

# Annual Report



# 2019



# ANNUAL REPORT 2019

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*In collaboration with Friedrich Naumann Foundation*

## Freedom Research

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## FOREWORD

Dear Friend of Liberty,

We say this every year but this year really was a momentous one for Turkey. Our people has witnessed plenty of dreadful threats, but also promising developments in 2019. In 2019, Turkey has experienced one of the most important cases of our time in terms of democracy and political freedom.

Everything that happened before, during and after the election held on the 31 of March made us think that we couldn't internalised the democratic values at all. The smear campaigns against the candidates from both sides were talked more than the election promises. This local elections had no fair campaign process, and what is worse, during the election night there were early victory statements to manipulate the election result.

At the end of the appeal process, which started with the objections from the AK Party, the mayoral election in İstanbul has been cancelled and renewed by the decision of the Supreme Election Council (YSK) on May 6. This has been considering as an unlawful decision that puts in danger of the future of our democracy.

The AK Party has failed to justify its objections, this proved that the decision was purely political. When the data show that opposition candidate is ahead of others, Anadolu Agency and the YSK stopped publishing the results of the elections at the election night. Later with the decision of the YSK, all this process has demonstrated that these institutions are totally politicized. After the renewed İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality elections on June 23, the AK Party has lost the mayorships of the big cities like İstanbul, Ankara, Antalya, Adana, Mersin and Diyarbakır. However, the threats to the mayors of opposition parties from the government and appointments of trustees to Diyarbakır, Mardin and Van municipalities have been considered as a violation of the right to choose and the destruction

of the will of the nation. This also means that Turkey has evolved into a competitive authoritarian structure. On the other hand, the unification of the opposition groups for democracy and justice in the renewed İstanbul elections and the voters' strong support to Ekrem İmamoğlu have showed us that there is still hope for our democratic system.

We experienced hundreds of fundamental rights violations in 2019. The detention of the representatives of the civil society, media and political parties who were arrested by political allegations has continued. Despite the decision of the European Court of Human Rights, Selahattin Demirtaş and Osman Kavala has been in the jail. Shortly after the release of Nazlı Ilıcak and Ahmet Altan, Altan was arrested again because of his statements against the government. This has been nothing but the constant violation of the freedom of expression.

In 2019, the vulnerable groups especially LGBT community and women have suffered from severe rights violations. The court finally made its decision about the ongoing case of Şule Çet, who became a nation-wide case with her suspicious death in 2018, and it has been declared formally that Çet was murdered. In 2019, 299 women have become the victims of toxic masculinity.

In the cases of violence against women, we witnessed that the public frequently pressured the courts through social media. Because the public were well aware that the court will decide that the murderers were provoked. Also the murderers aware that they could obtain a reduction in their penalty, in a manner exclusive to Turkish law.

The fact that the efforts to seek justice in suspicious deaths, such as Şule Çet and Rabia Naz, were only possible with organized public pressure to the courts showed us that trust for legal mechanisms has been falling.

In 2019 Turkey's foreign policy has been clearly militarized. 'Baris Pinari Harekatı' was launched on October 9 with the aim of securing our borders and ensuring the safe return of refugees to Syria. Aside from the operational difficulties and technical impossibilities of the operation, this operation has not been brought to public attention at all. All those who express their opinions about the operation are considered as traitors. All opposition groups were silenced with the support of pro-government mainstream media. This was another severe violation of the freedom of expression in the last year.

Another issue that is closely related to freedom of expression is the government censorship on the content offered by media platforms which work with paid subscription method. State interference in a private contract has been a direct violation of freedom of expression and freedom of choice. The differences in the society especially the LGBT community have been targeted; and treated as criminals and immoral. This attitude has led to another polarization wave in society.

At the end of this challenging year, our free and prosperous Turkey vision and our efforts to achieve it has emphasized again. In 2019, we fought against populist political discourses, market interventions and human rights violations and carried out advocacy activities. We organized different types of events, and published reports and books, and create online contents to promote a fair competition, a pluralistic democracy, freedom of expression in every part of our lives. We have launched the Structural Reforms in Turkey Project, and Creating Opportunities for Meaningful Expression in Turkey Project (Project COMET). In 2020, we will produce data to address the reform areas that will be the long-term solution to the economic and political crises of our country has been going through. Also we will continue to work to create a strong public demand for the elimination of the current human rights violations.

It's a common foresight for us that the New Year will be full of political developments and changes, that means your support for our association becomes more important than ever.

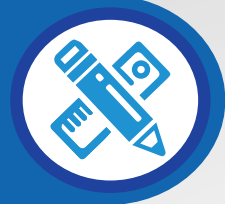
Dear friend of liberty, As FRA, we will continue to defend liberties in principle manner in 2020. Your support is crucial for us in this struggle. We hope that your support will continue in 2020. We will work with all our power to be worthy of your support. I wish that 2020 will bring peace, prosperity and freedom to our country.

Sincerely,

Prof. Bican Şahin  
Chairman of the Executive Board

# 2019 IN A NUTSHELL

**3** Projects



**1** Colloquium



**1** Seminar



**5** Conferences



**2** Reports



**3** Analyses



**1** Commentary



**11** Policy Talks



**9** Videos



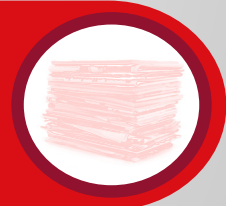
**2** Interviews



**17** Blog Posts



**3** Media Coverages



**5** Meetings and Trainings Abroad





## 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.

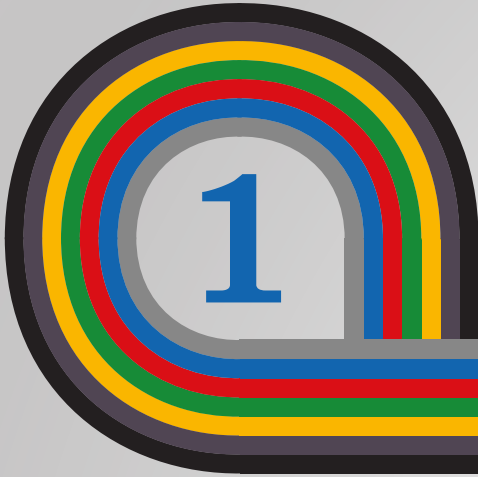
**The rules that FRA has determined to ensure the quality of its research are as follows:**

- 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.

# GENERAL PROCESS IN THE FRA RESEARCH



## IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEMS

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.



## ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS TO 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 (t to share policy proposals with the MP's

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).

## RESEARCH PROCESS



2

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.

## ADVOCACY



4

## EXECUTIVE BOARD



**Bican Şahin**  
Prof. Hacettepe Uni.



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Research Assistant



**Tuna Saral**  
Research Assistant



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Dr., Ankara Sosyal Bil. Un.



**Veli Kondak**



**Kerem Yavaşca**  
Dr.



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## EVENTS

## PROJECTS

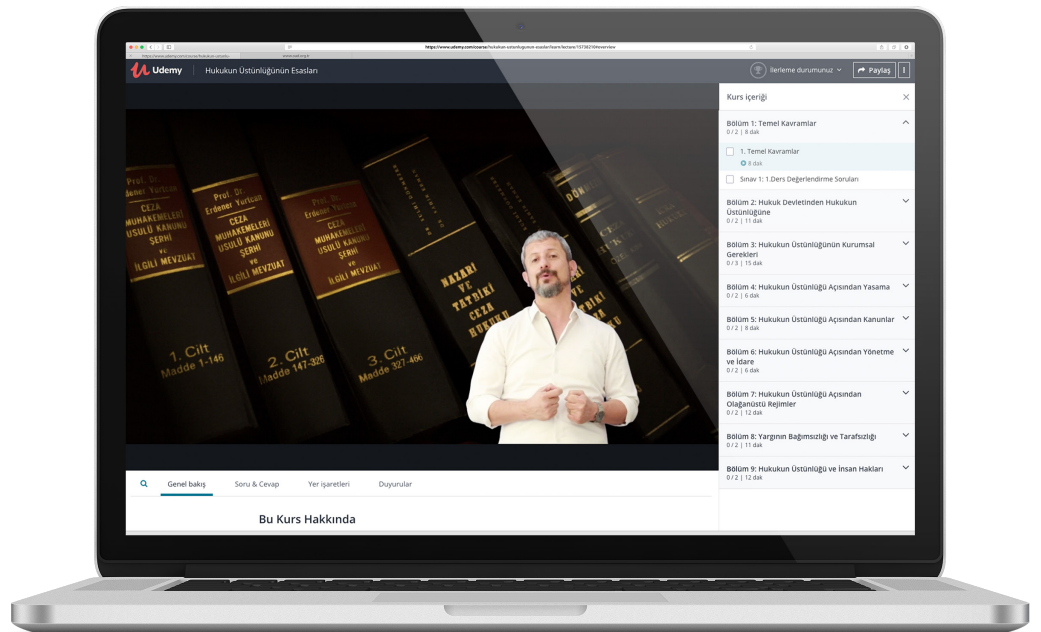
### Structural Reforms in Turkey

To strengthen the rule of law and good governance in Turkey, Freedom Research Organization (FRA) will advocate for structural reforms in five major institutions and sectors including the legislature, judiciary, public procurement system, public personnel system, and independent media. FRA will identify and analyze needed structural reforms in these five key areas that are critical to advancing the rule of law and accountability in Turkey and create a comprehensive advocacy plan to encourage political parties represented in the Turkish parliament to incorporate them into their respective party platforms. To achieve this, FRA will hold a series of workshops and public events, publish reports and a white paper, conduct social and mainstream media advocacy activities, and engage representatives of political parties, civil society and parliament. FRA will hold five two-day workshops, one for each specific reform area, with relevant stakeholders and interested parties to identify the key needs and challenges within that sector, and to draft concrete, actionable policy proposals on recommended structural reforms. FRA will pay five visits to influential civil society organizations such as the Turkish Industry and Business Association (TUSIAD), unions, chambers of commerce and bar associations across the country. The aim of these visits will be to introduce FRA's reform agenda and seek support from these organizations for its advocacy efforts with relevant government agencies, parliament and political parties. FRA will then visit each of the five political parties represented in the parliament to brief them about the reform proposals, seek their endorsement for the white paper, and encourage them to incorporate recommended reforms in their party platforms. FRA will develop a plan to engage social media influencers who can attract attention to its campaign and reform recommendations. FRA believes this will trigger nationwide momentum for its advocacy efforts. In addition, the organization will set up a comprehensive website that will serve as a go-to source for both the public and the policy-makers on these issues, and publicize project activities. Finally, FRA will hold a "National Conference on Structural Reforms" in Ankara to publicize the progress and findings of its activities and announce reform roadmaps for each area. It will also solicit endorsements from conference participants for the white paper and reform agenda.

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## Online Rule of Law Academy

Turkey has been experiencing a strong authoritarianism trend since 2013. Especially after the 2016 coup attempt, Turkey has seen strong signs of deterioration in her criminal justice system and judicial system in general. More than 3/4 of all judges and prosecutors currently in office have been appointed during the mandate of the last two ministers of Justice(same government). To address that, FRA designed a comprehensive Rule of Law Academy(RoLA) project for graduate level law students and legal professionals with at least 3 years of experience. This project includes 4 on-site colloquiums for law students and a 6 months of mentorship period with the colloquium moderators. The aims are a) to have the next generation of legal scholars/professionals gain a concrete understanding and a deep notion of rule of law and b) to establish a connection between the old and new generations of legal scholars/professionals who are keen to defend the rule of law. We aim to have a total of 80 alumni at the end of this year. An important point is that, through facebook and whatsapp groups, we aim to have an extensive alumni network, which, hopefully in the next 5-10 years will produce judges/prosecutors/lawyers who graduated from our academy different years. We are now aiming to take this academy to the next level by creating a MOOC platform. We will create a 10 week-long online course on the Rule of Law and this time we will not limit the admissions to people with law background. In fact, we are aiming





to have undergraduate students with all the background, and of which, at least 40 % of them coming from non-law backgrounds. It will be open to all interested parties. The participants will register to the academy and will pass on to the next phase only upon successful completion of the previous one. Necessary tests, quizzes and other measurements will be upheld in between phases to measure the progress of the participants. Participants, if successful at the end of 10th week, will receive a diploma from the academy. We will create an incentive system for the top performers such as awards, internships in Turkey & abroad, becoming a part of a greater network of alumni, access to nationwide platforms for their publications. We will host the participants in a weekend camp in Nevsehir and organize an essay competition for undergrad students. Our RoLA MOOC aims to have 100 alumni at the end of the project. One important side of the project is sustainability. Once we produced the 10-week module, it will be very easy to replicate in the coming years.

## **Creating Opportunities for Meaningful Expression in Turkey (Project COMET)**

The goal of the first part of this project is to build support for solutions-based approaches toward issues of media freedom in Turkey and to improve the ability of citizens to use their freedom of expression to advocate for issues of importance at a national level. The most recent Turkish election fortified President Erdogan's control over most government and non-government institutions, returning him to the newly empowered Presidency. Among the sectors most impacted is media. Government interference in media freedom takes blatant forms, such as the jailing of journalists and takeover of media companies, and more subtle forms, such as the direction of public and private advertising, the revenues of which determine whether news outlets survive or go bankrupt. Media freedom had been in decline for years, but the decline turned precipitous after the July 2016 coup attempt; since then, large-scale purges of people alleged to be involved in the coup have resulted in the closure of over 100 media outlets. The precipitous decline in media freedom is an action-forcing event. In Turkey's highly polarized political environment, FRA and IRI propose an approach bringing together media stakeholders to discuss issues related to media freedom and to develop policy solutions to the issues they identify. FRA and the IRI's Ankara field office maintains cooperation with all major parties, including AKP and MHP; IRI's in-country presence and multi-party cooperation places IRI in a unique position to effectively implement this effort. Despite Turkey's highly polarized political environment, Turkish people of all political persuasions share a deep distrust of media. In the 2018 Reuters Digital News Report, Turkey ranked among the bottom in the world for trust in media. Just over 40 percent of survey respondents said they trust the news sources that they themselves choose to use. This distrust interferes with citizens' realization of the freedom of expression. Poor quality and highly politicized media filter and distort Turks' everyday grievances through partisan lenses. The filtering and distortion complicate the efforts of citizens with common interests to work together to advance those interests. It also makes it difficult for constituents to express their interests to elected officials, a fundamental step in representative government. The impact of media distrust on the ability of citizens to use their freedom of expression meaningfully is an action-forcing event. In this con-

text, FRA and IRI proposes an approach that would involve citizens directly connecting with each other to express their needs and concerns directly to elected officials, circumventing some of the limits on freedom of expression.

For the second part of the project, Freedom Research Association (FRA) and IRI - Turkey Office will discuss the development of a website to better incorporate citizen feedback into parliamentary debates and discussions with sitting MPs and parliamentary staff. FRA and IRI will rely in part on its long-standing cooperation with leaders of AKP, CHP, HDP, İYİ, and MHP to ensure parliamentary buy-in. The website called Citizen Access will be used to facilitate citizen access to parliament and MPs. Citizen Access would include features allowing citizens to create petitions, questions, or requests about issues or policies of interest to them, ranging from relatively mundane issues of local service provision to debates over policies that affect the entire country. MP offices would be given access to data allowing them to better understand the scale of interest, level of passion about an issue from interested users, and correlate concerns on the basis of location and other relevant indicators.



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## SEMINARS

### Philosophy, Politics, & Economics (PPE) Academy

We were in Ağva/Istanbul for PPE (Philosophy Politics Economics) Academy on 9-12 September with the support of Friedrich Naumann Foundation - Turkey Office and Civil Society Development Center (STGM). We organized three-days long intensive camp with the participation of 16 young academics and 6 experts to talk about social science methodology, enlightenment political thought and public policy making process to raise our future public policy experts.



## FREEDOMTALKS@FRA

As FRA, we organize weekly based meetings in our office to talk about daily politics with liberal minded experts. Freedom Talks are our most regular events and they are great opportunities for our community to meet and discuss with experts in different kinds of political issues. FRA uses these events to create a liberal network and the sense of belonging in our liberal network. This event series has been gaining popularity in Ankara and our office has been turning a meeting point on every Friday for liberal minded people from all kinds of backgrounds. Here is the list of Freedom-Talks at FRA office:

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|   | <b>Yusuf Kanlı</b><br><b>Freedom of the Press and the Media in Turkey</b>   |   |
|  | <b>Prof. Tanju Tosun</b><br><b>Ebru Ağduk</b><br><b>2019 Local Election Results</b>   |   |
|   | <b>Prof. Bican Şahin</b><br><b>Towards the 23rd June:</b><br><b>Democracy and Freedom in Turkey</b>   |  |
|  | <b>Prof. Tanju Tosun</b><br><b>Dr. Şebnem Yardımcı-Geyikçi</b><br><b>Towards the 23rd June: Effects of the Election</b><br><b>and Party System on Turkish Democracy</b> |   |
|   | <b>Assoc. Prof. Berk Esen</b><br><b>The Reflection of Syria Operation on Turkish</b><br><b>Domestic and Foreign Policy</b>  |  |

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**Ömer Faruk Cantenar**  
The Results of the Syrian Civil War for Turkey



**Prof. Mete Yıldız**  
Public Policy and Technology



**Vedat Ahsen Coşar**  
The Rule of Law and  
Constitutional Democracy



**Soner Tufan**  
Freedom of Conscience in Turkey:  
Experience of the Protestants



**Tom G. Palmer**  
Populist Threat to Liberty in  
America and Beyond



**Prof. Mustafa Erdoğan**  
Justice and Law



## CONFERENCES



### A Liberal Response to Populist Challenge

The conference was organized by Freedom Research Association, Turkey and Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Turkey and sponsored by Atlas Network, USA; International Democratic Initiative, Netherlands; European Liberal Forum, Belgium; and Friedrich Naumann Foundation between the 14th and the 16th of June in Istanbul.

A group of liberal academics, think tank representatives and politicians came together in Istanbul to discuss about the nature of the populist threat and to develop a liberal communication strategy to counter it. The participants were from the following countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Sweden, Turkey and the USA. The first part of the workshop involved presentations of papers on different aspects of populist threat. In the second part, the participants discussed about designing the communication strategy to counter populism and came up with the white-paper.

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## Mass Surveillance Conf 2019

“Mass Surveillance Conference: The Rise of Digital Authoritarianism” was held in Ankara at HiltonSA on October 5 with the support of Friedrich Naumann Foundation – Turkey (FNF-Turkey), International Democratic Initiative (IDI).

At #MSConf2019, we talked and discussed the potential short and long-term effects of mass surveillance technologies on human rights, governance, government and society with academics, journalists, digital activists and technology followers from around the world.





## Turkey Economy And The New Economic Program

We organized a roundtable meeting in İstanbul, on the 1st of February with the support of Friedrich Naumann Foundation - Turkey (FNF-Turkey). The meeting was moderated by our board member Enes Özkan with the participation of Dr. Nesrin Nas. Turkish economic crisis and The New Economic Program were our topic in the conference. In this conference we have also launched our report entitled “Turkish Economy and the New Economic Program: Issues and Policy Alternatives”. In this report, you will find a comprehensive summary of the issues discussed in the meetings and a detailed analysis of the NEP.

## ‘Media and Trust’ Conferences in Kars and Antalya

Freedom Research Association (FRA) and IRI - Turkey Office will organize the People’s Voices Caravan to bring representatives of the working group to approximately 8 smaller communities around the country, where they would discuss their draft proposals with people outside of major metropolitan areas whose voices are often underrepresented. Two of our conferences were in Kars and Antalya. Caravan travelers focus on gathering input from these underrepresented populations. FRA and IRI would reach out to local journalists to ensure their attendance in particular. During Caravan stops, FRA and IRI conduct meetings for local journalists and the general public to promote freedom of speech in Turkey



## COLLOQUIUMS

### A Liberal Response to the Populist Challenge

Freedom Research Association has organized a colloquium called “Populism and Liberal Democracy” in İstanbul, Ağva Robin’s Nest Hotel between the 12th - 15th of September in cooperation with Network For Free Society to discuss populism with scrupulous attention to details. Thanks to our generous partners, twenty-five liberal-minded academics from the most prominent universities, civil society representatives and business people were invited to the colloquium. The final participation list were fifteen academics and eight of them had a nodding acquaintance with the FRA. Three civil society representatives, two business people and two political scientists who are familiar with FRA were also among the participants.

We mostly focused on what is to be done to fight this threat:

- First one is focusing on identifying and countering threats to liberal institutions. An independent judiciary, freedom of the press, the rule of law must be safeguarded.
- At the same time, political reforms are needed to restore the ability of liberal democratic institutions to act effectively.
- Gridlock frustrates ordinary citizens and makes them more open to leaders who are willing to break the rules in order to get things done.
- Take fears seriously, admit that e. g. the migration will change society. Acknowledge realities if we don’t, anger rises even more.
- Acknowledge where populists say the truth, then figure out how to respond to it.
- “Silent majorities” as the greatest long-term opportunity against populism have to be mobilized.
- One major reason for populism is ignorance, so educate as many people as possible.
- Liberal can adopt diverse views on issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage, local traditions, and religion while remaining true to their political creed.

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After an intense two days, we were glad that despite everything that happened in Turkey, our democracy can be saved and restored again. We know how to navigate in these hard times against the current. This colloquium was a reminder for Freedom Research Association and the participants that liberal ideas are still alive and functional. We just have to expand our work to include more topics which are directly related to people's daily life. Also, we have to reach more people to present them to liberal ideas and to tell them there is no need to be afraid.







# 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. *Organized Interest Politics in Turkey: Labour Unions, and Civil Society* Yunus Furkan Arıcan

In this essay, we will discuss the interest politics in relationship between the civil society and the state aspect of labour unions. Firstly, we define the role of labour unions as a free market actors and civil society members in policy processes. We then emphasize that the relationships of the labour unions with the state has been turned into privileged and unequal interest politics in the era of the AKP governments. Finally, it is argued that these interest politics make civil society more vulnerable against the government interventions.



## 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 two analyses.

### 1. *Turkish Economy and the New Economic Program*

After the government announced the New Economic Program, FRA's Economic Freedom Center organized two PolicyTalks in Istanbul and Ankara. PolicyTalks is one of our major initiatives, where we bring together a diverse stakeholder profile to discuss a given policy issue. We organized two PolicyTalks on November 3rd and 24th to discuss the measures to be taken vis-a-vis the severe economic crisis Turkey is facing today and the trade-offs/merits and shortcomings of the NEP. The report contains a

summary of the views shared in the meetings. It is our

sincere hope that this study (and those alike) would

contribute to a more sensible public debate and

policy-making process. We would like to thank,

in particular, Mr. Murat Çokgezen and Mr.

Murat Öztürk for their invaluable support

and contributions during the prepara-

tion of this report as well as our

long-term partners Friedrich

Naumann Foundation (FNF)

and the International Republi-

can Institute (IRI) for their cooperation.





## 2. Freedom of Assembly and Freedom of Association: LGBT Ban in Ankara

### İsrafil Özkan

This study focused on the importance of freedom of assembly and freedom of association for LGBT rights movement as well as all other groups. The study makes a detailed legal and political analysis for the LGBT ban in Ankara which was effective until the beginning of April. The study confirms the legal violation of the freedom of assembly and the freedom of association of LGBT people lives in Ankara. Then calls local authorities to take actions to protect the rights of all.



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### **3. An Alternative Way to Fund the Education System in Turkey**

**Israfil Ozkan**

In this study the aim is to develop a funding proposal that will encompass the following: Develop a modern and scientific curriculum that considers regional demands and participation of partners from Turkey; aim to increase individual liberties and rights; increase quality and competitiveness which will reduce inequalities that result from economic conditions.



## LIBERAL PERSPECTIVE: REPORT

Our reports are generally prepared after a long research process on a public policy issue and include extensive reform proposals to the government in that particular area.

Last year we published two reports.

### 1. *Local Elections in Turkey and Istanbul from the 31st March to the 23rd June* **Prof. Tanju Tosun & Prof. Gülgün Erdoğan Tosun**

This report was aimed to analyse the results of the 31st March and the 23rd June local elections and also evaluate them in various aspects. In the first part of the study includes the local election legislation and the last results of local Election and election alliances are evaluated on Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir examples.

“The 31st March Elections is the 14th local election of Turkey. Things that happened before, during and after the election make the 31st March unique and make its effects nationwide. Pre-electoral period has witnessed sharp political polarization and this was made a sensation how will be the results of the election. After the 31st March election, according to The Supreme Electoral Council (YSK)’s decision, the mayoral elections in İstanbul have been cancelled and renewed. This decision make the election process more problematic than ever.”



## 2. A Liberal Response to the Populist Challenge

Bican Şahin & Radu-Nicola Delicote

There have been various explanations as to why the populism arose. Some placed the blame on the economic consequences of globalization. According to this line of argument, with the coming of economic globalization, in order to find cheap labor and raw materials the western capital left the developed World for the developing World. This, in its turn, has caused unemployment in the former. Those who are unemployed feel that they are losing economically. They became discontented with the liberal democratic system. Secondly, the new waves of migration brought about by the globalization introduced new cultural differences in the western societies. Coming across with the culturally different made the less cosmopolitan segments of society fearful. They felt culturally insecure and alienated. As a result of this economic and cultural insecurity, some of the population was attracted to the propaganda of populist parties and leaders who promise to ban immigrants and bring the capital back. It is imperative for liberals to respond to this new threat. With its emphasis on the unlimited democracy and intolerant discourse, the populist movement is undermining individual liberty throughout the World. Thus, in the summer of 2019, a group of liberal academics, think tank representatives and politicians came together in Istanbul to discuss about the nature of the

populist threat and to develop a liberal communication

strategy to counter it. The participants were from the

following countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia,

Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Po-

land, Romania, Serbia, Sweden, Turkey and

the USA. The first part of the workshop

involved presentations of papers on dif-

ferent aspects of populist threat. In

the second part, the participants

discussed about designing the

communication strategy to

counter populism and came up with

the white-paper presented here.



## VIDEOS

### *From Past to Present: Free Market in Turkey*

Our “From Past to Present: Free Market in Turkey” named Youtube video prepared with the support of Friedrich Naumann Foundation - Turkey Office (FNF - Turkey) and 140Journos. The video included interviews with well-known economists who are Atilla Yeşilada, Can Selçuki, Nesrin Nas, Seyfettin Gürsel and Ercan Uysal on free market and structural reforms and Turkey’s free market history. The video was aimed to explain structural reforms and guide to decision makers about public policy. The video has reached 1 Million clicks on 12.11.2019

This video and its success has encouraged us to start our “Structural Reforms in Turkey” named two-year lasting project. We will continue to work on structural reforms and try to become a guide for Turkey’s near future.



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## ***Indigenous and National Market Economy***

**Prof. Erdal Türkkan**

We made an interview with our executive board member Prof. Erdal Türkkan about government's direct sale points on food stuff.





## ***Freedom of Assembly and Freedom of Association: LGBT Ban in Ankara***

### **İsrafil Özkan**

This is the interview with our Project Coordinator İsrafil Ozkan about his analysis entitled “Freedom of Assembly and Freedom of Association: LGBT Ban in Ankara”.



## ***Freedom of Speech Video Series***

### **Atty. Orhan Kemal Cengiz**

We produced a video series called “Freedom of Speech with Atty. Orhan Kemal Cengiz” on our Youtube channel with the support of Friedrich Naumann Foundation - Turkey Office (FNF-Turkey) and Atty. Orhan Kemal Cengiz. In this series, which included scope of freedom of speech in Turkey, Mr. Cengiz talked about Turkey’s current legal cases of freedom of speech.

### ***How to Solve the Problems of Freedom of Speech in Turkey?***



### ***Why “Freedom of Hate Speech” is so wide in Turkey?***



*Insult to The State and The Nation (Is That So?)*



*Insult to The President (Is That So?)*



*How to Make Terror Propaganda?*



### ***Analysis of Local Election***

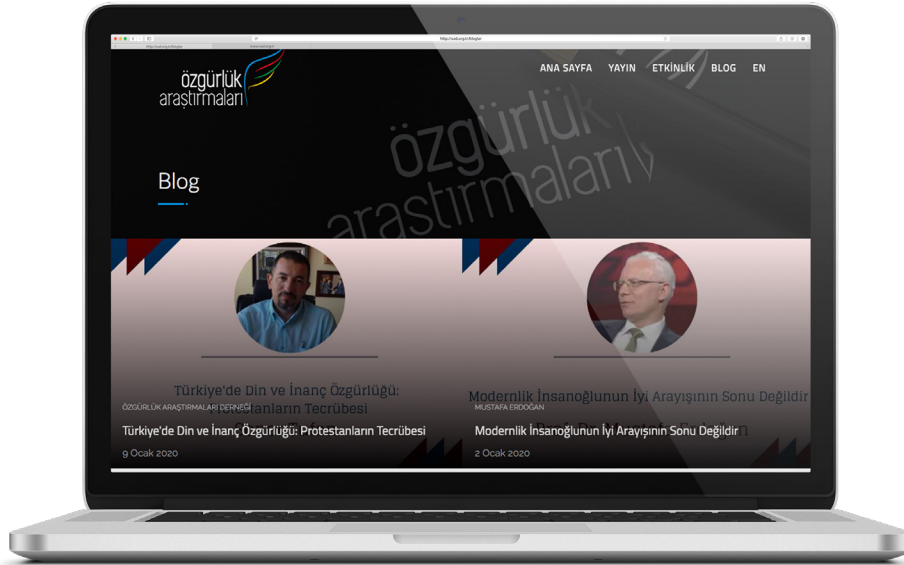
#### **Prof. Tanju Tosun**

FRA hosted Prof. Tanju Tosun in the Holiday Inn Hotel at the 5th of April with the support of Friedrich Naumann Foundation – Turkey Office (FNF - Turkey). At the meeting, which has a broad participation, Tosun evaluated the results of the 31st mayoral election and new alliance system.



## BLOG

We posted opinions of Turkey's prominent academics and experts about hot political issues on our blog all year round and shared them via social media.





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## INTERVIEWS

In addition to our projects and activities, we continued to be a close follower of the issues that concern the freedom in Turkey.

We interviewed with our president Prof. Bican Şahin, our National Advisory Board member Prof. Vahap Coşkun and Atty. Orhan Kemal Cengiz about elected Kurdish mayors removed in the southeast of Turkey.

*“Today, the target is the Kurds, but every municipality that opposition parties took may suffer the wrath of the government tomorrow”.*

**Prof. Vahap Coşkun**



*“Depriving of the right to vote of Kurdish citizens may cause separatist demands through non-political means.”*

**Prof. Bican Şahin**



*“Basic principles of rule of law has been reversed in Turkey. Exceptional conditions are now the new usual state of Turkey.”*

**Atty. Orhan Kemal Cengiz**





As Freedom Research Association, we conducted interviews with prominent legists who are Prof. Sami Selçuk, Prof. Mustafa Erdoğan, Prof. Ergun Özbudun and and economist Dr. Nesrin Nas about the renewed local elections in Turkey



*"It is not surprising that the 31st of March elections has been cancelled. AKP has diverged from fair and competitive election principles since the 2014 presidential elections."*

**Prof. Mustafa Erdoğan**

*"Supreme Electoral Council has lost its neutrality with the last annulment decision. I wish the people could say 'there are judges in Ankara' but they couldn't."*

**Honorary President of Turkey Court of Cassation  
Prof. Sami Selçuk**



*"Turkey has deviated from free fair and democratic election principles a long time ago but with the latest decision, Supreme Election Council (YSK) has dissolved itself."*

**Dr. Nesrin Nas**

*"In countries where the judicial independence has been abolished, the decision like this one is not surprising at all. I therefore find it pointless and useless to engage in a detailed legal analysis of the decision."*

**Prof. Ergun Özbudun**



A large stack of newspapers is shown, with a prominent yellow rectangular overlay covering the center. The newspapers are stacked horizontally, and some headlines are visible on the edges, such as "Bad drivers in", "Down will be the uniform of choice for", and "Payroll offshore to". The yellow overlay is a solid, bright yellow color, and the text "MEDIA COVERAGES" is centered within it in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

# **MEDIA COVERAGES**

Kılıç's speech in our 5th anniversary reception drawn wide attention by the media.

Haşim Kılıç, the former head of the Turkey Constitutional Court, said dissenting opinions in Turkey had been dealt with by impairing freedom of expression.



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**FRIENDS OF FRA**





## European Liberal Forum (ELF)

The application process which began in 2017 has come to an end, and our membership application has been approved in 2019! Now, we are a member of the largest umbrella organization of liberal organizations in Europe, European Liberal Forum.

In the following years we able to apply for project funding to ELF and to increase our cooperation with ELF and other European partners.



Freedom Research Association is now 5 year-old!

Our 5th Anniversary Reception hosted renowned scholars, journalists, business people and friends of FRA. Our keynote speaker was the former head of the Constitutional Court of Turkey Haşim Kılıç.

FRA's anniversary receptions are now our flagship event series to celebrate our birthday with the friends of liberty.





# **FRA TEAM ABROAD**

**F**

## FRA TEAM ABROAD

As part of an international network of more than 500 classical liberal think tanks all around the world, FRA has a global perspective and sense of cooperation with its peer organizations. One of the key targets is to become a competent research institute with considerable human and physical capital. For that reason, FRA team attends numerous events all around the globe, as participants, speakers or contributors, to increase the Association's capacity. Here's a quick snapshot:

### Europe Liberty Forum 2019

Our team were in Athens for "European Liberty Forum 2019" between 9th-10th May 2019. Prof. Bican Şahin gave a presentation titled "A Liberal Response to The Populist Challenge" in Europe Liberty Forum 2019.





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### **Liberty Forum and Freedom Dinner 2019**

Our president Prof. Bican Şahin and our team members Medeni Sungur and İsrail Özkan were in New York between the 6th and the 8th November for Liberty Forum and Freedom Dinner 2019 organized by our biggest partner Atlas Network.





### Leader Lab 2019

Our Project Coordinator İsrail Özkan were in Philadelphia/USA between the 1st and the 5th of November to participate for Leader Lab which is developed and detailed version of Think Tank MBA Programme organized by Atlas Network.

İsrail Özkan and his team prepared a project about the current democracy crises of Hong Kong to stand with the Hong Kongese against the ROC, and their project was selected the best project of the Leader Lab 2019.



### **Global Influencers Submit 2019**

Atlas Network hosted senior level managers of 30 NGO's from different countries on the Global Influencers Submit programme which is organized for the first time. Our Executive Director Medeni Sungur represented FRA in the Submit between the 1st and the 3rd of November in Pennsylvania/ USA. With a busy schedule, the three-day event began with a session led by Sarah Gibson (founder of Accent Learning and Consulting and author of Geezer. Punk. Whatever.), who explored generational gaps and their implications for the workplace. The group identified both differences and similarities among generations while discussing best practices to navigate them. In total, the group participated in eight workshops, six of which were peer-to-peer sessions. Some of the topics of discussion were empowering leadership and entrepreneurship, improving employee performance, and building cohesive teams.



### How to Administer an ELF Project

European Liberal Forum (ELF) organized “How to Administer an ELF Project?” titled training programme for their members. To represent us, our Project Coordinator İsrail Özkan were in Warsaw/ Poland between the 6th and the 10th February. As a new full member to ELF, it is now crucial for our team to know how to run an ELF project properly.

# PARTNERS





# ANNUAL REPORT 2019



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