

Annual Report



2020



FRIEDRICH NAUMANN
FOUNDATION For Freedom.
Türkiye



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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In collaboration with Friedrich Naumann Foundation

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FOREWORD

2020 was a year for Turkey that we have been faced with restrictions on civil, political and economic rights of freedom. Unlike previous years, we also witnessed the restriction of freedoms beyond reasonable rates in liberal democracies settled in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. In countries like ours where a liberal democracy has not yet settled, the pandemic has been used as a justification for further restriction of freedoms.

First of all, in the political freedoms, we experienced a downfall with the appointment of trustees to 52 of the 65 municipalities won by the Peoples' Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi – HDP), which achieved success especially in the Eastern and Southeastern provinces in the local elections on March 31, 2019. The restriction of political freedom was not only enforced in local government but also happened in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (Parliament) in 2020. Enis Berberoğlu who is the Istanbul deputy of the main opposition Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi - CHP), the HDP's Diyarbakır Deputy Musa Fari-soğulları and Hakkari Deputy Leyla Güven were dropped from parliament due to the court decisions.

Osman Kavala, who had to be released in 2019 as a result of the decision of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), was acquitted in February 2020, but was not released after a new arrest warrant was issued on the charge of espionage. Despite the Committee of Ministers' decision that the new detention was based on the charges examined by the ECHR and therefore should be released, Kavala is still under arrest. A new decision given for Demirtaş, who is charged in 2016 due to being

a member of a terrorist organization, should be released immediately by the ECHR's Grand Chamber in December 2020, however President Erdogan and his ruling partner Devlet Bahçeli expressed that "they will not recognize the decision given by ECHR". Thus, Turkey ignored once again international law.

There were also major problems in the government's management of the COVID-19 pandemic process. In this process, which transparency and audibility were not possible, there were great coordination problems among cabinet members, and suspicions arose that the officially announced COVID-19 data were manipulated by the government. The doctors, journalists or citizens who expressed these doubts through the press or social media were arrested for generating "false perception".

President Erdoğan has launched a national solidarity campaign to mitigate the financial consequences of the pandemic with the slogan of "We are self-sufficient, Turkey!" A similar campaign was initiated by CHP municipalities. Especially the campaigns of Ekrem İmamoğlu and Mansur Yavaş attracted great interest from both social media and local people. The campaigns of the municipalities by the Ministry of Internal Affairs were found unlawful on the basis of the Aid Collection Law No. 2869, and the accounts were blocked by the ministry. Whereas many lawyers drew attention to the fact that the donation authority of the municipalities is regulated by the municipal law numbered 5393 and 5216 and within this framework, the campaigns of the metropolitan municipalities of Istanbul and Ankara are legal. Behind this intervention of the government, there has been a perception that these campaigns by the municipalities have received more attention than the campaign made by the government.

In 2020, the law proposal for "multiple bar association" passed into law by the AKP and MHP. According to this law, with the signatures of 2000 lawyers in the provinces where there are more than 5000 lawyers, the way has been opened for the establishment of new bar associations. On the one hand, it should be admitted that this law potentially promotes freedom of association and pluralism. On the other hand, considering the dominance of the government over many institutions such as the YSK, HSK and the Constitutional Court since the 2011 elections, this law is likely to result in the split and neutralization of bar associations, which are an effective source of democratic opposition. In addition, the court can take

a stand by looking at the bar association of which lawyers are members during a trial in our country, where the guarantee of the judge has suffered greatly. This will deal a blow to the citizens' right to a fair trial.

As last year, Turkey could not protect the right to life of individuals especially women and LGBT + at 2020. While Pınar Gültekin is brutally murdered and her case has been continuing, 300 women were killed in 2020. While women are victims of femicide, Numan Kurtulmuş (Deputy Chairman of AKP) brought forward withdrawing the Istanbul Convention on the agenda. In addition to these, the judges' application of good conduct discounts to killers and cases like exactly in the Aleyna Çakır; the killer Ümitcan Uygun could not charge by the judge for a long time. Thus, these cases undermined confidence in the rule of law in Turkey. Again, in a sermon which President of Religious Affairs Ali Erbaş spoke about COVID-19, he targeted homosexual individuals by hate speech violation.

Freedom of the press faced major restrictions in 2020. 37 journalists were imprisoned on various charges in 2020. The Radio and Television Supreme Council also imposed various censorship and blackouts this year on platforms such as Netflix, and especially on opposition television channels. In addition, with the law enacted in July, which includes various sanctions on social platforms, the government will now be able to request the removal of inappropriate content on social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook within 48 hours, and if the platforms do not recognize the decision, it will be subject to sanctions.

2020 was an extremely busy year for the FRA. Due to the pandemic, we moved all our work to online platforms. With the live broadcasts we prepared on YouTube, we reached more than 500,000 views. With the support of the National Endowment for Democracy, we started "The Structural Reforms in Turkey Project" to identify and concretize problems in the *Legislation, Judiciary, Public Procurement Regime, Public Personnel Regime and Media Independence*, which are the main political structures in Turkey. In this context, we have prepared reports that can be a road map to structural reforms in these areas. We started to prepare bulletins on the rule of law, civil and economic liberties by monitoring the effects of the government responses in the pandemic with the support of Friedrich Naumann Foundation Turkey Office and Freedom House. We published "The Freedom of Press in Turkey: 2019-2020 Report" which analyses de-

pendency created through public advertisements in the media and pressure on opposition media.

As the year 2020 ended, the whole world began to wait impatiently for COVID-19 vaccines. As Freedom Research Association, we hope that the 2021 year will first bring the vaccine to our country and the whole world and to achieve herd immunity as soon as possible. While we bow with respect before the memory of all healthcare professionals who lost their lives in the fight against the pandemic, we wish for the world a free and prosperous 2021, in which the world will recover again, economic damages have begun to be compensated, and all freedom-restrictive government measures taken on the grounds of public health will be lifted.

Sincerely

Freedom Research Association

2020 IN A NUTSHELL



5 Commentaries



3 Analyses



5 Reports



3 Books



50 Blog Posts



16 Media Coverages







VISION AND MISSION

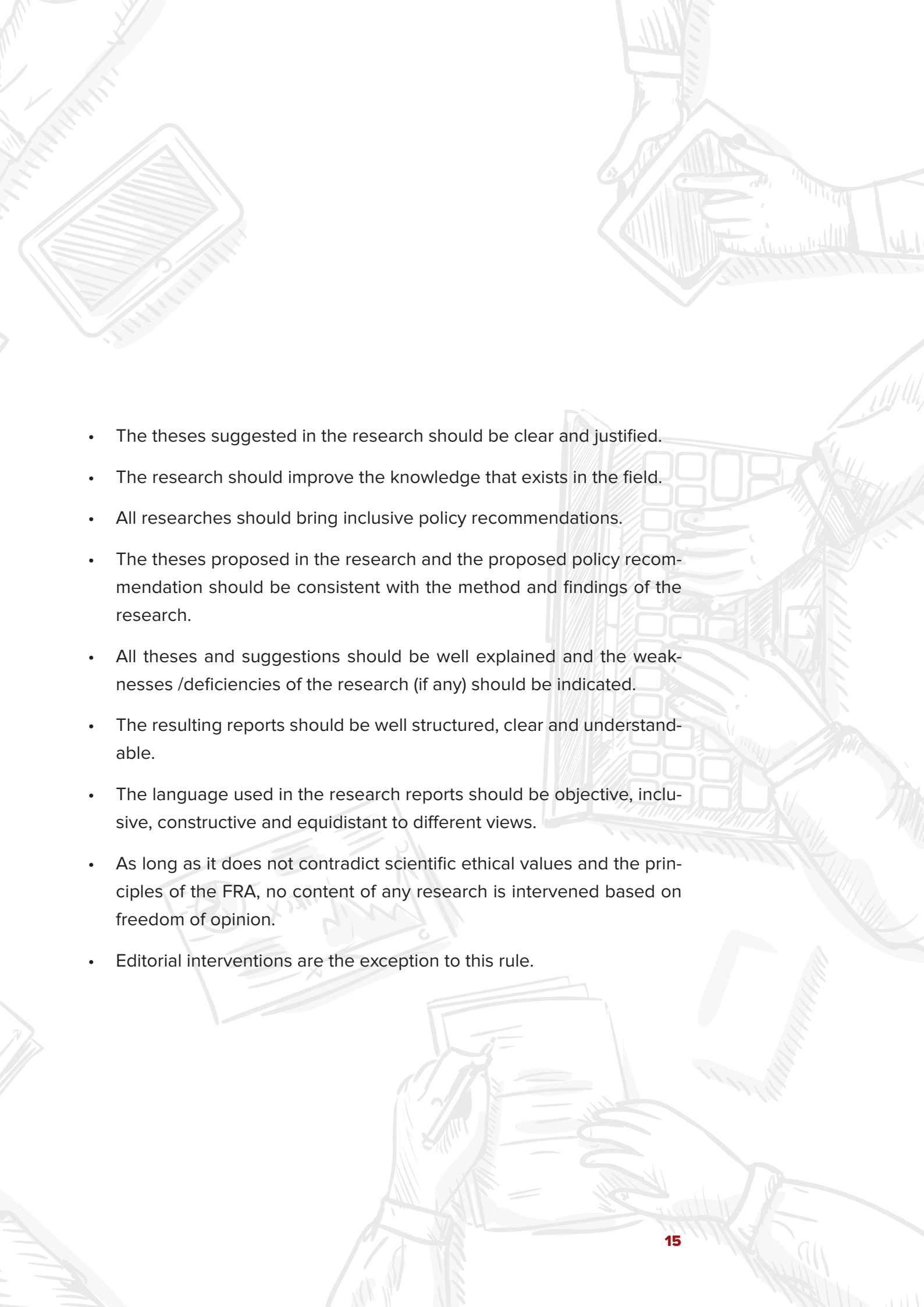
Freedom Research Association (FRA) was founded in August 2014 by a group of academics, business people, journalists and legal experts to conduct public policy research with a liberal and scientific approach. FRA envisions a free and prosperous Turkey. The mission of FRA is to promote evidence-based policy 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



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



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A red-tinted photograph of a conference room. In the background, two men in suits are seated at a long table with microphones and water bottles. In the foreground, a laptop is open on a table, displaying a website. The word "EVENTS" is centered in white text over the laptop screen.

EVENTS

PROJECTS

Structural Reforms in Turkey

To strengthen the rule of law and good governance in Turkey, Freedom Research Association (FRA) has been advocating for structural reforms in five major institutions and sectors including the legislature, judiciary, public procurement system, public personnel system, and independent media. FRA identifies and analyzes needed structural reforms in these five key areas that are critical to advancing the rule of law and accountability in Turkey and creates 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 held a series of workshops and public events, published reports and a white paper, conducted social and mainstream media advocacy activities. In the next, FRA will engage representatives of political parties, civil society and parliament. As a final step, 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.



Freedom of The Press in Turkey 2019-2020

Indexes that measure scores of democratization in countries all agree that Turkey has become authoritarian in recent years. The dramatic decline regarding freedom and a rapid shift towards authoritarianism has also deeply affected the freedom of the press in Turkey. At this point, the situation is not very promising.

Freedom Research Association has been monitoring the state of the freedom of press since 2014. In this project, FRA conducted a report titled 'The Freedom of Press in Turkey: 2019-2020 Report', a video and a conference to promote our findings with the support of D66 International.

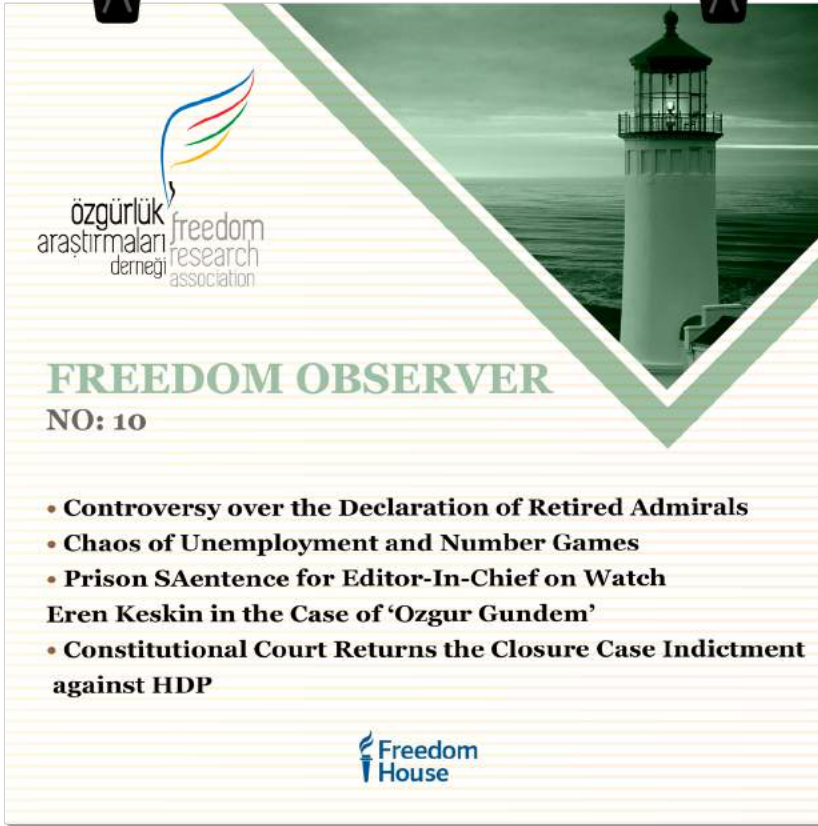


The Online Rule of Law Academy

Another exciting project that we initiated during the last few months of 2020 is a project that hosts well-known legal experts and focuses on the rule of law. The main purpose of the “The Online Rule of Law Academy” is to strengthen the fundamentals of the rule of law in Turkey by educating young lawyers and senior year law students. The Online Rule of Law Academy consists of four sessions where the notion of rule of law by Prof. Serap Yazıcı, assurances of just trial by Attny. Orhan Kemal Cengiz, ban on discrimination by Attny. Z. Beydağ Tıraş Öneri and the right to security and freedom by Assoc. Prof. Günel Kurşun are presented.

The project had 9 seminars, 1830 applications and 364 alumni in 5 months. Our special thanks go to our instructors, project team and our partner in this project, Canada Fund for Local Initiative - Canadian Embassy to Turkey.





Monitoring The Rule of Law and Democracy in Turkey

The project is organized to monitor and report the rule of law and the fundamental human rights violations in Turkey with the support of Freedom House. To report the latest development from Turkey, biweekly bulletins have been prepared in both Turkish and English languages. The biggest objective of the project is to inform policy makers and international observers about the current activities of the government policies, regulations and the Covid-19 responses in Turkey.

The project started in October 2020 and will continue in 2021. The bulletins can be reached from our website and social media accounts or can subscribe to our newsletter.



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEANINGFUL EXPRESSION IN TURKEY (PROJECT COMET)



Creating Opportunities for Meaningful Expression in Turkey

COMET: Creating Opportunities for Meaningful Expression in Turkey Project was conducted with the support of the International Republican Institute. The COMET began in 2019 with the aim to improve the access to the parliament and the freedom of expression in Turkey and finished in May 2020.

The project consists of two simultaneous sections. The first one aims to strengthen the ties between members of the parliament and the citizens by informing them of the public discussions of Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA), which lost its influence after the transition to the presidential system; and to revitalize the checks and balances mechanisms. In this context, we created a platform that enables citizens to communicate with MPs, start campaigns and be informed of the agenda of the parliament: “meclisteyiz.com” We’ve launched this platform to the use of the citizens and MPs.

In the other section, it is aimed to reveal the structural obstacles blocking journalists, and to do their jobs freely and independently. findings were collected as a result of the field work that continued from October 2019 to

February 2020; we gathered with 182 journalists and directors in Ankara, İstanbul, Kars, Eskişehir, Antalya, Aydın, Samsun, Kocaeli, Hatay and Diyarbakır; and within the context of “Media Caravan” interviews, four group meetings in İstanbul and Ankara separately were conducted with over 300 citizens to understand the trust relationship they establish with the media in Turkey. In the light of the findings, a report named “Policy Suggestions to Improve Freedom of Media and Expression in Turkey” was presented.



“meclisteyiz.com”

Here is “meclisteyiz.com”, which is one of the branches of the COMET project and was created to inform the public about TGNA’s latest discussions, and strengthen the bridges and communication tools between MPs and the citizens!

The platform consists of three sections. In the first section, you can reach any MP that you want to communicate with according to the relevant title, their city, party and/or gender by using the “Reach the MP” button and write a message in detail to the MPs regarding the topic you want to discuss. Also, you can choose in which way you want your requested topic to be brought forward or request an appointment.

In the other section called “Start a Campaign”, you can choose the campaign responders and MPs and write your target number of signatures; after you give detailed information about the related topic. After you reach the target number of signatures, your campaign will be brought to the related authorities.

The third and the last section was designed for you to follow “Parliament Agenda”. You can find every detail about the parliament’s agenda from this related section.

The related works were prepared with great care and are according to KVKK laws of Turkey.



Turkish Public Alcohol Policy Watch Platform

Alcohol drinking is undoubtedly one of the essential outcomes of civil liberties. Since the early years of history, consuming alcoholic beverages has been considered a way to relax or entertain in many civilizations. Regardless, in our modern-day, not all governments are approaching this normal as they should. Turkey is one of the most significant countries that practice alcohol related regulations via legislation and challenges the common usage of alcoholic beverages, therefore its citizens' civil liberties. Founded in January 2020, the Turkish Public Alcohol Policy Watch initially concerns about those regulations' legitimacy to inform the public opinion about the possible unlawful government interventions directed to civil liberties.

Turkey is worldwide notorious for its irrationally high alcohol taxes. Because of the harmless nature of individual consumption of alcoholic beverages, those tax regulations inevitably create black markets. FRA's project, Turkish Public Alcohol Policy Watch is the only non-governmental initiative that daily watch-



es all the outcomes of the black market of illegal alcohols. Since the day of its foundation, it has reported countless operations directed at unlawful traders and capture of illicit alcoholic beverages and pure alcohols, intending to publish those reports in the period of three months. Concurrently, the Turkish Public Alcohol Policy Watch daily publishes those operations' highlights via its social media accounts with the intent of creating public awareness. You can follow our social media accounts to be informed about us:

Twitter: @alkolpolitika

Youtube - Facebook: Devletin Alkol Politikalarını İzleme Platformu

Instagram: @alkolpolitika



CONFERENCE

Freedom of the Press in Turkey 2019-2020

Turkey has performed increasingly poor in indexes focusing on freedom of the press and drifted to authoritarianism in recent years. Domestically, all critical groups complain about the government's pressure on the media more than ever before. In this context, Freedom Research Association has been monitoring the state of the freedom of press since 2014. Our latest report titled 'The Freedom of Press in Turkey: 2019-2020 Report' has been prepared by Assoc. Prof. Burak Bilgehan Özpek with the support of International Democratic Initiative (IDI) and Friedrich Naumann Foundation Turkey Office (FNFTurkey). To launch the latest freedom of press report and to analyze the current state of the freedom of press in Turkey, Freedom Research Association conducted an online conference on ZOOM on the 3rd of October 2020. The conference was moderated by Burak Bilgehan Özpek and the speakers were Nevşin Mengü, Beril Eski and Aydın Gündüz who are well known journalists and academicians in Turkey.

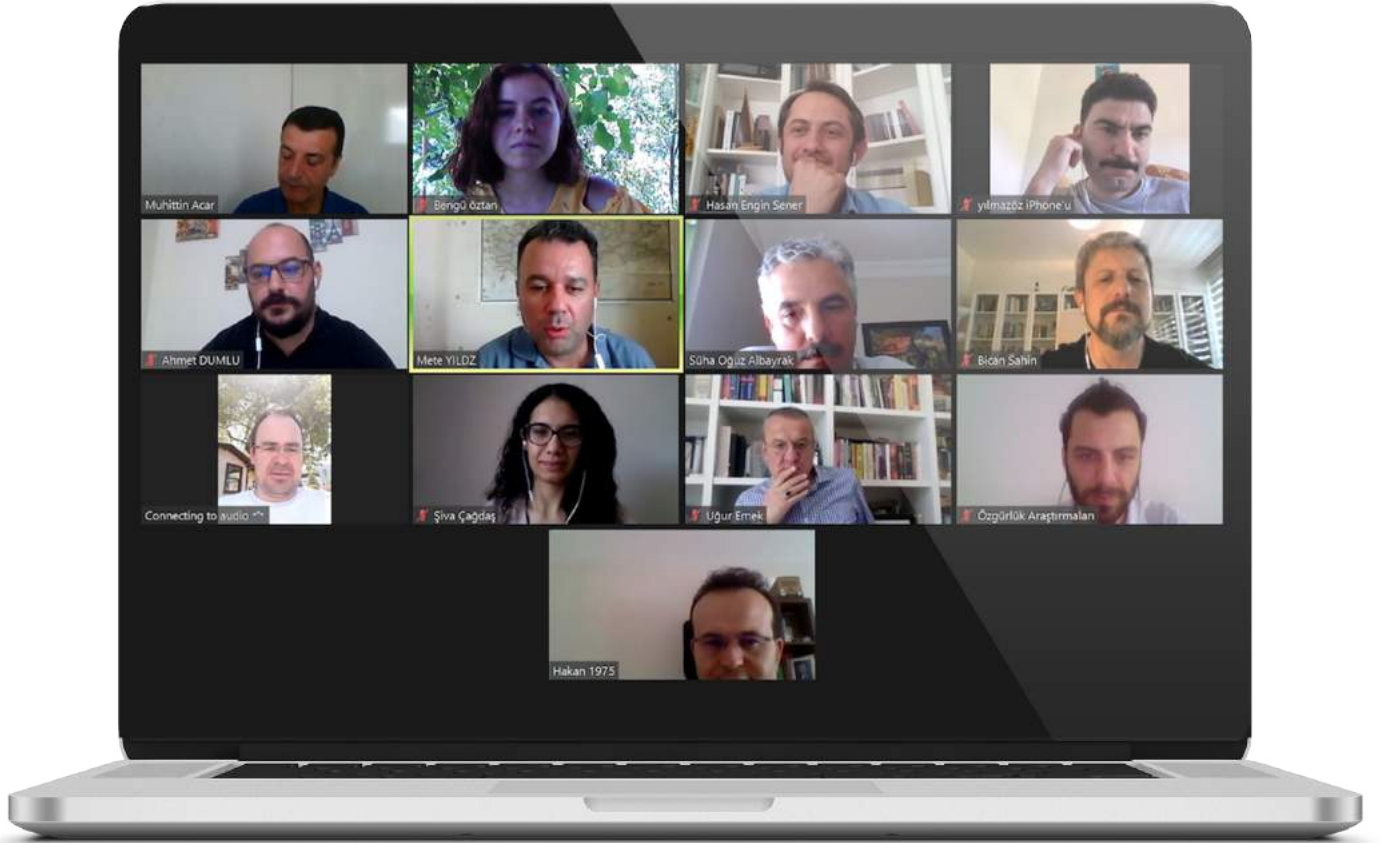
WORKSHOPS

In the past year, we organized 5 workshops for the Structural Reforms in Turkey Project. While one of these workshops were conducted face-to-face, the rest had to be conducted online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In our workshops, we aimed to analyze and provide solutions to the on-going problems of the legislation, judiciary, public bidding regime, public personnel regime and the media freedom in Turkey. In total, we hosted 70 experts in these 5 workshops and prepared 5 publicly brief and 5 videos to promote the findings.

Workshop on Public Procurement Regime

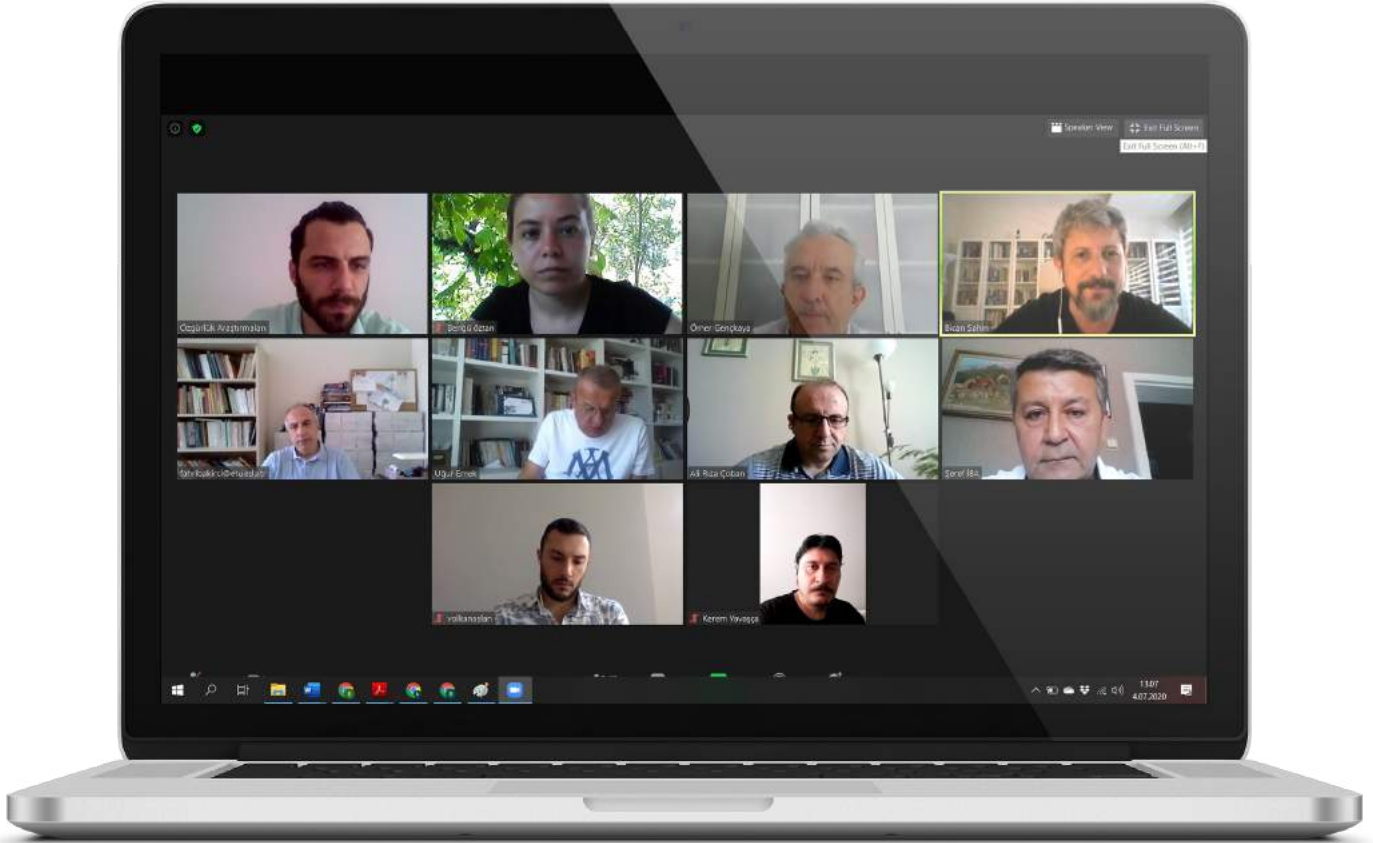
The workshop was organized on February 1, 2020 in order to discuss the deficiencies, inadequacies and mistakes in implementation of the Public Procurement Law. With the participation of precious academicians, economists, bureaucrats and lawyers, general, specific and technical were offered solution recommendations regarding the law and the relevant institution.





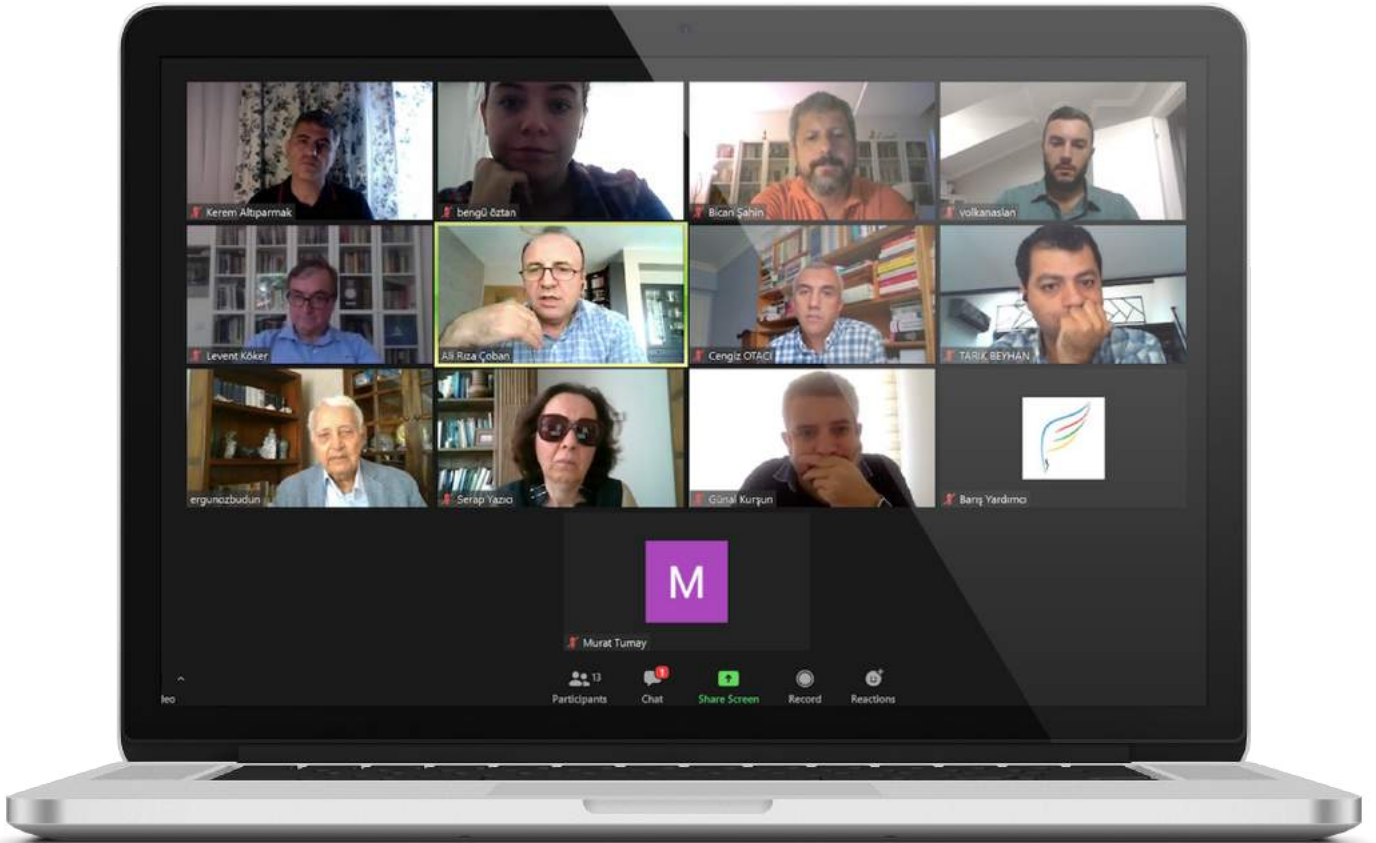
Workshop on Public Personnel Regime

The workshop titled “The Need for Structural Reform in the Public Personnel Regime” was organized online on June 27, 2020 with the participation of valuable bureaucrats and academicians. The strengths and weaknesses of the Public Personnel Regime, the opportunities and risks it presents, and the reform proposals in this area were discussed.



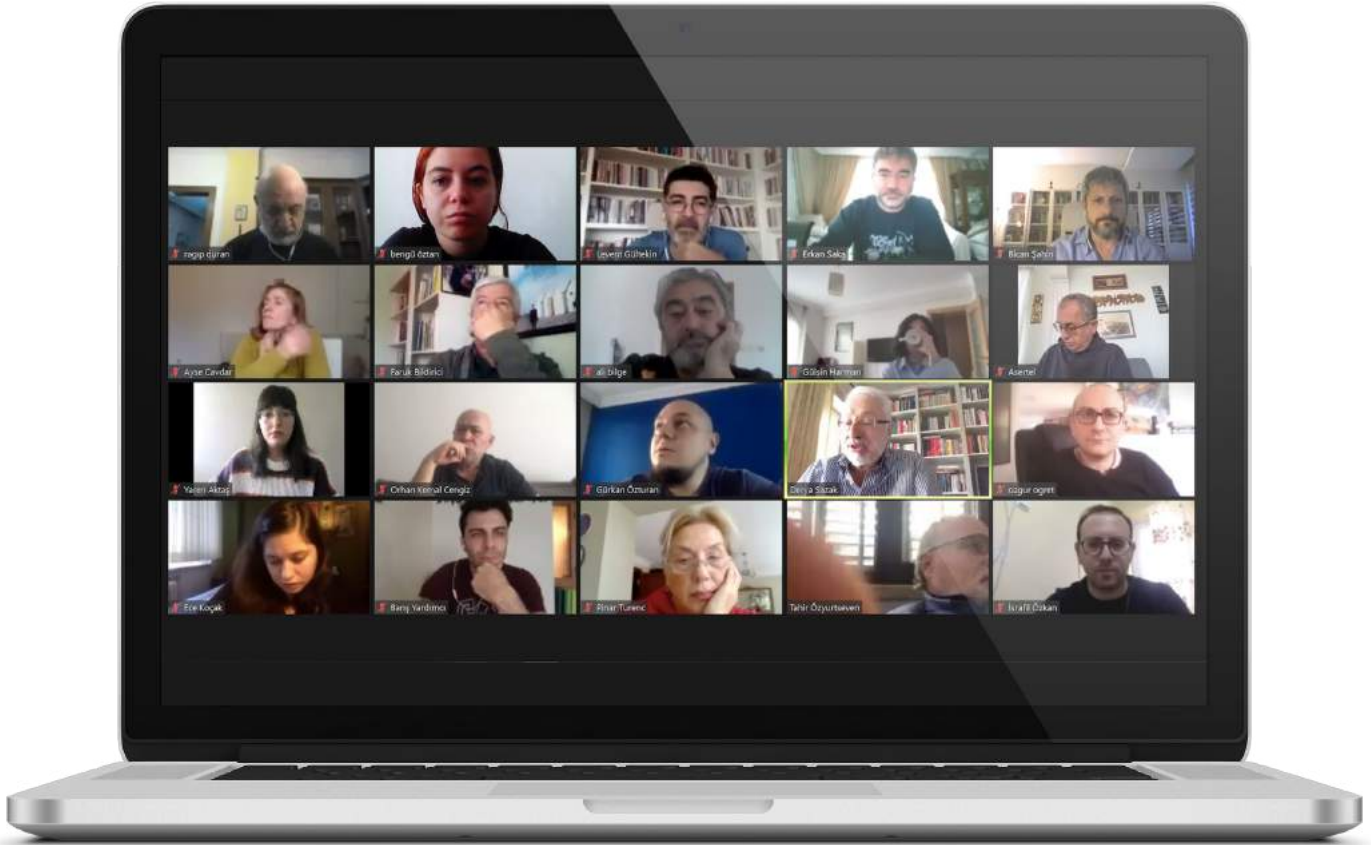
Workshop on The Need for Structural Reform in Legislative Effectiveness

The workshop called “The Need for Structural Reform in Legislative Effectiveness” was organized on July 04, 2020 to discuss ways to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the Parliament. Our online workshop was conducted with the participation of respectable academics, bureaucrats and legislative experts.



Workshop on The Need for Structural Reform in the Judiciary

The workshop titled “The Need for Structural Reform in Judiciary” was conducted online on October 17, 2020 with the participation of academics and lawyers who are doyen in the field of law. In this workshop, reform suggestions to increase the efficiency, impartiality, independence and accountability of the judiciary were discussed.



Workshop on The Need for Structural Reform in the Press

“The Need for Structural Reform in the Press” workshop was organized on December 05 2020, with the participation of doyen and precious journalists, parliamentarians, civil society workers and academicians. The workshop dealt with the independence of media ownership and the current situation in Turkey; Solution suggestions for the independence of the media were discussed.

FREEDOM TALKS

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we moved our once face-to-face weekly discussions to the online in 2020. We presented 3 livestream programs with different concepts and invited experts in 80 livestreams and 84 podcasts to have a discussion on the political agenda as well as life-long policy problems of Turkey. In 2020, The FreedomTalks viewed more than 80.000 times and they will continue to broadcast in 2021 and can be reached from our Twitter, Facebook and Youtube accounts.

Online Freedom Talks

The Online FreedomTalks host experts from different fields every week to evaluate the government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and the latest developments concerning the rule of law and democracy in Turkey from a liberal perspective. The Online FreedomTalks has two sessions: A 30 minutes long presentation, followed by a Q&A session.





The Quarantine

The purpose of the “The Quarantine” is to analyze the government responses to the COVID 19 pandemic from a liberal perspective. In this context, the moderator conducted the livestreams by only asking questions to the guest expert in 30 minutes after monitoring the political agenda for a week.



The Portrait

The purpose of the Portrait is to present and promote the vision, mission and projects of the FRA and broaden the audience.

The presentation about the projects and publications followed by a Q&A session.

PUBLICATIONS

LIBERAL PERSPECTIVE: COMMENTARY

Commentaries are short articles reflecting a liberal perspective written by our experts, on a public policy related topic, 4-6 pages long.

Last year we published five commentaries.

1. *Evaluation of the Government Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic from an Ethical Perspective* **Ercan Avci**

The coronavirus pandemic that started in China in December 2019 and became a pandemic in March 2020. All countries took various medical, economic and social precautions and these precautions were obligatory for countries.

The precautions like being in voluntary or obligatory quarantine, isolation, curfew, limited social life and temporary closure of workplaces created serious results directly affecting individual, social and economic liberties.

In this report Dr. Avci evaluates the ethical acceptability of these precautions taking into account the efficiency, proportionality, obligation, minimum violation, legitimacy and justice.

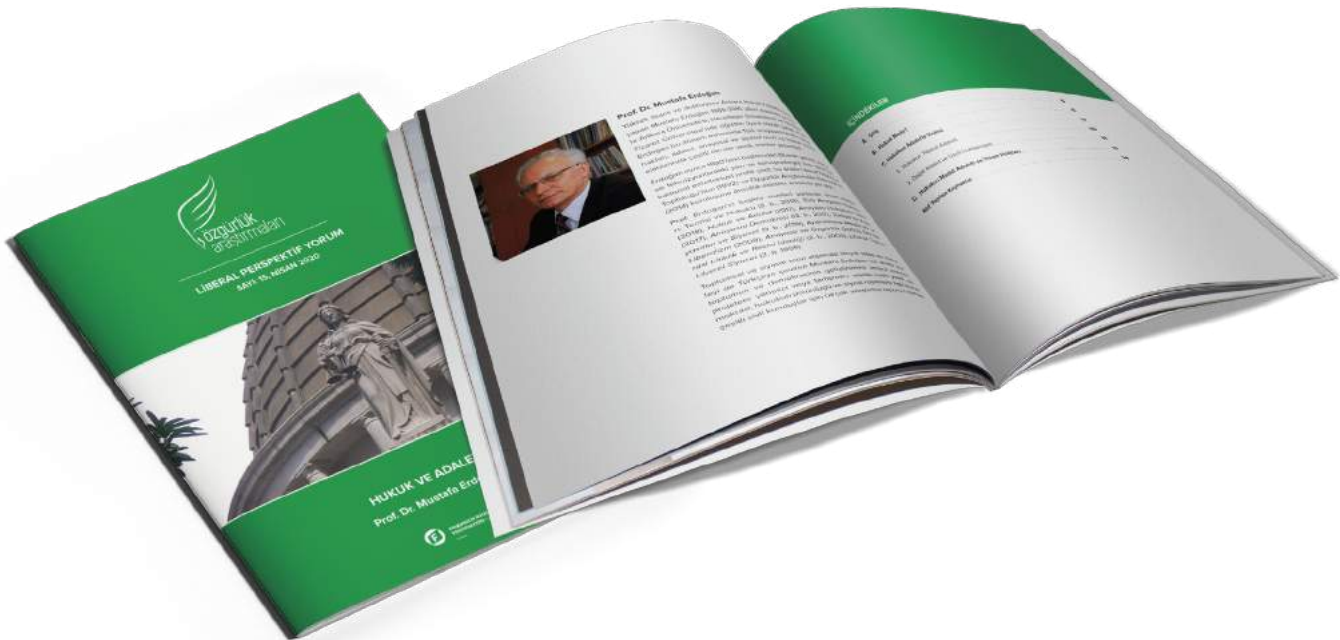


2. Law and Justice

Mustafa Erdoğan

The connection of law with justice comes in right at this point: If law is not merely a phenomenon that functions effectively with the power of state behind it, we cannot think of it independently of the value of “justice”, which is the first reference of people’s universal perception about law. The thought of law is related to justice in every place; as stated before, there are sayings in every culture that express or imply that law has an unbreaking bond with justice. The most common of these are the sayings and understandings about how courts “distribute justice”. Additionally, in many contexts, law and justice are used synonymously.

States can of course forcefully operate a normative system that does not cover the minimum requirements of justice; however, such a system where individuals do not comply voluntarily and with the feeling of obligation does not deserve the name, law. In reality, even though they cannot dare to voice their opinion, people generally have the tendency to see this type of a “law” as nothing more than the application of brute force by a gang.



3. Capitalism vs. Economical COVID-19 Precautions

Bican Şahin

The capitalist system is worthy of preference not only because it is more successful than its alternatives, but also because it is compatible with human freedom. This is a system that relies not on the coercion of the individual, but on voluntary cooperation.

Nowadays, it can be possible to look for a solution to the crisis that resulted from COVID-19 pandemic with a Keynesian liberal interpretation. In an emergency, states can provide a temporary safety net to those experiencing income loss. This can be done through borrowing and lowering taxes. Once the crisis is overcome and markets start operating again, states must gradually return to their previous equal budget policy. If acted otherwise and continued with the socialist control economy model or a hybrid statist economy model, it would result that people will lose the gains they acquired against famine and poverty.



4. A Legal Evaluation of the Curfew in the Pandemic

Volkan Aslan

Since March, aside from general curfews in Turkey, additional curfews were implemented for people 65 and over, 20 and under and people with chronic illnesses. As the legal foundation of these limitations which were implemented with the notices released by the Ministry of Interior and greatly affected liberties, paragraph C of the 11th article of the Province Administration Law and the 27th and 72nd articles of the Public Hygiene Law were presented. However, on constitutional grounds that the 1982 constitution provided, it is problematic that the curfews were based on the relevant regulations. For this reason, this report examines the suitability and discusses the lawfulness of these curfews that came with COVID-19 with respect to the limitation of basic rights and liberties.



5. Organized Interest Politics, Worker Unions and Civil Society in Turkey

Yunus Furkan Arıcan

Arıcan analyzes the changing environment of organized interest politics by placing specific focus on the interplay between the Islamic labour unions and the AKP governments throughout the 2000s. Shedding light into exclusionary dynamics of the industrial relations, Arıcan claims that liberal civil society has undergone through a period of elimination of channeling broad democratic demands as a result of co-optation of market actors. In order to broaden the scope of liberal civil society, Arıcan underlines the necessity of inclusion of trade unions into the democratic representation system, which, in turn, pays off the flourishing of civil society.



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 three analyses.

1. *How to Use of Limited Resources in the Fight Against the COVID-19 Pandemic* **Ercan Avcı**

State emergencies and natural disasters are periods that can drive individuals in the society into concern and create lack of trust in the individual-authority relationship. One of the most fundamental rules of fighting this is to eliminate feelings of fear and distrust in the society.

For this reason, the authority that carries out public health services should accurately and completely inform people about how and with what criteria it is fought with the relevant epidemic or natural disaster.

How the use of limited resources should be in times of epidemics and natural disasters and what principles they should be based on is discussed in this analysis. Additionally, the necessity of implementing the rules that the relevant system requires without exception, regardless of whatever system is followed for the use of limited resources, is underlined.



Mete Yıldız

The purpose is to understand how this balance between liberties and public benefit/health in the restrictive public policies can be established and maintained.



3. The Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic on the Turkish Economy and the Evaluation of Government Responses in Terms of Economic Liberties

Harun Öztürkler

While the COVID-19 Pandemic leads to massive losses in short term production and employment with the negative supply and demand shock it created in the global and national economy and the devastation that COVID-19 Pandemic created will continue for a while after it.

In the long term, the pandemic will change the way of organization in global and national economy, international relations of economy and politics, relations between socio-economic classes on national level as well as relations between government-private sector-market.

The study initially aims to define the structural characteristics of the supply and demand side of the Turkish economy. The nature of the precautions that the government took against the crisis, the effectiveness of the precautions and their impact on individual economic liberties (such as property rights, freedom of entrepreneurship, freedom of labor, freedom of exchange) are evaluated. Finally, it formulates recommendations related to what can be the alternative economic policies.



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 five reports.

1. *Freedom of the Press in Turkey Report 2019-2020* **Burak Bilgehan Özpek**

Indexes that measure scores of democratization in countries all agree that Turkey has become authoritarian in recent years. The dramatic decline regarding freedom and a rapid shift towards authoritarianism has also deeply affected the freedom of the press in Turkey. At the point reached, the situation is not very promising.

Freedom Research Association has been monitoring the state of the freedom of press since 2014. Our latest report is titled ‘Freedom of the Press in Turkey: 2019-2020’ has evaluated the current state of the press freedom in Turkey from January 1st of the year 2019 until June 21, 2020. The report shows that the state of press freedom in Turkey has maintained its negative outlook and it has been increasingly worsening. The report examines the state of the press freedom in Turkey through the pressure on media organizations and journalists, economic dependency relationship between the government and media outlets and the quality of public debate.



2. Kamu İhalelerinde Rekabet ve Şeffaflık Uğur Emek

The report examines the historical background and the development processes of the Public Procurement Law no. 4734 and the Public Procurement Contracts Law no. 4735 After analyzing the laws and the procurement process in detail, risk areas that could harm activities in public purchases were determined and necessary regulatory advice on how to diminish the negative effects of these risks were given in the report.



3. The Separation of Powers: Legislative and Executive Branches

Ömer Faruk Gençkaya

In the report, relations between the existing checks and balances mechanism and legislative and executive branches in Turkey was discussed by referring to the principle of separation of powers. In this context, it was attempted to explain the unique presidential system of Turkey and the efficiency of the Parliament in this system. Aside from that, the relationship between legislative and executive branches was examined. Lastly, recommendations were made in order to enable the legislative and improve separation of powers as well as checks and balances mechanisms in the new presidential system.



4. The Need for Structural Reforms in the Public Personnel Regime

Muhittin Acar

The report discusses the existing problems in the public personnel regime and the risks these problems bring out within the framework of the constitutional-legal principles that constitute the related regime; and evaluates them in light of these principles.

Factors such as the country's economic-financial structure and social fabric, the demographic structure of the labour force and the level of organization in the country, basic qualifications of the state, the nature of the relations of state-society and politics-bureaucracy, approaches of the ruling establishment to state, visions about democracy and change as well as public institutions and their services and staff; affect the structure and the operation of the public personnel regime.

These principles were discussed within the constitutional-legal framework and in the light of the evaluations and current discussions, policy proposals were made regarding the Public Personnel Regime.



5. Policy Suggestions to Improve Freedom of Media and Expression in Turkey

Gülseren Adaklı, Ali Rıza Çoban, Nermin Pınar Erdoğan, Aslı Ece Koçak

“COMET: Creating Opportunities for Meaningful Expressions in Turkey” was completed by the Freedom Research Association (FRA) with the support of International Republican Institute (IRI) to develop policy recommendations for freedom of expression in Turkey.

The report analyzes the ownership structure of the media, political influence on media, transparency of the media sector and market shares, and weakening of judicial independence, criminal law and how these turned into an instrument of pressure against the press.



BOOKS

In the past year, we have published 3 books.

1. *Freedom and Law*

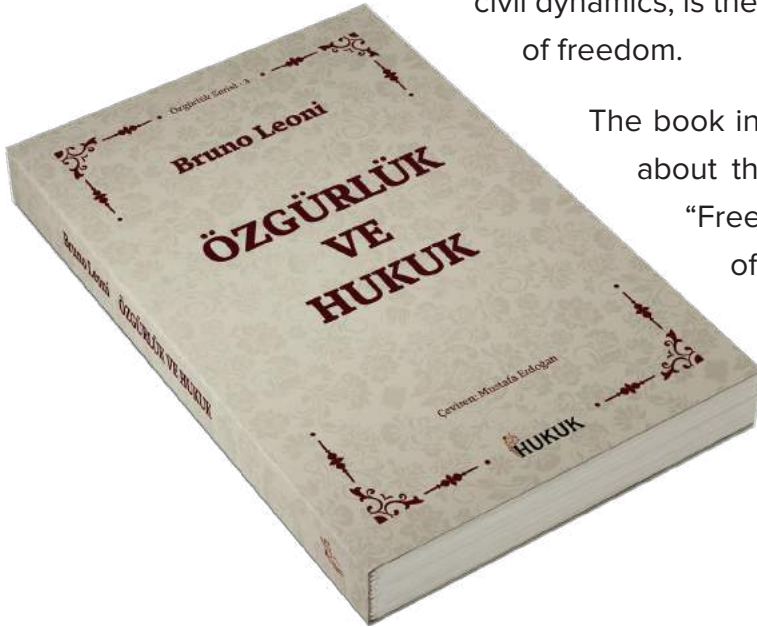
Written by Bruno Leoni

Translated in Turkish by Mustafa Erdoğan

In this book, *Freedom and Law*, the great Italian jurist and thinker Bruno Leoni analyzes both conceptual and historical evidence that the evolutionary view of law based on spontaneous development, derived from civil dynamics, is the paradigm of law that best fits with the ideal of freedom.

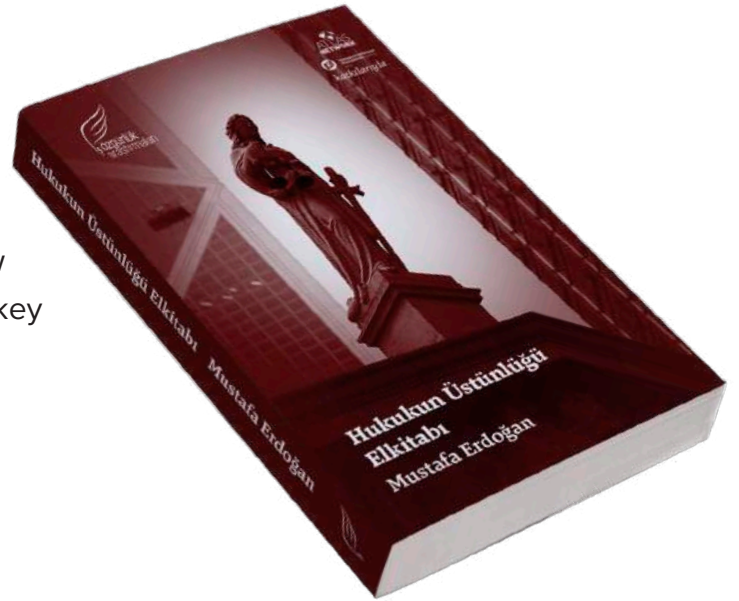
The book informs readers not only about the law, also about the correlation between liberalism and law.

“Freedom and Law” aims to contribute to change of the understanding of law in Turkey. The book is presented as a part of “Freedom Series” of the FRA with the translation of Prof. Mustafa Erdoğan.



2. *The Rule of law Handbook* Mustafa Erdoğan

The purpose of this handbook is to introduce all aspects of the foundations of the rule of law principle. Although this book consists of a theoretical review, it examines the requirements of the rule of law and to what extent the current state of Turkey corresponds to it.



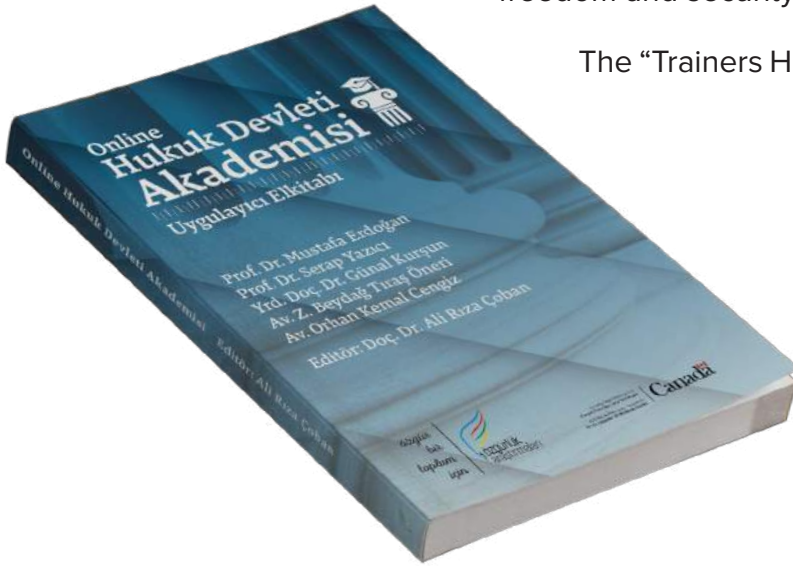
3. The Online Rule of Law Academy: Trainers Handbook **Mustafa Erdoğan, Serap Yazıcı, Orhan Kemal Cengiz,** **Beydağ Tıraş Öneri, Günal Kurşun**

This book has been prepared to be used as a handbook for practitioners in the Online Rule of Law Academy.

In the first part, Prof. Dr. Mustafa Erdoğan has an introduction article that focuses on the theoretical framework of rule of law. The second part is about the basic elements of the rule of law and it is prepared by Prof. Serap Yazıcı. In the third part, Atty. Orhan Kemal Cengiz examines the fair trial guarantees in criminal cases. The fourth part was written by Atty. Z.

Beydağ Tıraş, and it is about the prohibition of discrimination. In the final part, Assoc. Prof. Günal Kurşun's article examines the right to freedom and security.

The “Trainers Handbook” is available on the FRA website!



BULLETINS

1. *Liberties' Challenge With COVID-19*

Many governments around the world are eager to take advantage of the COVID-19 crisis and use it for expanding their own scope and political power in detriment of civil liberties, as well as of economic rights. The Turkish government is not an exception in that regard. The government has so far carried out numerous policies that violate these rights. As FRA, we monitored and evaluated the government policies in 20 Turkish bulletins with the support of Friedrich Naumann Foundation Turkey Office.

Summarizing and evaluating the political, legal, and economic effects of government policies from a liberal democratic perspective for national and international communities helped us to create an archive where we can properly track the change in government's power vis-à-vis individual rights across time.

The bulletins can be reached from the FRA's website and social media platforms.





2. *Freedom Observer*

The COVID-19, created many opportunities for the Turkish government to deny or restrict citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms, thus creating a climate of fear for all of civil society.

Despite the grim picture, FRA has launched a new project titled Freedom Observer in Turkey. To monitor and build awareness of the complex ways in which the current pandemic threatens fundamental freedoms in Turkey.

FRA has been using its expertise in providing scholarly, non-partisan research on public policy to monitor the government's response to the pandemic and amplify its messages to reach important stakeholders via biweekly and bilingual bulletins since October 2020.

The Freedom Observer can be reached from the FRA's website and social media accounts.

VIDEO

1. *Freedom of the Press in Turkey 2019-2020*

After completing the 'Freedom of the Press in Turkey Project', FRA prepared a video consisting of in-depth interviews with Assoc. Prof. Burak Bilgehan Özpek, Journalist Nevşin Mengü, Journalist Beril Eski and Assist. Prof. Aydın Gündüz, we examined the latest state Turkey is in in terms of freedom of press.

Our video was shared on every social media account of our association and it reached 10.000 views on Youtube!



2. The Public Procurement Law: A Policy Proposal

The last video in 2020 was on the public procurement law, which is one of the five institutions/fields that we analyze in our Structural Reform in Turkey Project.

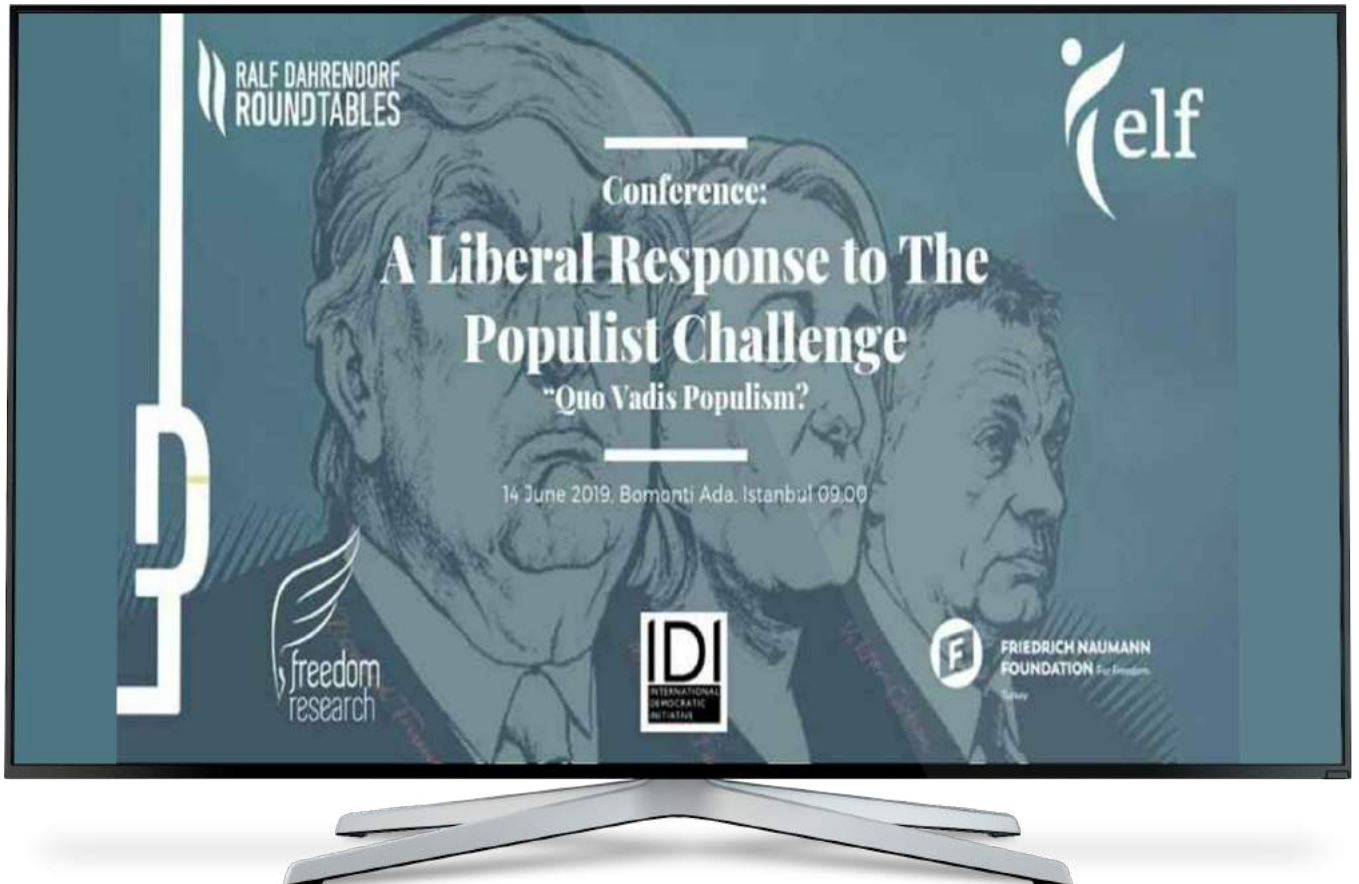
The video has five interviews in it with Prof. Uğur Emek, Prof. Bican Şahin, Prof. Erdal Türkkan, Fatma Çölaşan and Prof. Sedat Çal. The speakers examine the problems in procurement law and propose solutions. The video was viewed more than 75.000 times!



3. A Liberal Response to the Populist Challenge (Part I-II)

With the cooperation of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation Turkey Office and the European Liberty Forum, we carried out a conference where the rise of populism was evaluated on June 14th-15th-16th, 2019. Liberal experts, academics, journalists and civil society representatives from European countries and Turkey gathered in order to discuss the nature of the populist threat and to develop a liberal communication strategy against it; rise of populism was assessed both from their own countries' perspectives and a general framework.

After the conference that took place with the attendance of 70 people, a two-day workshop to which the experts contributed was organized. In a time when the rise of the populism threat once again occupied the agenda, the video that was compiled from the workshop footage was shared on every social media account in the last quarter of 2020. With the addition of Turkish subtitles to the English language workshops, the relevant work was presented both to international and national public opinion. Shortly afterwards the video attracted interest and views reached to 3.500.



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 of the papers. The yellow overlay is semi-transparent, allowing the texture of the paper and the edges of the newspapers to be seen through it.

MEDIA COVERAGES









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