment of the law principle principle. Thus, we have been continuing to conduct policy proposals with reference to both institutional arrangements and the good examples in our publications.

In many respect, the year of 2017 was a concerning year for the freedom movement. We have experienced a period in which populist political and social movements are on the rise and have come into power in some countries.

These events remind us Friedman’s famous quotes:

“Freedom is a rare and delicate plant. Our minds tell us, and history confirms, that the great threat to freedom is the concentration of power.”

Dear friend of liberty, we will continue to defend liberties in a principle manner in 2018 as FRA. Your support is crucial for us in this struggle. We hope that your support will continue in 2018. We will work with all our power to be worthy of your support.

Your Sincerely,


Chairman of the Executive Board

Prof. Bican Şahin


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# 2017 IN A NUTSHELL


## EVENTS

**1** Colloquium 


**3** Roundtable Meetings 

**2** Conferences 

**10** FreedomTalks @FRA 

**8** Meetings/ Trainings Abroad 

## PUBLICATIONS, MEDIA

**1** Report 

**7** Analyses 

**4** Commentaries 

**33** Blog Posts 

**2** Media Coverage 





## VISION AND MISSION

Freedom Research Association (FRA) was founded in August 2014 by a group of academics, business people, journalists and legal experts to conduct public policy research with a liberal and scientific approach. FRA envisions a free and prosperous Turkey. The mission of FRA is to promote evidence-based policy making among decision-makers and an informed public debate in Turkey. Freedom Research Association is strongly dedicated to individual liberties, rule of law, peace, fair and competitive markets. We believe that a free and prosperous Turkey can only be founded upon universal human rights, rule of law and a competitive free market economy which deters cronyism. "Institutional Reform" is a key focus area of FRA's research. Main aims of FRA's projects on this area are as follows: To explore the suitable ground on which Turkey's institutions can operate with reference to universal standards To propose necessary reforms which need to be done in processes and structures, based on international best case examples.

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## CORPORATE STRATEGY

FRA focuses on universal and scientific ethical standards in its work. They formulate their work as inclusive as possible and in accordance with scientific ethical standards. FRA is strictly independent and non-partisan. In order to protect its independence, FRA doesn't accept public funds from state institutions in accordance with its by-law. Transparency and honesty are taken as the basis both for the internal affairs and public relations.

**The rules that FRA has determined to ensure the quality of its research are as follows:**

- The main aim and the purpose of the research should be clearly explained.
- The method of the study should be well formulated and applied throughout the research.
- The research should provide information/references about the other field works.
- The research should be based on the most current and valid data

available.

- The theses suggested in the research should be clear and justified.
- The research should improve the knowledge that exists in the field.
- All researches should bring inclusive policy recommendations.
- The theses proposed in the research and the proposed policy recommendation should be consistent with the method and findings of the research.
- All theses and suggestions should be well explained and the weaknesses /deficiencies of the research (if any) should be indicated.
- The resulting reports should be well structured, clear and understandable.
- The language used in the research reports should be objective, inclusive, constructive and equidistant to different views.
- As long as it does not contradict scientific ethical values and the principles of the FRA, no content of any research is intervened based on freedom of opinion.
- Editorial interventions are the exception to this rule.

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# GENERAL PROCESS IN THE FRA RESEARCH



## IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEMS

To bring together the stakeholders who are relevant to the research topic or the researched institution. The content, limitations and method of the research are determined in accordance with the feedback from these discussion(s).

In the research process, the research team guided by a specialist will identify the problems in the field, their causes and their effects and explore international good examples. The results of the research will be presented as a solution to the problem identified at the beginning of the research.

## RESEARCH PROCESS



## ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS TO THE PUBLIC

Organizing a conference, seminar or press conference where the results will be announced to the public. The research team (or its representative) shares the findings and outcomes of the research with the public.

The final report will be shared with the relevant departments of the universities, public institutions and organizations, media companies and relevant non-governmental organizations. Going to the GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF TURKEY to share policy proposals with the MP's

## ADVOCACY





## EXECUTIVE BOARD



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Prof., Hacettepe University



**Yusuf Ziya Kıvanç**  
Lawyer



**Veli Kondak**  
Publisher



**Seval Yaman**  
Dr., Ankara Social Sciences University

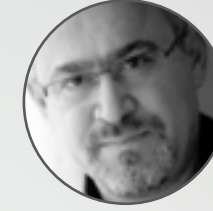


**Erdal Türkkan**  
Prof. Dr.

## NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD



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Prof.



**Orhan Kemal Cengiz**  
Lawyer



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**Erdal Türkkan**  
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Journalist-Lawyer



**Nesrin Nas**  
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**Chandran Kukathas**



**Ali Salman**



**David Schmitz**



**Parth Shah**



**Linda Whetstone**



**Rainer Heufers**



**Timur Kuran**



## RULE OF LAW ACADEMY PROJECT

### Rule of Law Academy Project

The main purpose of this project is to strengthen the foundations of the rule of law in Turkey. The rule of law rises on three pillars: institutions (first level courts, high courts and administrative bodies); rules and regulations; and finally, human capital (judges, prosecutors, lawyers). Turkey's track record is not satisfactory with respect to any of these pillars. In this Project, we will focus on the third pillar, human capital. It is possible to approach to the pillar of human capital from several different angles. One approach may be to train the current judges, prosecutors and lawyers. A second approach may be to train the current students of law who will become judges, prosecutors and lawyers tomorrow. A third approach may be to educate tomorrow's legal scholars and academics who will educate the future generations of judges, prosecutors and lawyers. We will take the third approach which we believe to have the highest adding value in the long run.

We brought graduate students of law as well as promising early, mid-career lawyers together with some of the most respected legal scholars of Turkey in a structured colloquium. The participants were selected on the basis of questionnaires and letters of intent. The selected participants (20 persons) were sent a reading package prepared by our team of legal scholars. The reading materials consisted of both the classical writings

on the matter and writings penned by the team. The colloquiums lasted two days. There had been three sessions each day, totalling six sessions. After the completion of the colloquia, the participants were asked to write a publishable paper on a different aspect of the rule of law. Each participant was assigned to a scholar. The scholars gave feedback to students. Our team of scholars encouraged and led students to submit their papers to respected journals for publication. This format repeated in four major cities of Turkey.

This project has been funded primarily by National Endowment for Democracy and conducted with the support of Friedrich Naumann Foundation Turkey and Atlas Network.



**Mustafa Erdoğan**  
Prof. Dr.



**Ali Rıza Çoban**  
Doç. Dr.



**Oktay Uygun**  
Prof. Dr.



**Günal Kurşun**  
Yrd. Doç. Dr.



**Kerem Altıparmak**  
Yrd. Doç. Dr.



**Vahap Coşkun**  
Prof. Dr.





## EVENTS



### COLLOQUIMS

#### Rule of Law Academy Project - Colloquium in İstanbul

15 lawyers, master and Phd students from different universities from 3 different cities gathered in İstanbul for the first colloquium of the Rule of Law Academy Project.

The colloquium took place between the 18th – 19th November 2018.

The moderators of the first colloquium were Prof. Mustafa Erdoğan and Prof. Oktay Uygun. The participants discussed the principle of the rule of law together with our moderators over the weekend.



**CONFERENCES****The Future Technologies and Their Economies**

The conference was hosted in partnership with the European Students for Liberty - Turkey in Ankara on 14th May 2017.

The 3D printers, artificial intelligence, bitcoin and blockchain and the new economic opportunities which is created by these technologies were among the topics of the conference.

**The Economic Freedom Audit in Turkey**

The conference was hosted in partnership with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation - Turkey Office, Atlas Network, International Republican Institute, Open Society Foundation and Fraser Institute in Ankara on 25 May 2018.

A first of its kind initiative, 4 workshops were held for each of the specific sub-topics of the Economic Freedom of the World Index. Detailed proposals have been drafted with regards to the size of government, legal system, free trade and regulations.

## ROUNTABLE MEETINGS



### The Syrian Civil War and the Turkish Foreign Policy

FRA in cooperation with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation – Turkey Office and with the support of TOBB University of Economics and Technology, organised a one-day workshop entitled “The Syrian Civil War and the Turkish Foreign Policy”, which took place on 10 March 2017 at the premises of TOBB University of Economics and Technology in Ankara.

30 well-known academics, politicians, journalists and diplomats attended the meeting. The first findings of the ‘Post-Civil War Syria and the Turkish Foreign Policy’ report prepared by Assoc. Prof. Burak Bilgehan Özpek, Director of the Center for Civil Liberties, were shared with the participants.



### Countering Violence Against Women

The meeting was held in Ankara in cooperation with the Jarl Hjalmarson Foundation and the Swedish Institute on 1 June 2017. Well-known women’s rights activists, successful business women and women MP’s from Turkey and Sweden gathered in our meeting entitled “Countering Violence Against the Women in Turkey”.

The topics of the conference were the importance of the coalitions between different sectors to counter the violence against the women and how to build them.



### The Turkey – EU Relationship and the Role of Media

The last roundtable meeting of the year was held in İstanbul with the support of Jarl Hjalmarson Foundation and the Swedish Institute on 19 December 2017.

There were journalists, legal experts, bureaucrats, academics, former ambassadors, and MP's from Turkey, Sweden and European Parliament among the participants.

In the meeting, the role of the civil society organizations and the media in time of crisis between the Turkey and the EU and the effects of the way of the media coverage of these crisis on the public opinion were discussed.

## FreedomTalks@FRA

**Abdülbaki Erdoğan**

The Presidential System  
and the Identity



**Yusuf Kanlı**

The Current Situation in the  
Cyprus Peace Talks



**Medeni Sungur**

The Age of Trump: The Rising Populism  
and the Nationalism



**Uğur Emek**

The Wealth Fund of Turkey



**Levent Korkut**

The Checks and Balances System in the  
New Constitutional Proposal



**Kemal Özkiraz**

The Referendum Results and the  
Voter Tendencies in Consideration of  
Recent Surveys



**Bican Şahin**

The Potential Scenarios after the  
Constitutional Referendum



**Erol Tuncer**

The Referendum and the  
Future of our Democracy



**Ahmet Nezihi Turan**

The Relationship Between the  
Nationalism and the Islamism in Turkey.



**Tanıl Bora**

The Political Ideologies and the  
Liberalism in Turkey





## PUBLICATIONS

### LIBERAL PERSPECTIVE: COMMENTARY

Commentaries are short articles reflecting a liberal perspective written by our experts, on a public policy related topic, 3-5 pages long.

Last year we published one commentary.

**1. *The Minimization of the Economic Impact of the State of Emergency***  
**Prof. Erdal Türkkan**

In this commentary, the economic impact of the coup attempt and the fight against the coup and how to minimize these economic effects without compromising the effectiveness of the struggle is discussed.





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## 2. Aristotle, Political Friendship and the Social Peace

Prof. Bican Şahin

“The history of conflicts between social classes and the groups goes back to the period when social differentiation and different classes emerged. The search for a systematic solution to these conflicts began with the birth of political philosophy.”

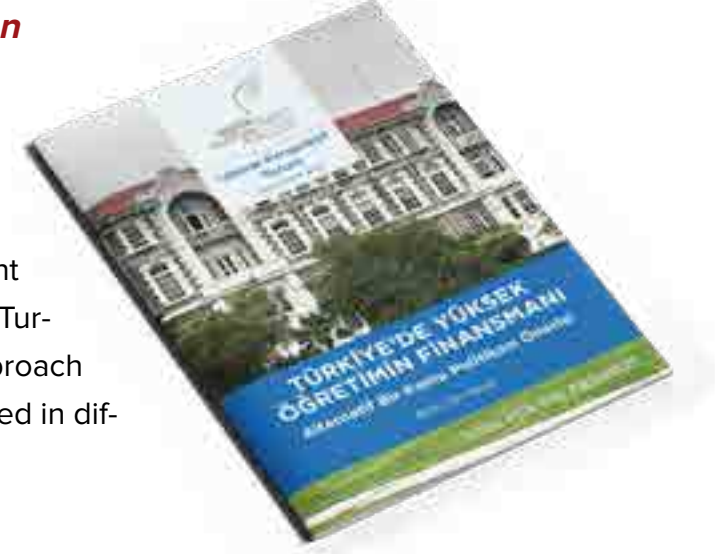


This commentary aims to shed light on our current problems of terrorism and the social peace, taking into account of the ongoing search for conflict resolutions from Ancient Greece.

## 3. Financing the Higher Education System in Turkey

Ekin Can Genç

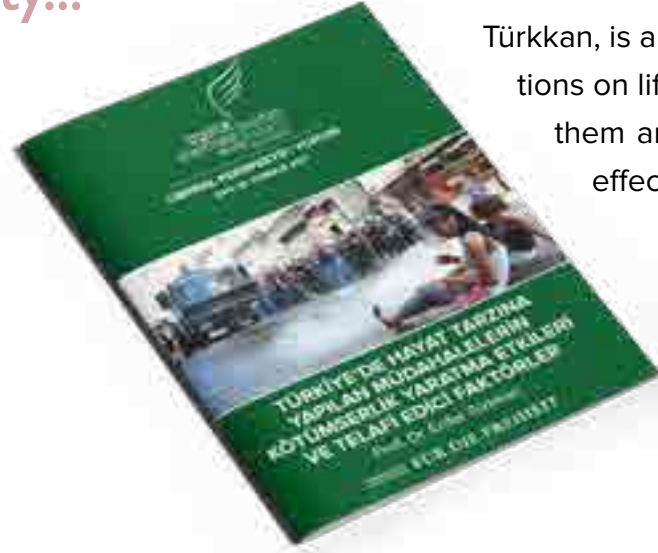
Ekin Can Genç is discussing thoroughly in this report disadvantages of the current funding method for higher education in Turkey. Then, he offers an alternative approach for Turkey through funding models applied in different countries.



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#### 4. *The Ill Effects of the interventions on Lifestyle in Turkey.* Prof. Erdal Türkkan

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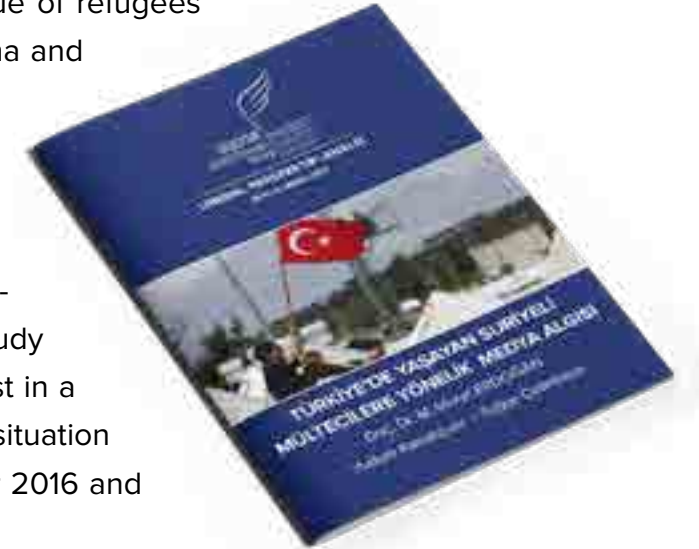
Türkkan, is analyzing the ill effects of the interventions on lifestyle in Turkey and how to minimize them and what can be done to avoid these effects.

## LIBERAL PERSPECTIVE: ANALYSIS

An analysis is an in-depth investigation of a public-policy issue from a liberal perspective, based on data and research, generally 20-30 pages long. Last year we published six analyses.

#### 1. *Developments in Turkey the Refugee Crisis & The Media* Assoc. Prof. Murat Erdoğan

Since April 2011, Turkey is experiencing the most serious migration movements in its history. People forced to leave their homes in Syria and have arrived in Turkey along with refugees and migrants from other countries. The total number of refugees/migrants in Turkey has exceeded 4,7 million in the past six years; approximately 1,2 million continued to Europe and other countries, whereas 3,5 million people remain in Turkey. Among those remaining, 3,1 million are Syrians. While only 8 percent of the refugees are living in camps and are relatively isolated from Turkish society, the remaining 92 percent are living all around the country, in almost every city. This makes the issue of refugees in Turkey an evident social phenomena and a natural foundation for the discussions of social acceptance and exclusion. Turkish media has a very special role for the high, albeit fragile, social acceptance and for conflicts remaining at a very minimal level. This study makes an analysis of «refugeeism» first in a legal, then in a sociological sense, the situation of refugees in Turkey as of December 2016 and the attitudes of the Turkish media.



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## 2. The Exclusive Partnership of Turkey and the European Union

**Nilgün Arısan Eralp**



Arısan, examines the Turkey - EU relations from beginning until today. Then, she lists the likely impact of the recent developments in between the EU and Turkey to the future of relations.

## 3. Post-Civil War Syria and the Turkish Foreign Policy

**Assoc. Prof. Burak Bilgehan Özpek**

Assoc. Prof. Burak Bilgehan Özpek makes an analysis of potential scenarios of Turkish Foreign Policy after the Syrian Civil War.

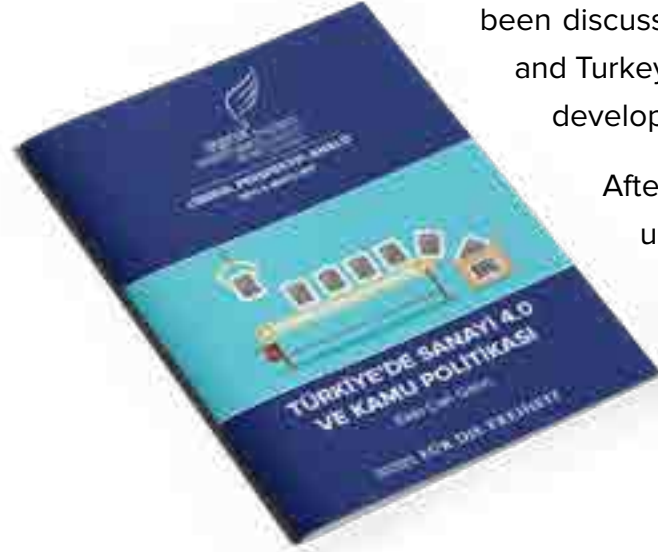
He focuses on the reason of the Syrian Civil War, the beginning and the ending of the war and the Turkish foreign policy.



#### 4. The Industry 4.0 and the Public Policy Ekin Can Genç

Ekin Can Genç introduces the Industry 4.0 which has been discussed widely in policy circles in Europe and Turkey, considering the latest technological developments.

Afterwards, he shares his views on the unemployment as a result of the Industry 4.0 and the perils of the direct state aid to the industry.



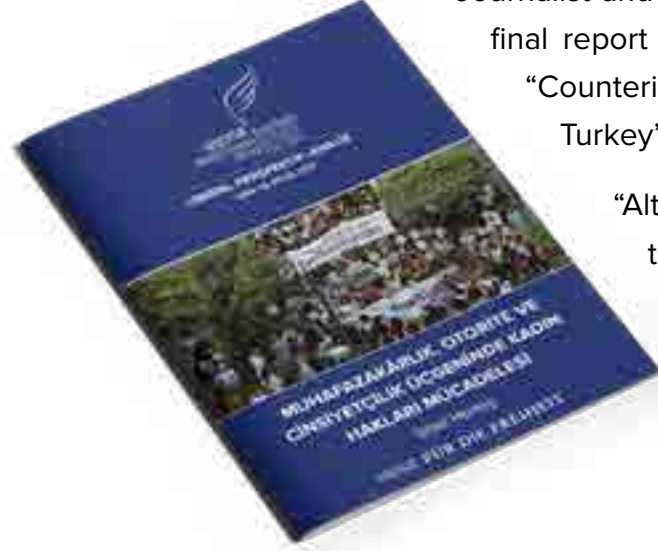
#### 5. Childhood Vaccination in the USA and the Turkey Ercan Avcı

Childhood vaccination is one of the most significant public health means and cost-effective ways to prevent disease, prolong life, and promote health. To take these advantages, each country implements certain immunization policies to at least reach herd immunity thresholds. However, due to medical, religious, or philosophical reasons, sometimes parents may refuse vaccinating their children. Therefore, especially in case of compulsory immunization, which is applied by the United States and Turkey, a conflict emerges between population-based benefits and individual liberties. In this context, this essay aimed to examine the immunization models of the United States and Turkey and evaluate their mandatory immunization policies from a liberal perspective, which values individual freedom and minimal state intervention. The United States uses school immunization requirements with medical, religious, and philosophical exemptions, while Turkey implements a guardianship model with financial incentives for parents and negative incentives for care providers. Nevertheless, many European countries' vaccination rates indicate that high coverages can also be achieved and maintained through voluntary immunization systems. Therefore, it seems that it is most likely to ethically justify the United States' soft compulsory model, rather than Turkey's guardianship-based hard compulsory policy.





**6. Women's Rights Movement Against the Sexism, the Authority and the Conservatism**  
**Sibel Hürtaş**



Journalist and writer Sibel Hürtaş has prepared the final report of the round table meeting entitled “Countering Violence Against the Women in Turkey”.

“Although the conservative and authoritarian system has been causing more severe violence against women, the women’s movement has been continuing to be stronger since the end of the 1990s.”



## IN THE NEWS

Our work has been covered in the media. A few selected news:

Our workshop “Countering Violence Against the Women in Turkey” has been on the ArtıkGerçek!



Journalist Soli Özel has featured our analyses entitled “The Exclusive Partnership of Turkey and the European Union” in his blog on HaberTurk!



In 2017, Nils Muiznieks has prepared a memorandum for the freedom of press in Turkey to the Council of Europe which gives a reference to our 2015 Freedom of Press Report in Turkey.





## Check and Balances Network (CBN)



### “Imagine Turkey”

The Imagine Turkey Project was completed last year. In 2018, the final report of the project has been published by the secretariat of the Checks and Balances Network (CBN). Imagine Turkey project collected the future visions of 500+ citizens from all walks of life around Turkey. We are a member of CBN since 2015 and organized two “Imagine Turkey” workshops in our office to reflect the Turkish liberals’ 2030 vision within the framework of this project.

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### Local Coordinatorship of CBN

After the Imagine Turkey Project of the CBN İsrafil Özkan has become of one the local coordinators of Ankara.



### 3rd Anniversary Reception

It's been three years since the first day of the FRA!

Our third Anniversary Reception hosted renowned scholars, journalists, business people and friends of FRA. Our keynote speaker was the Honorary President of the Court of Cassation of Republic of Turkey Prof. Sami Selçuk. FRA's anniversary reception is our flagship event to celebrate our birthday with the friends of liberty.

## FRA TEAM ABROAD



### Turkish Liberal Network Meets EU Counterparts

This historic partnership between the EU and Turkey, which lately suffers certain blowbacks, can not be left to the hands of the governments only. That's the main reason we attempt to organize a civil society level dialogue for reconciliation.

So we organized a business trip to the Brussels between the 22nd – 24th of November and aims in organizing this trip are as follows:

1. Foster the cooperation and mutual understanding between liberal civil society organizations and individuals of EU and Turkey.
2. Explore the suitable grounds as to what extent each side might be helpful in pulling Turkey back into the European track
3. Updating EU counterparts with the latest developments in Turkey and share the perspective of liberals

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### **Wisconsin University – Center for the Study of Liberal Democracy**

Our President Prof. Bican Şahin was a visiting scholar in the Center for the Study of Liberal Democracy of the University of Wisconsin in the USA for a year.

Also Prof. Bican Şahin gave a lecture entitled “An Assessment of Democracy in Turkey from A Liberal Perspective”. The presentation consisted of an analysis of the current state of democracy in Turkey from the perspective of liberal democratic values such as the principle of rule of law and limited government.



### **Think-Tank Shark Tank Competition**

Prof. Bican Şahin attended the Think Tank - Shark Tank 2017 Competition organized by the Atlas Network. He made a successful presentation on our project “The Online Rule of Law Academy” and the project has been rewarded by the jury.

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### Liberal Forum & Freedom Dinner (LFFD) 2017

The annual Liberty Forum brings together amazing freedom champions from this network to exchange ideas and share strategies. The Freedom Dinner serves as a fitting grand finale to this conference, celebrating heroes of the freedom movement and the principles that friends of Atlas Network are advancing worldwide.

Prof. Bican Şahin attended to the LFFD 2017 on behalf of the FRA.



### “Future Of Freedom” Annual Consultation

“Future of Freedom” Annual Consultation is an annual event of the Regional Office for East and Southeast Europe of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF-ESEE). The consultation enables debate and analysis among liberal thought leaders, decision-makers and multipliers about the latest trends and challenges that our societies face today. The consultation brings together representatives from FNF partner organizations working in civil society, think tanks and political parties from the region and beyond. It, thus, creates an enriching environment and an engaged community for debate and analysis, best-practices sharing, ideas’ generation, synergies’ and solutions’ incubation.

From our team Assoc. Prof Burak Bilgehan Özpek was in Athens on September to attend the consultation.

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### Promoting Tolerance

“Promoting Tolerance’ is an annual programme made up of the following three parts: An Online Seminar, an International Seminar in Europe which brings the participants together to both discuss the problems they face in their respective countries in combating intolerance and to develop methods for addressing the situation. A Study Trip to the United States is the core element of the programme. It offers an opportunity to become familiar with the American models of inter-ethnic coexistence. AJC ensures that participants are exposed to a large variety of public and private projects and initiatives. The goal is not to instruct but to demonstrate. The intent is to contribute to the establishment of valuable contacts and the exchange of useful examples to be replicated back home.”

Our Executive Director Medeni Sungur was in Berlin on June and in USA on November to attend a series of events and meetings.



### Open Markets and Entrepreneurship

Our Executive Director Medeni Sungur participated in the training called “Open Markets and the Entrepreneurship “ between the 13rd – 25th of August.

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### Asia Liberty Forum 2017

Our President Prof. Bican Şahin was in Mumbai, India to attend the Asia Liberty Forum, organized by the Atlas Network which took place between the 10th and the 22th of February 2017.

## PARTNERS



# FAALİYET RAPORU 2017



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