



özgürlük arařtırmaları derneđi
freedom research association



Annual Report 2023

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Foundation

Design
Serbest Kitaplar
serbestkitaplar.com

Freedom Research Association

Çankaya Mah., Atatürk Bul., No.160 D.10 Çankaya, Ankara, Türkiye

+90 312 213 24 00

www.oad.org.tr info@oad.org.tr

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5	FOREWORD
8	WHAT WE DID IN 2023
10	PROJECTS
16	SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES
22	PUBLICATIONS
34	FRA IN
36	FRA TEAM'S INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES
42	FRA IN SOCIAL MEDIA
46	PARTNERS

FOREWORD

2023 was a year of great transformations and upheavals for Turkey in the legal, political, economic, and environmental fields. As the Association for the Study of Freedom (ÖAD), we continued our activities with a libertarian perspective during this critical period and took an active stance against the events.

The 2023 general elections had a profound impact on Turkey's political atmosphere. The economic crisis directly affected voters' preferences and political expectations. High inflation, unemployment and rising costs of living have caused serious economic problems for large segments of society. Although AKP nearly lost the election due to the economic crisis, it ultimately succeeded because of the political uncertainty surrounding the table of six, the selection of an unsuitable presidential candidate, and the failure to listen to public concerns. The decision of the table of six to give a large number of parliamentary seats to small parties in exchange for supporting Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's presidential candidacy caused great disappointment among voters. This resulted in voters' political expectations not being met and reduced trust in the democratic process. Political uncertainties and internal bickering led to a loss of confidence among voters, and the elections destroyed the possibility of winning. Similar to the government's creation of its own biased media over the years, the opposition created its own media in the run-up to the elections. By imposing its preferred presidential candidate as the choice of opposition citizens, the opposition ensured that there was no independent media in Turkey and that a year of partisan media created by the government or opposi-

tion parties emerged.

During this period, it was clearly seen that the media was financially supported either by the government or opposition parties, and that there was a lack of an independent media that was able to create its own revenue models. As FRA, we have prepared structural reform proposals to prevent the media from becoming dependent not only on the government but also on opposition parties, and we have emphasized the need to ensure an independent media environment. Through the reports we published, and seminars we organized; we offered concrete suggestions for restructuring economic policies. We played an active role in strengthening Turkey's democratic processes and meeting the expectations of the people. In 2023, the Republican People's Party (CHP) changed its chairman through democratic methods after 13 years. This change set a positive example for the development of democratic culture and internal party democracy in Turkey.

As FRA, we evaluated this process in terms of democracy, emphasized the importance of democratic processes in political parties and tried to raise awareness on this issue. It was also a challenging year for the rule of law. The Constitutional Court's acceptance of the case to shut down the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) reignited the debate on the politicization of law. During this period, FRA published various reports and analyses defending the rule of law, informing the public and drawing attention to the transparency of legal processes. One of the biggest events of 2023 was the earthquake disaster in February. This tragic event once again demonstrated the importance of civil society and solidarity in Turkey. Unfortunately, there were serious shortcomings and mistakes in the crisis management of the government and the state. Inadequate relief efforts, lack of coordination, and failures in post-disaster support processes made the living conditions of earthquake victims even more difficult. As FRA, we took swift action after the earthquake, supporting relief efforts in the earthquake region and organizing various events to ensure the coordination of civil society. We also analyzed media freedom after the earthquake and drew attention to the importance of accurate information and transparency.

2023 was also a year in which environmental issues came to the fore. The

resistance in the Akbelen Forest became a symbol of the struggle to protect Turkey's natural beauty. The destruction of the environment for the purposes of mineral exploration, power plants and tourism caused widespread protests and social reaction. As FRA, we have played an active role for the protection of environmental rights and sustainable development. Through the reports we published and the events we organized, we emphasized the importance of protecting nature and the environment.

The COP28 Conference was also an important platform where environmental policies were discussed in 2023. In the final declaration of the conference, it was emphasized that more ambitious targets should be set in the fight against climate change. It was stated that concrete steps should be taken to reduce the use of fossil fuels, accelerate the transition to renewable energy and reduce carbon emissions. As FRA, we carefully followed the results of COP28 and offered suggestions to bring Turkey's environmental policies in line with international standards and to realize sustainable development goals.

The year 2023 also witnessed shocking events around the world. The war between Israel and Hamas led to the deaths of thousands of innocent people and a major humanitarian crisis. During this period, we issued statements emphasizing the need to respect international law and human rights norms and called for global peace and stability. However, the suffering and persecution of the Palestinian people is not over, and many developed democracies continue to remain silent on the issue.

Throughout 2023, the FRA played an active role on freedoms and human rights in Turkey. We continued to inform the public through various reports, analyses, and events. We are continuing our work without slowing down for 2024. We are determined to work for a freer Turkey with new projects and analysis on the rule of law, economic freedoms, political participation, structural reforms, and liberalism.

As the Association for the Study of Freedom, we proudly present all the activities we carried out in 2023 and emphasize that we will continue our way with the same determination and determination in 2024. We will continue to work for a free and democratic Turkey with your support.

WHAT WE DID IN 2023

Videos

55

Projects

6

Live
Broadcasts

50

Seminars

4



LIVE

12

Reports



Print Media
Coverages

65



4

Analysis



1

Online
Conference





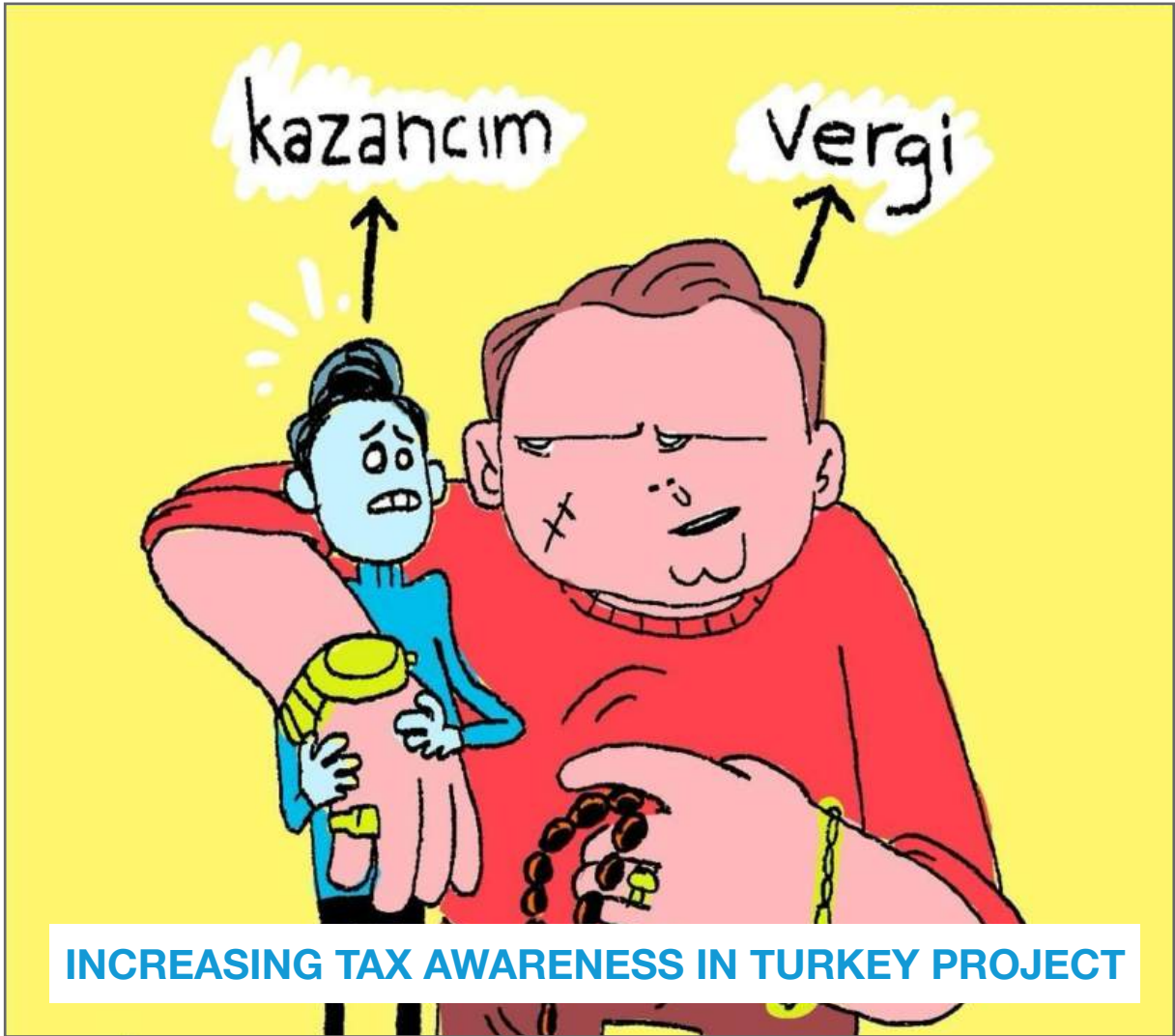
PROJECTS



“STRUCTURAL REFORMS IN TURKEY” PROJECT

As Freedom Research Association, we have been examining the problems caused by the economic decline in Turkey and the deterioration and corruption of the institutional structure in the legal and administrative fields since 2019. In this context, we continue our efforts to increase the rule of law and accountability and to prevent structural erosion with the Structural Reforms in Turkey Project, which we carry out with the support of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). In the first phase of the project (2019-21), we focused on the Legislature, Judiciary, Public Procurement Regime, Public Personnel Regime and Media Independence. In the second phase of the project (2021-23), we focused on the Post-Legislative Review System, Political Party Law, Election Law, Constitution Making Process and the Executive (Government System). During this period, we took care to organize workshops, develop reports and policy recommendations, and meet with parliamentary representatives, civil society organizations and political parties. In the third phase of the project (2023-25), we plan to focus on the institutions we have identified and develop reports that include the current problems of these institutions, analyses and solutions of these problems, and reform proposals. These institutions are as follows: Ombudsman Institution, Radio and Television Supreme Council, Council of Judges and Prosecutors, Constitutional Court, Human Rights Equality Institution of Turkey.

With the support of Atlas Network, we launched the “Raising Tax Awareness in Turkey Project” in 2023 with the aim of raising citizens’ awareness of Turkey’s tax policies and their impact on individuals. In particular, we focused on the Earthquake Tax (Law No. 4481) and the Turkish State Television Revenue Law (Law No. 3093) and developed reform proposals to review or amend these laws. We also continued our campaign work on the relationship between tax awareness and individual well-being.



With the support of Atlas Network, we launched the Increasing Tax Awareness in Turkey Project in 2023 to raise public awareness of Turkey's tax policies and their impact on individuals. In this project, we focused particularly on the Earthquake Tax (Law No. 4481) and the Turkish State Television Revenue Law (Law No. 3093), developing reform proposals for the review or amendment of these laws. Additionally, we continued our campaign efforts to highlight the relationship between tax awareness and individual prosperity.



RULE OF LAW AND DEMOCRACY MONITORING PROJECT IN TURKEY



As Freedom Research Association, we continued to discuss and evaluate innovations in government policies and current developments within the scope of the “State of Law and Democracy Monitoring Project in Turkey”, which we have been conducting since September 1, 2022 with the support of Freedom House. In this context, we have analyzed a wide range of issues from economic and civil liberties to individual rights of citizens with a liberal perspective and shared them with our followers every two weeks under the name

‘Freedom Agenda’ in both Turkish and English. These bulletins aimed to inform stakeholders about the effectiveness and accuracy of the implemented policies as well as to create a data source for international observer analysis and will continue for the next year. You can follow the full bulletins from the link below: <https://oad.org.tr/category/yayinlar/ozgurlukgundemi/>



THE GREEN FACE OF LIBERALISM

In 2023, with the support of D66, a political party based in the Netherlands, we aimed to critique the prevailing unilateral and interventionist approach to climate change and to make liberal voices more visible on climate change. We focused on making climate change less of a marginalized issue and more of a topic of interest to everyone, and we emphasized the role of liberal philosophy in climate change debates by highlighting fundamental principles such as global justice, democratic responsibility and individual accountability.

Furthermore, in November 2023, we organized a workshop called “The Green Side of Liberalism” facilitated by Sven Gerst, an expert on contemporary debates and intellectual history of liberal philosophy, and gathered around 20 young people at the FNF Turkey office.

The Climate Studies Center is still active, if you want to be informed about our work, you can follow the link below:

<https://www.instagram.com/iklimcalismalari/>





**SEMINARS AND
CONFERENCES**





SEMINAR ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION FOR LAW PRACTITIONERS

With the support of the Embassy of Germany, we organized Freedom of Expression Seminars for Legal Practitioners in Van, Istanbul and Izmir in 2023 and met with a total of 75 lawyers. With this project, we aimed to contribute to the knowledge and experience of legal practitioners on freedom of expression advocacy and to improve their ability to use international human rights law standards in domestic law in the most effective way in the cases they are involved in. The topics covered in the seminars were as follows:

- General Principles of Freedom of Expression and International Human Rights Law
- Freedom of Expression, Judges and Lawyers
- Hate Speech and Incitement to Violence
- Crimes of Disinformation, Insulting State Institutions and Insulting the President
- Defamation and Freedom of Expression
- Individual Application Right in the Context of Freedom of Expression



LIBERALISM WEBINARS

One of the projects we realized in 2023 was the ZoomPolitikon Liberalism Webinars Project, where we aimed to discuss liberal solutions to the increasing acts of populism and authoritarianism around the world. Our aim in this project, which we organized for the third time this year, was to pioneer a new and young liberal network to give a liberal direction to public debates and to offer liberal solutions to modern problems created by populism and identity politics.

In this context, we prepared an online seminar series with Prof. Dr. Bican Şahin, Dr. Seval Yaman, Dr. Belgin Tarhan, Dr. Nurettin Kalkan and Berat Mutluhan Seferođlu to discuss liberalism from different perspectives. With these webinars with an intense and interactive discussion, we have graduated more than 100 graduates in total. We organized a face-to-face liberalism camp with 25 young people selected from these graduates. In a period when free discussion of ideas has become almost a luxury, we will continue our work in this field as Freedom Studies.

You can access our video series titled Core Values of Liberalism from this link:

<https://www.udemy.com/course/liberalizmin-temel-degerleri/>



STRUCTURAL REFORMS CLOSING CONFERENCE

We have successfully completed the Structural Reforms Project that we carried out in the 2021-2023 period. Within the scope of this project, we identified structural problems in our country, developed solutions and brought them to the attention of the public. The main objective of the project was to contribute to the implementation of reforms in economic, legal and governance areas.

The project was closed with a conference in 2023, which was broadcast live on YouTube. This closing conference was attended by the rapporteur lecturers of our project. During the conference, the findings and recommendations of the project were discussed in detail and enriched with questions and comments from the participants.

The activities organized and reports prepared during this project aimed to make significant contributions to Turkey's sustainable development and democratization processes. We would like to thank all academics, experts and participants who contributed to our project. We will continue our project in 2024 with different topics.



PUBLICATIONS



This year, our publications, in which we address problems on different issues in depth and propose solutions from a liberal perspective, continued unabated. You can access the original versions of these publications, which play an important role in our efforts to “disseminate knowledge” and “raise public awareness”, which is one of the missions of our association, on our website.

<https://oad.org.tr/category/yayinlar/analiz/>

<https://oad.org.tr/category/yayinlar/rapor/>

You can also follow us on our Instagram account to be instantly informed about these publications and regularly read the content we have created using their important parts.

<https://www.instagram.com/ozgurlukarastirmalari/>

LIBERAL PERSPECTIVE: ANALYSIS



This comprehensive analysis of market intervention discusses the inevitable consequences of market intervention and offers recommendations for ensuring economic freedoms and enhancing social welfare. The analysis also provides an in-depth account of the effects of market intervention and is an important resource for economic policymaking.

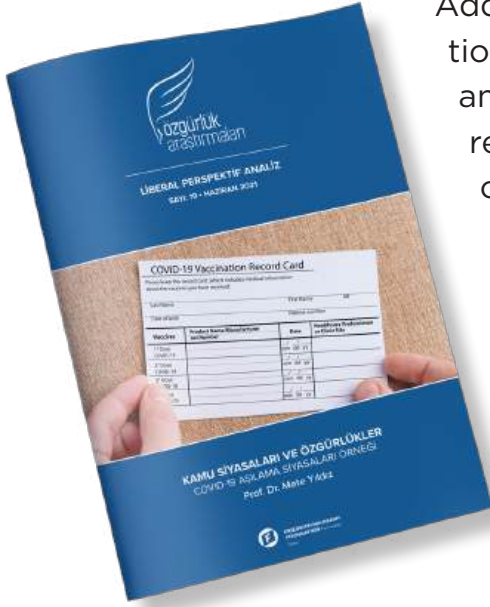
Click here for the full analysis:

<https://oad.org.tr/yayinlar/analiz/analiz-piyasaya-mudahale-ve-sonuclari/>



Introduction to Harm Reduction Strategies as a Consumption Policy

Çağın Eroğlu



Addressing important issues such as harm reduction, lifestyle economics and public health, the analysis includes various measures such as harm reduction strategies, avoiding unexpected accidents and reducing the negative effects of substance use. It highlights the relationship between harm reduction strategies and individual freedoms and aims to protect freedoms by encouraging individuals to make healthier choices.

Click here for the full analysis:

<https://oad.org.tr/blog/bir-tuketim-politikasi-olarak-zarar-azaltma-stratejilerine-giris/>

Public Service Broadcasting and Bandrol Fee

Hasan Basri Çifçi



Created in 2023 within the scope of the “Increasing Tax Awareness in Turkey Project” (Vergi Mükellefi), which we implemented with the support of Atlas Network, this analysis includes policy analyses on various tax areas in order to emphasize the proportional majority of indirect taxes and to draw attention to their quality. The author aims for these analyses to contribute to public debate and citizens’ tax awareness.

Click here for the full version of the analysis:

[https://oad.org.tr/yayinlar/
kamu-hizmeti-yayinciligi-ve-bandrol-bedeli/](https://oad.org.tr/yayinlar/kamu-hizmeti-yayinciligi-ve-bandrol-bedeli/)



LIBERAL PERSPECTIVE: REPORT



In 2023, the report assesses the state of press freedom in the country and developments in this field, drawing attention to the pressures, censorship, legal restrictions and violations of freedom of expression faced by journalists and media organizations. Issues such as media ownership, distribution of advertising revenues and attacks on journalists are also on the agenda of the report.

Click here for the full report:

<https://oad.org.tr/yayinlar/turkiyede-basin-ozgurlugu-raporu-2023/>



Evolution of the Independence of the Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey in the 2000s

Prof. Dr. Murat Çokgezen



The report, which is divided into various chapters, discusses what is meant by the independence of the Central Bank and how its independence is measured, the evolution of Central Bank independence in the world over the last fifty years, and finally the evolution of Central Bank independence in Turkey. The report also references changes in laws, some key economic indicators, government decisions and statements to assess independence.

Click here for the full report:

<https://oad.org.tr/yayinlar/2000li-yillarda-turkiye-cumhuriyet-merkez-bankasi-bagimsizliginin-evrimi/>



Disinformation Risk Assessment: The Online News Market in Turkey

In collaboration with the Global Disinformation Index, the report presents findings from 31 online news sources identified to discuss the news market in Turkey and current and potential disinformation risks, and includes key findings that provide guidance on media and disinformation issues in Turkey. Ger

Click here for the full report:

[https://oad.org.tr/yayinlar/
dezenformasyon-risk-degerlendirmesi/](https://oad.org.tr/yayinlar/dezenformasyon-risk-degerlendirmesi/)





Competition and Transparency in Public Procurement

Prof. Dr. Uğur Emek

Our project, supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), examines the institutional erosion in Turkey and seeks solutions: “Structural Reforms in Turkey Project”, this report identifies the current risks and problems with the Public Procurement Regime and proposes solutions.

Click here for the full report:

<https://oad.org.tr/yayinlar/rapor/kamu-ihalelerinde-rekabet-ve-seffaflik-2/>





Post-Legislative Review Mechanism

Prof. Dr. Ömer Faruk Gençkaya

Our project supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), in which we examined the institutional erosion in Turkey and sought solutions: “Structural Reforms in Turkey Project”, the report includes sections such as Effectiveness of Legislation, Types of Post-Legislative Review, Findings on the Legislative Effectiveness of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. It includes problem determinations and recommendations.

Click here for the full report:

<https://oad.org.tr/yayinlar/rapor/yasama-sonrasi-denetim-mekanizmasi/>





The Freedom Research Association Blog continued to be the oasis of intellectual debate in Turkey this year. In this period, a total of 125 articles from law to political philosophy, from active politics to economics, from law to political philosophy, from active politics to economics were published on the blog, which we enriched with opinion and commentary articles and translations. You can access the main articles below, or you can visit our website to read the whole blog. You can follow us on our social media accounts to stay informed.

- The Situation of Press Freedom in Turkey is “Very Grave!
- Individualism, Solidarity, Collectivism
- Neoliberalism and Libertarianism
- Nanny State Index: The Best and Worst States for Freedom to Consume in Europe
- 2023 World Index of Economic Freedom Published!
- Does Liberalism Have No Answer to Climate Change?

You can click to reach FRA Blog:

<https://oad.org.tr/category/blog/>



FRA IN PRESS



Throughout 2023, Freedom Research Association was featured in the press 65 times and continued various collaborations with new media organizations. To view the content we have been featured in the press, just click on the “Us in the Press” section on our website.

You can click here:

<https://oad.org.tr/basinda-biz-2/>



**FRA TEAM'S
INTERNATIONAL
ACTIVITIES**



In 2023, we continued to support the international development of our staff and increase the visibility of our association in the global arena. In this context, we attach importance to expanding our network through activities such as participating in international conferences, conducting joint projects and establishing collaborations with similar civil society organizations in various countries. In this way, we promote the ideas and mission of our association more effectively on international platforms and aim to create a global impact in the field of freedom and human rights.

**Democratic Training Academy, Democratic Training Academy
Romania, Istanbul, Morocco**

In partnership with VVD International, a Netherlands-based organization, and the Liberal International Network, our association will soon join this network. We participated in a three-part training series aimed at enhancing young professionals' leadership skills.





Organizing Freedom, Leipzig, Germany



2023 Asia Liberty Forum - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Our Project Coordinator Derya Özkul and Vice President Prof. Dr. Bican Şahin represented our association at the 2023 Asia Liberty Forum, organized by Atlas Network in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



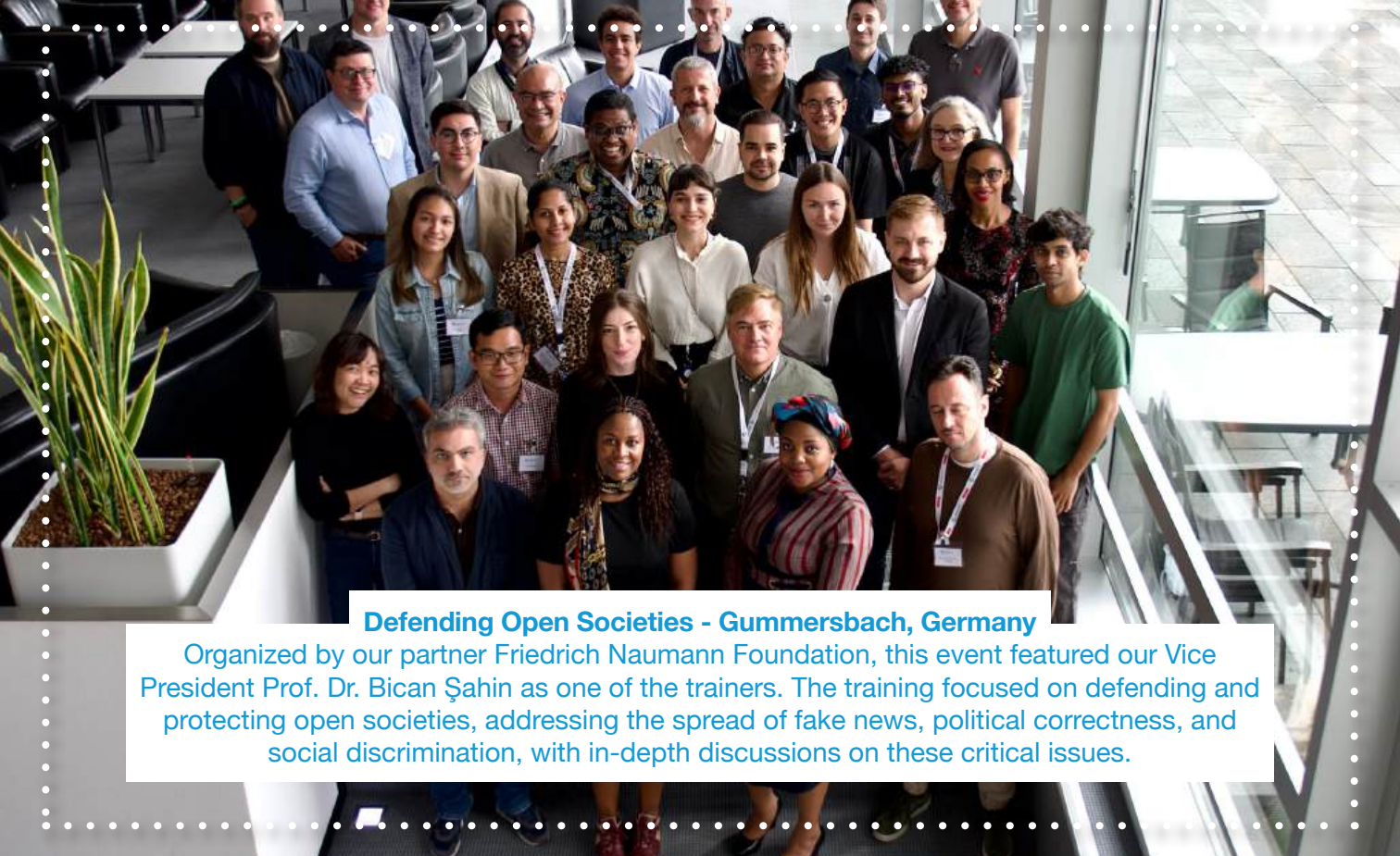
European Liberal Forum General Assembly - Brussels, Belgium

We participated in the annual general assembly of the European Liberal Forum, the umbrella organization of European liberal think tanks, held in Brussels. The assembly included the election of the new board of directors.



Organizing Freedom Workshop, Freedom Workshop - Stockholm, Sweden

This event brought together professionals from liberal political parties and associations across Europe, aiming to discuss the nature of political participation. It included workshops, with our Project Coordinator Derya Özkul representing our association.



Defending Open Societies - Gummersbach, Germany

Organized by our partner Friedrich Naumann Foundation, this event featured our Vice President Prof. Dr. Bican Şahin as one of the trainers. The training focused on defending and protecting open societies, addressing the spread of fake news, political correctness, and social discrimination, with in-depth discussions on these critical issues.



European Liberal Forum General Assembly - Paris, France



**World Liberty Congress
(World Freedom
Conference)
Vilnius, Litvanya**



**Turkish Civil Society Meets
EU: 2023 Turkish General
Election Meetings,
Brussels, Belgium**



**Campaigning for
Political Parties and
Think Tanks Training,
Gummersbach,
Germany**



Liberal Leadership Europe - Belgrade, Serbia



FRA IN SOCIAL MEDIA





C/Özgürlük Araştırmaları



@ozgurlukar



@ozgurlukarastirmalari



@ozgurlukarastirmalari





PARTNERS



PARTNERLERİMİZ



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DENGEVE
DENETLEME AĞI



FRIEDRICH NAUMANN
FOUNDATION For Freedom.

Türkiye

IDI International
Democratic
Initiative



J JARL
H HJALMARSON
S STIFTELSEN

NED National Endowment
for Democracy
Supporting freedom around the world

M **L** **SA** Media and Law Studies Association
Medya ve Hukuk Çalışmaları Derneği



 **KEΦÍM**

iea
Institute of
Economic Affairs