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Dear Friends,

We are delighted to share the 18th edition of the European Institute Newsletter. This issue highlights our latest research, publications, events, educational programmes, and outreach activities, reflecting our ongoing engagement with European studies in a rapidly changing global context.

This year, we place special focus on two major research projects shaping our academic agenda. ValEUs, led by the European University Viadrina, examines global contestations over European values and develops responses through research, education, and public debate. Alongside this, the Horizon Europe project PLEDGE explores the emotional dimensions of political discontent and their implications for democratic governance.

The newsletter opens with an overview of our ongoing projects, including the Jean Monnet Chair on the Diffusion of Norms and Turkey–EU Relations (BİLGİNormsEU). We are also pleased to feature a Blogpost by members of the PLEDGE project team, offering insights from their recent research. Further sections introduce our academic programmes, international partnerships, summer schools, and research units, including the German Studies Unit and reflections from our MA students in European Studies.

We thank the Rectorate and Board of Trustees of Istanbul Bilgi University for their continued support, and we are especially grateful to our readers for their interest and engagement.

As we look ahead, we wish you a year of fruitful collaboration, meaningful dialogue, and renewed commitment to academic inquiry and democratic values.

Happy New Year!



Prof. Dr. Ayhan Kaya
Director
European Institute
Istanbul Bilgi University



Dr. Özge Onursal-Besgöl
Vice Director
European Institute
Istanbul Bilgi University



Dr. Ozan Kuyumcuoğlu
Vice Director
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ABOUT THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE



Istanbul Bilgi University is a non-profit higher education institution founded in **1996**, guided by the principle “*Non scholae, sed vitae discimus*”—learning not for school but for life. The University serves more than **20,000 students**, supported by a faculty of over **1,000 academics**, and is part of a community of more than **60,000 alumni**. Operating across **eight faculties**, **three institutes**, and **three vocational schools**, BİLGİ offers over **150 undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate programmes** in a wide range of disciplines, including social sciences, economics, business, communication, arts, law, engineering, and architecture. Since its establishment, BİLGİ has been recognised for its **open-minded stance on key social and political issues in Türkiye** and its **active engagement in debates on European integration**.

BİLGİ’s strong European orientation led to the establishment of the **Centre for European Studies**, which was restructured as the **European Institute** in **2007**. The Institute conducts **advanced research on EU politics and policies**, with a particular emphasis on **diversity and pluralism**. As the focal point for **interdisciplinary European studies** at BİLGİ, the European Institute supports research and academic programmes addressing **European integration, Europeanisation, multiculturalism, and the formation of European identities**.

The **European Institute** has contributed to numerous **EU-funded projects**, including several **Framework Programme 7 (FP7)** and **Horizon Europe** initiatives, strengthening its role in addressing **complex European and international challenges**. The Institute

has received several prestigious funding awards, most notably the **Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence Award (2013)**, alongside **three Jean Monnet Chairs**, multiple **Jean Monnet Modules**, and “**Learning EU at School**” projects.

In particular, the **European Values at School – EUeducate** project played a decisive role in BİLGİ being designated as a **Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence**, making it the **fourth university in Türkiye** to receive this distinction. This recognition reflects the University’s long-standing commitment to **EU-focused academic excellence**. The European Institute continues to prioritise **outreach activities** centred on core **EU values**, including **human rights, pluralism, and diversity**, fostering a deeper understanding of **European integration and democratic citizenship**.

In addition to its Jean Monnet activities, the European Institute currently participates in several **Horizon Europe projects** and is a partner in the **Jean Monnet Policy Network “ValEUs: Research & Education Network on Contestations to EU Foreign Policy”**, a major research initiative coordinated by the **European University Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder), Germany**. Funded by a **€1.2 million Erasmus+ grant (2024–2027)**, the project integrates **research and educational outreach** to advance understanding of the **challenges facing EU foreign policy**.

Prof. Ayhan Kaya serves as the **Director of the European Institute**. **Dr. Özge Onursal-Beşgül** and **Dr. Ozan Kuyumcuoğlu** serve as **Vice Directors of the Institute**.



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JEAN MONNET CHAIR on Diffusion of Norms and Turkey- EU Relations “BİLGİNormsEU”

Dr. Özge ONURSAL-BEŞGÜL



Istanbul Bilgi University

Dr. Özge Onursal-Beşgül has been awarded a Jean Monnet Chair in European Union Studies by the European Commission of the European Union (EU). Jean Monnet Chairs are funded under the Erasmus + Programme as three-year teaching and research posts for scholars specialising in European Union studies. Özge Onursal Beşgül will hold the Chair until 2025.

JM Chair on Diffusion of Norms and Turkey-EU Relations aims to focus on how norms at the EU level are constructed, diffused, and contested at the national level in different policy areas. The conceptual framework of norms diffusion will contribute to the diversification of the discussions on EU-Turkey relations, where most of the focus is on conditionality and change with pressure.

As part of the project, three new courses were launched in the Spring 2022 and Summer 2022 academic terms: “**International Organisations and Norms**,” “**Selected Topics in EU-Turkey Relations**” and “**The EU in the World**”. During the first six months of

the project, “**Conversations on Europe and Türkiye Seminar Series**” were organised to bring together students with scholars working on contemporary issues in Europe and Turkey. The seminars were online and open to the public. In the coming months, public webinars will be held as well as a new podcast series will be organised. At the end of the project, all the project materials, including the contents of the courses and their outputs, will be shared with the public on the project's webpage. The project's goal, specifically addressing young people relatively new to European studies, is to ensure the emergence of different public perspectives on Turkey-EU relations.

Prof. Ayhan Kaya from the Department of International Relations and **Prof. Ayşe Uyduranoğlu** from the Department of Economics contribute to the project as senior researchers. The project team also includes **Dr. Mehmet Ali Tuğtan** from the Department of International Relations (expert and advisor), **Dr. Büke Boşnak** from the Department of International Relations (expert), doctoral candidate **Veysi Kondu** from Boğaziçi University's Department of Political Science and International Relations (expert), Doctoral candidate **Bahar Özay** from Boğaziçi University's Department of Political Science and International Relations (researcher) and doctoral candidate **Suna Gökçe Kızılkaya** from İstanbul Bilgi University's Political Science Program (researcher).

For more information, please click [here](#).

PUBLICATIONS, NEWS & EVENTS

Jean Monnet Chair Panel: Rethinking Norms: Europe and Türkiye in a Changing World

Within the framework of the **Jean Monnet Chair project**, the European Institute of Istanbul Bilgi University hosted a panel titled “**Rethinking Norms: Europe and Türkiye in a Changing World**” on 26 February 2025, at the **santralistanbul Campus (E2-210)**.

The panel brought together **Büke Boşnak**, **Suna Gökçe-Kızılkaya**, and **Özge Onursal-Beşgül**, who discussed the transformation and contestation of norms in Europe–Türkiye relations in the context of global political and social change.



Jean Monnet Chair #BİLGİNormsEU - Special Issue

We are pleased to share a **Special Issue** published within the scope of the **Jean Monnet Chair project #BİLGİNormsEU**, featured in ***Southeast European and Black Sea Studies***. The Special Issue brings together a collection of peer-reviewed articles that critically engage with **European norms, values, and contemporary political challenges**, offering interdisciplinary perspectives from both established and early-career scholars.

The Special Issue is **co-edited by Özge Onursal Beşgül** and **Ayhan Kaya**, and reflects the project's core objective of fostering critical debate on the transformation, contestation, and application of European norms.

#BİLGİNormsEU Jean Monnet Chair Webinar Series on YouTube Channel!

The full recordings of the **#BİLGİNormsEU Jean Monnet Chair** webinar series are now available on our YouTube channel!

Click on the images to access the links and enjoy the discussions.

WEBINAR
Jean Monnet Chair
on Norms and Turkey-EU Relations
#BİLGİNormsEU

**The Rise of Civilisational
Rhetoric and the Co-
Radicalisation of Young
Europeans:
Islamophobia vs. Islamism?**
Prof. Ayhan Kaya

WEBINAR
Jean Monnet Chair
on Norms and Turkey-EU Relations
#BİLGİNormsEU

**Green Deal:
EU Being the Leader of Climate
Policies**
Prof. Ayşe Uyduranoğlu

WEBINAR
Jean Monnet Chair
on Norms and Turkey-EU Relations
#BİLGİNormsEU

**The European Security and the
Invasion of Ukraine**
Dr. Mehmet Ali Tuğtan

FEATURED ARTICLES

Contesting the EU from Below? Migration Governance and Civil Society Struggles for Rights in EU–Turkey Relations

Author: Büke Boşnak

SOUTHEAST EUROPEAN AND BLACK SEA STUDIES
https://doi.org/10.1080/14683857.2025.2514352



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Contesting the EU from below? Migration governance and civil society struggles for rights in EU- Turkey relations

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ABSTRACT
Civil society and social movements have played a crucial role in the EU's external relations, yet studies on EU contestation by civic actors remain varied. Drawing on framing theory, this article explores the construction and contestation of the EU in EU-Turkey relations to analyze civil society mobilization in migration governance. Using frame analysis and extensive fieldwork in a cross-time perspective, the study examines activism in Turkey, highlighting how Europeanisation processes initially created opportunities for civil society to act as norm entrepreneurs to promote migrant rights. However, since 2015, civil society's role has weakened due to the contestation of the EU's externalization policy, the shrinking space for rights-based organizations, and the declining legitimacy of the EU. The instrumentalisation of migration in the EU-Turkey deal has further complicated advocacy efforts. These findings contribute to understanding social movement mobilization in Turkey by examining evolving claims and frames during critical periods of EU-Turkey relations.

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Received 25 January 2025
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KEYWORDS
Civil society; social movements; framing; migration; EU

Introduction

Since the turn of the Millennium, Europeanisation has travelled beyond the European Union (EU), becoming a central framework for understanding how EU norms, ideas and values influence civic actors in candidate and neighbouring countries (Diez et al. 2005; Wunsch 2018). This process has resonance in Turkey, where societal actors play a pivotal role in navigating the complex interplay between domestic political developments and external pressures. As a major refugee-hosting country and a key partner in EU migration governance, Turkey represents a remarkable case for analyzing the mobilization of civil society, social movements and activism.

An essential yet understudied aspect of this process is how civil society actors engage with shifting EU migration policies to defend migrant rights. This study highlights the agency of civil society actors in framing the EU as both a promoter of rights and an enforcer of restrictive migration policies. The article investigates how civil society actors in Turkey articulate, contest, and adapt to the EU within the field of migration

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Contesting the Norm Contester: Responses to Turkey’s Withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention

Authors: Burcu Özdemir Sarigil, Marella Bodur Ün

SOUTHEAST EUROPEAN AND BLACK SEA STUDIES
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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Contesting the norm contester: responses to Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention

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ABSTRACT
This article contributes to research on norm contestation by examining the types of responses to norm contesters that might preserve, strengthen or undermine norm robustness. It focuses on the Council of Europe (CoE) and its member states' reactions to Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention and its validity contestation of gender equality norms. Using a typology of responses to norm contestation (i.e. *containment*, *alignment*, *no response*), the study analyzes an original dataset of online diplomatic communications released during the three-month official withdrawal process. The findings show that the CoE and its members did not align with Turkey, either adopting a non-response strategy or actively containing Turkey's position, thereby reinforcing their commitment to the Convention and gender equality norms. The analysis reveals that even the effects of validity norm contestations, as in the Turkish case, can be mitigated through containment responses, preserving and even reinforcing the norms' robustness.

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KEYWORDS
Norm contestation; norm robustness; third-party responses to norm contestation; Istanbul Convention; Council of Europe; Turkey

Introduction

The contestation of the Liberal International Order (LIO) and its core norms has become a defining feature of contemporary global politics. Established after World War II, the LIO embodies a set of principles and norms such as free markets, liberal democracy, human rights, rule of law, multilateralism and collective security, supported by institutions like the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and NATO (Ikenberry 2018, 7; Lake et al. 2021). However, these norms have increasingly faced contestation from various state and non-state actors, including nationalist, conservative, populist movements and parties in the West, middle powers such as Turkey and Brazil, and authoritarian states like China and Russia (Bettiza and Lewis 2020; Oniş and Kutlay 2020; Adler-Nissen and Zarakol 2021; Lake et al. 2021).

As a rising regional and middle power, Turkey has become one of the active challengers of the human rights norms underpinning the LIO in recent decades. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's discourses and policies since the beginning of 2010s have explicitly contested global gender equality norms, which he has labelled

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Turkish Civil Society, Normative Power Europe, and Appeals to Restore the EU’s Transformative Power

Authors: Hüsrev Tabak, Kadri Kaan Renda, Ali Onur Özçelik

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Turkish civil society, normative power Europe, and appeals to restore the EU’s transformative power

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ABSTRACT
This paper examines the evolving role of civil society in sustaining the European Union's (EU) normative influence amid the Union's diminishing capacity to drive change in the European periphery, with a particular focus on Türkiye. As the EU's transformative agenda wane and its credibility as a normative power erodes, EU-engaged civil society actors in peripheral states seek alternative strategies to uphold the Union as a normative anchor. Drawing on in-depth interviews with high-level representatives and senior experts from prominent EU-engaged Turkish civil society organizations, the study demonstrates that civil society bridges the concerns of local norm advocates in both norm-making and norm-receiving contexts. It also actively contributes to the mutual socialization of the EU and candidate countries in efforts to restore the EU's normative influence. The findings reaffirm the relevance of civil society within the Normative Power Europe (NPE) framework and highlight its stakeholder role in sustaining and diffusing EU norms.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 10 Feb 2025
Accepted 04 Jun 2025

KEYWORDS
Civil society; normative power Europe; EU; Turkey; normative anchor

1. Introduction

The concept of Normative Power Europe (NPE) is employed in scholarly discourse to characterize the European Union's (EU) role and identity on the global stage. As articulated by Manners, NPE refers to the EU's 'ability to shape conceptions of "normal" in international relations' and its capacity to exert 'ideational impact' (Manners 2002, 238–239; Diez and Manners 2007, 175). NPE denotes a transformative capacity for the EU to stimulate normative transformations in *others* (Whitman 2011, 5) through 'redefining international norms in its own image' and relatedly creating compliance to such norms, as a practice of norm diffusion (Manners 2002, 252). The extensive process of Europeanization occurring in the member and candidate states is a direct result of the EU's transformative influence and serves as a demonstration of the mechanisms it employs, such as political conditionality, persuasion, invocation of norm compliance, shaping of discourses regarding what constitutes normalcy, and leading by example (Forsberg 2011). The EU's enjoying such a capacity is attributed to its qualities of *being* normative and *acting* in a normative way

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Unpacking Normative Power Europe: European Union’s Promotion of Climate Change Norms in Türkiye

Authors: İrem Aşkar Karakir, Gözde Kaya

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Unpacking normative power Europe: European Union’s promotion of climate change norms in Türkiye

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to assess EU’s performance as a normative power in promoting climate change norms in a candidate state, Türkiye. Normative actors are expected to internalize the norms themselves first and then transfer these internalized norms to the external world through diffusion. To this end, initially climate change in EU’s domestic politics and foreign policy are analysed. Secondly, the study focuses on the determination and actions of the EU with respect to encouraging Türkiye’s commitment to climate change norms. Through analysing the relevant sections of European Commission’s annual reports on Türkiye since 2012, the study seeks to find out the extent of Türkiye’s harmonization of its climate-related legislation and policies with that of the EU *acquis* on climate action. It is argued that while noticeable limitations have remained regarding Türkiye’s progress in climate action, the EU has had an essential guiding impact on Türkiye’s climate action policies.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 09 April 2025
Accepted 10 June 2025

KEYWORDS

EU; Türkiye; climate change; normative power; norm diffusion

Introduction

Introduced by Ian Manners, the term Normative Power Europe (NPE) has been widely used to highlight that the EU is both constructed on a normative basis and seeks to diffuse its norms in international politics. The focus of this study is on the NPE-climate norm diffusion nexus. It seeks to question the extent to which the EU exhibits the characteristics of a normative power by diffusing its climate norms to other states. It is suggested that normative actors should first internalize the norms themselves. By that logic, initially, climate change in EU’s domestic politics and foreign policy are analysed. Secondly, normative powers are expected to transfer these internalized norms to the external world through diffusion. At this stage, the study concentrates on the determination of the EU with respect to encouraging Türkiye’s commitment to climate policies.

Admitting its contribution to greenhouse gases (GHG) as the third largest emitter after the United States (US) and China, the EU has been an early mover in adopting targets to reduce GHG emissions. On the internal front, the EU authorities have introduced attractive frameworks to encourage a ‘green

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Roma Rights in Turkey: De-Europeanization as a Form of Contestation

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Roma rights in Turkey: De- europeanization as a form of contestation

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the historical development of Roma rights in Turkey through the dual lenses of Europeanization and de-Europeanization, with a focus on normative contestation. Rather than disappearing, the norms introduced during the Europeanization phase have been selectively applied, reframed, and recontextualised within a ‘national and native’ policy agenda. De-Europeanization is therefore not understood as an outright rejection of European norms, but rather as their renegotiation – a process of normative contestation. To this end, a qualitative content analysis is conducted using primary documents such as EU country and progress reports, national strategies, action plans, and project findings relating to Roma rights. Particular attention is given to two key policy documents – the 2016–2021 and 2023–2030 National Roma Social Inclusion Strategies – and their respective action plans. The study traces the evolution of Turkey’s national policy framework on Roma inclusion.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 10 March 2025
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KEYWORDS

Turkey-EU relations; contestation; de-Europeanization; Roma rights

The development of Roma rights in Turkey has evolved alongside the country’s changing relationship with the European Union (EU). As a candidate country, Turkey underwent a period of Europeanization, during which there was increased recognition of Roma identity and the gradual removal of discriminatory legal provisions, among other significant normative and policy shifts. However, this has not been a linear process. In recent years, amid democratic backsliding and a broader reorientation away from the EU, Turkey has entered a phase of de-Europeanization. Rather than representing a clear break with the past, this shift has involved the selective adoption and reinterpretation of previously adopted norms within a domestically driven ‘national and native’ policy agenda.

As an EU candidate country, Turkey adopted norms related to Roma rights, prompting significant changes to domestic policies and public discourse. During this period, there was progress in repealing discriminatory provisions in legislation such as the Settlement Law and Police Regulations (see *İskan Kanunu* 1934, 2006), and there was an increase in public recognition of Roma identity. These reforms established a foundation that endured even as Turkey moved towards de-

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The Limits of EU Liberal Norm Diffusion: A Quest for ‘Better Democracy’?

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The limits of EU liberal norm diffusion: a quest for ‘better democracy’?

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the extent to which the EU has diffused liberal and democratic norms across its new members and its periphery in a context of the EU’s liberal norm diffusion on the one hand, and the populist backlash towards liberalism on the other. We measure these norms via the International Social Survey Program Citizenship modules and levels of democracy via the Varieties of Democracy Project’s liberal democracy index. We posit that while liberalism has become near synonymous with democracy, and despite findings that affirm the EU’s influence on liberal norm diffusion, the EU’s lack of consideration of alternative republican and communitarian norms has slowed down the process of democratic consolidation. These findings have policy implications especially for Hungary and Poland, where democratic erosion is evident, and for EU candidate states, Türkiye and Georgia, where, in the accession process, the EU’s liberal bias prevails over alternative democratic norms.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 1 April 2025
Accepted 14 June 2025

KEYWORDS

Norm contestation; liberalism; democratic citizenship norms; the EU

Introduction

Following the third wave of democracy (Huntington 1991) and paralleled by the dominance of the international liberal order (ILO) (Nayyar 2006, Lawson and Zarakol 2023), the principles and procedures of a specific version of democracy, *liberal democracy*, has been endorsed by aspiring democratizers (Schmitter and Karl 1991; Diamond et al. 1997), sidelining not only competing regimes but also alternative formulations of democracy. The conceptualization of liberalism and democracy as inseparable has created a perception of their being synonymous. This order was further strengthened in the 1990s when the European Union (EU), with the Maastricht Treaty (1992), decided to institute a political union along liberal lines (Manners 2002; Wagner 2017). EU citizenship, for example, one of the key tools for the diffusion and internalization of both democracy and liberalism, was established to enhance ‘the respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights’ (Akaliyski et al. 2022). Having universalist claims (Weiler et al. 1995), these liberal norms transcend the specific ethno-cultural and historical contexts of EU states, heightening the likelihood of their internalization (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998).

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This article has been corrected with minor changes. These changes do not impact the academic content of the article.
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Contesting the EU? China’s Engagement with Türkiye and the Western Balkans


Author: Gözde Yılmaz

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Contesting the EU? China’s engagement with Türkiye and the Western Balkans

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ABSTRACT
The EU has been challenged as a norm exporter both internally and externally in recent years. However, studies focused on the external dimensions of this contestation, such as the rise of China, have remained limited in the literature to date. This article accordingly explores the external dimensions of EU contestation by examining the case of Chinese engagement with Türkiye and the Western Balkan countries in the 2010s and 2020s. It is argued that despite the EU’s long engagement as a norm exporter in the aforementioned countries, its hesitant approach to enlargement opened the gates to China as an alternative gravity centre for these countries. China filled the space left empty by the EU and increased its cooperation with Türkiye and the Western Balkan countries. As a result, Chinese influence has become a reality, contesting the EU as a norm exporter in its own neighbourhood.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 8 April 2025
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KEYWORDS
Authoritarian cooperation;
China; European Union;
Türkiye; Western Balkans

Introduction

The EU has been contested from the inside and the outside in recent years due to internal developments including the rise of illiberal powers within the EU and external developments including the rise of China and Russian aggression. While internal EU dynamics have become a lively topic of scholarly work, the external dimensions of such contestation have been neglected in the literature, as Dandashly and Noutcheva (2022, 416) previously stressed. Aiming to address that gap in the literature, this study focuses on the external dimensions of EU contestation by examining the cases of Türkiye and the Western Balkans and China’s economic and political engagement with these countries.

Despite the EU’s long-standing engagement with Türkiye and the Western Balkans, they have demonstrated authoritarian tendencies, drawing the norm projection of alternative powers in the last decades. This study argues that the EU, with its hesitations in the accession processes of Türkiye and the Western Balkan countries and its overt focus on stability, particularly in the case of the Western Balkans, has opened new horizons for these countries beyond the EU, thus granting entrance to alternative powers such as China into the EU’s close neighbourhood. Furthermore, as the EU has been prioritizing stability and transactional cooperation over its normative agenda, it has inadvertently strengthened the influencing power of authoritarian leaders. In short, the EU’s approach

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Reinterpreted Liberal Norms: Türkiye’s Anti-Westernism in the Horn of Africa


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SOUTHEAST EUROPEAN AND BLACK SEA STUDIES
https://doi.org/10.1080/14683857.2025.2528339

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Reinterpreted liberal norms: Türkiye’s anti-Westernism in the Horn of Africa

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ABSTRACT
This paper investigates how Türkiye, as a regional actor, penetrated the Horn of Africa by adopting an anti-Western approach and reinterpreting liberal norms. Türkiye appealed to an anti-colonial discourse, particularly during the ongoing deterioration of its relations with the West. Turkish political elites blamed the West for maintaining colonialist policies in the Horn of Africa while portraying themselves as a benevolent actor inspired by the Ottoman charity culture based on humanitarianism and conscience. In its engagement in the Horn of Africa, the Ottoman charity model, humanitarianism, and conscience became basic concepts of Ankara’s narratives. The political elites claimed that Türkiye’s humanitarian and conscientious approach aimed at revitalizing liberal norms like human rights, democracy, pluralism, and respect for diversity, which the West had abandoned.



ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 21 March 2025
Accepted 28 June 2025

KEYWORDS
Liberal norms; Horn of Africa;
ottoman charity; anti-colonialism; Human-oriented foreign policy

Introduction

Türkiye’s foreign policy towards the Horn of Africa is a significant element of its engagement with liberal principles such as human rights, democracy, pluralism, and multilateral cooperation. Since 2005, as Türkiye has broadened its political and economic influence in the region, it has differentiated itself from Western states by promoting the narrative that its actions are guided by ‘humanitarian and conscientious values rooted in its history.’ This framing positions Türkiye in sharp contrast to the West, which it depicts as having a history characterized by colonialism, materialism, and self-interest. Turkish political elites frequently emphasized the idea of ‘human-oriented foreign policy.’

This study contends that Türkiye, in its engagement with the Horn of Africa, operates within the framework of the liberal international order by reinterpreting liberal norms even while adopting a critical stance towards the West. The Horn of Africa, encompassing Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Djibouti, and Eritrea, was selected as the focal point because it is the area where Türkiye has most prominently articulated its anti-Western position while conducting its humanitarian and infrastructure initiatives. Some statements of political elites that reference the broader African continent have also been incorporated into this study. This inclusion is significant because the Horn of Africa is where Türkiye has conducted the most extensive aid and infrastructure projects.

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A Difficult Change: Norm Contestation in Multiple Veto Player Settings


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A difficult change: norm contestation in multiple veto player settings

Ali Baydarol 

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ABSTRACT
How do international norms diffuse into a domestic setting with multiple veto players? The extant scholarship has moved beyond system-centric explanations by recognizing the central role played by agency in mitigating norm diffusion. This article links the scholarly work on norm contestation to economic reform literature to evince how veto players with divergent preferences can become the main drivers of norm contestation. While privatization arose as an international norm in the 1980s under the Washington Consensus, the current article investigates how it encountered staunch contestation in Turkey during the 1990s and early 2000s. In this period, norm-conforming ruling parties strategically modified their behaviour to confront multiple norm-contesting veto players, ultimately culminating in privatization after a prolonged process. Accordingly, the Turkish case shows that norm adoption is not necessarily a one-time occurrence and can come after a rational-choice-informed bargaining process in the domestic realm.



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KEYWORDS
Norm diffusion; norm contestation; veto players; Turkey; Privatization

Introduction

Following the earlier system-level accounts highlighting how states quickly internalize prevailing international norms (Finnemore 1993; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998), scholars began drawing attention to norm contestation – the central role played by agency in conditioning norm diffusion, broadly put (Acharya 2004; Checkel 1999; Krampf 2013; Aydın-Düzgüt 2018; Wiener 2014). Most often, norm contestation mechanisms hinge on the logic of appropriateness (Checkel 1999; Acharya 2004; Wiener 2014), with the underlying assumption that effective norm internalization requires a convergence between the international norm and the domestic normative environment. This paper links the scholarly work on norm diffusion to the literature on economic reforms and veto players, actors capable of hindering reform implementation. Accordingly, it offers a strategic interaction-based explanation for norm contestation.

Reforms and policy changes are essential mechanisms that allow the transfer of an international norm into a domestic setting. Yet, such transfer inevitably demands approval from veto players. While the conventional view in the comparative politics

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Regional Migration Governance and the Selective Framing of Norms: A Comparative Analysis of BSEC and SEECP

Liberal Norm Contestation in the Periphery: Assessing Türkiye’s Shifting Peacemaking Approach in Cyprus

Authors: Damla Aksel, Gülece Şenel

Author: Esra Dilek

Regional migration governance and the selective framing of norms: a comparative analysis of BSEC and SEECP

Damla Aksel ^a and Gülece Şenel^b

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^bDepartment of International Relations, Ahmet Yasawi University, Türkistan, Kazakhstan

ABSTRACT

This article explores how regional organizations engage in the construction, diffusion and contestation of migration and mobility norms. Drawing on the literature on regionalism and migration governance, this study adopts region as the primary unit of analysis and examines how normative agendas of regional organizations are shaped, depoliticized and selectively implemented. Focusing on the South-East Europe and Black Sea (SEBS) region, the study analyses two intergovernmental platforms with limited institutionalization: Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP). Through a Critical Discourse Analysis of over 100 institutional documents produced from the early 1990s to 2024, the article investigates how these organizations address migration and mobility in response to shifting geopolitical dynamics. The findings suggest that BSEC and SEECP do not operate as cohesive norm entrepreneurs. Rather, they function as discursive arenas where migration governance is negotiated and selectively framed, reflecting broader power asymmetries and institutional constraints.

ARTICLE HISTORY



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KEYWORDS

Regionalism; migration; norms; selectivity; depoliticization

Introduction

The construction, diffusion, contestation, reframing and selective implementation of migration and mobility norms by states and international organizations have received increasing attention in recent years, especially in the wake of the so-called ‘migration crisis’ of 2015. While much of the scholarship has centred on the role of the European Union (EU) as a norm promoter in migration governance, other regional organizations remain understudied, despite growing interest in cases such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) or Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Lavenex et al. 2016). The Southeast Europe and Black Sea (SEBS) region present a compelling yet underexplored setting to investigate how migration-related norms are constructed, invoked and reinterpreted through regional cooperation platforms. This article addresses this gap by analysing two intergovernmental organizations: the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP). It asks how these organizations frame norms around

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Liberal norm contestation in the periphery: assessing Türkiye’s shifting peacemaking approach in Cyprus

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ABSTRACT

The contestation of liberal peacemaking is assessed as part of a broader normative shift, characterized by growing challenges to the Liberal International Order (LIO), led by rising powers such as Russia and China. This paper focuses on Türkiye as a rising middle-power country situated on the European periphery to assess Türkiye’s evolving peacemaking approach regarding the Cyprus conflict. The political discourse for the post-2017 period reveals that Türkiye has engaged in two contestation types with regard to the Cyprus conflict: First, *power contestation*, through which Türkiye contests the actorness of the EU and the UN in peacemaking in Cyprus. Second, *normative contestation*, wherein Türkiye prioritizes sovereign equality over mediated negotiations and contests the selective application of core liberal principles such as justice and rights in peacemaking in Cyprus. Both contestation strategies reflect Türkiye’s effort to reassert agency and secure status as a rising power within the international order.

ARTICLE HISTORY




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KEYWORDS

Norm contestation; rising powers; Turkey; Cyprus

Introduction

A global shift in the normative influence of the Liberal International Order (LIO), which provided the dominant framework for accepted state behaviour during most of the twentieth century, is taking place. Scholars point to how rising powers (Newman and Zala 2018), authoritarian powers (Bettiza and Lewis 2020), (semi)peripheral actors (Adler-Nissen and Zarakol 2021), and the ‘subaltern’ (Kobayashi et al. 2022), widely referring to states outside of the core liberal West, challenge the existing order by contesting the norms and power structures that make it up. While the challenge to the LIO comes also from within (Adler-Nissen and Zarakol 2021; Lake et al. 2021), it is more voiced and systematic outside of the core, especially by rising powerful countries such as Russia and China. This contestation covers both normative and representational aspects, i.e., it is directed both towards the principles (e.g., non-intervention, democracy) and the institutions (e.g., the control of institutions such as the UNSC) of the LIO (Newman and Zala 2018). Although challenges to the LIO may have decentralized and therefore democratized global governance to an extent, the rise of authoritarian middle powers

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ValEUs: Research & Education Network on Contestations to EU Foreign Policy

ERASMUS-JMO-2023-NETWORKS



The project titled '**VALEUS: Research & Education Network on Contestations to EU Foreign Policy**' the application of which was made by a consortium including **Prof. Ayhan Kaya**, Faculty Member in the Department of International Relations at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities and Director of European Institute, as co-coordinator and Faculty Member, **Özge Onursal Beşgül**, PhD from the Department of International Relations and the Vice Director of European Institute, as researcher was entitled to receive the support of European Commission's Erasmus + Jeanne Monnet Policy Debate programme.

In recent years, the EU has faced unprecedented challenges to live up to its mission to create a peaceful future based on common values. Despite the incorporation of foundational values into instruments of global governance, societal actors have increasingly opposed both the methods by which the EU propagates its values and the values themselves. Understanding contestations is of utmost importance, not only for the resilience of the EU but also for its future role on the international scene.

ValEUs main objectives are (1) to enquire into the various contestations of the EU values and provide a realistic account of EU Foreign Policy; (2) to learn more about potential and successful counterstrategies to contestations and develop an alternative policy agenda; (3) to promote a new role for universities as responsible actors, as laboratories for democracy and committed partners to endangered regions, such as Ukraine.

ValEUs convenes 21 partner institutions from 18 countries and five continents. All institutions have a strong expertise in EU Studies across a wide range of academic disciplines and share the mission to build collective research capacity (WP3), develop innovative teaching collaboration (WP4) and engage in impactful societal policy debate (WP5), resulting in policy recommendations for EU and non-EU stakeholders. The consortium will create a common Peer Review Platform (WP2), organise academic conferences, co-teaching projects in cooperation with Ukrainian Global University, student laboratories for democratic participation and policy debates with civil society and political stakeholders. Moreover, it will disseminate and communicate project results through the project webpage and effective communication channels targeted to different stakeholders (WP6). Network insights will be published in working papers, policy briefs and a regular newsletter. For a greater public ValEUs will edit a MOOC and a dedicated podcast.

Istanbul Bilgi University Team

Prof. Ayhan Kaya
Dr. Özge Onursal Beşgül
Didem Balatlıoğulları, MA

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PUBLICATIONS, NEWS & EVENTS

New Massive Open Online Course (MOOC): Values in European Union Foreign Policy



We are pleased to announce the launch of a new Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) titled “**Values in European Union Foreign Policy**”, developed by scholars from the **ValEUs network**, an interdisciplinary consortium of twenty partner universities across five continents.

This free online course consists of **13 lectures** and offers a comprehensive introduction to how values shape the European Union’s foreign policy and how these values are increasingly contested. Through video lectures, presentations, readings, and an online exam, participants gain critical insights into the EU’s role as a normative power, challenges to value-based foreign policymaking, and contemporary debates surrounding democracy, human rights, migration, and populism.

The MOOC is open to **students, researchers, practitioners, policymakers, journalists**, and anyone interested in EU foreign policy and norm contestation. Upon successful completion of the course and final exam, participants receive a **digital certificate**.

The course is offered within the framework of the **Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Policy Network “ValEUs – Research & Education Network on Contestations to EU Foreign Policy.”**

Shaping the future of EU foreign policy through research, dialogue, and global collaboration

"This Course is designed within the framework of an Erasmus Jean Monnet Network Project titled “ValEUs - Research & Education Network on Contestations to EU Foreign Policy”. The main objectives of this course are:

(1) equip the students with the skills to enquire into the various contestations of the EU values and provide a realistic account of EU Foreign Policy

(2) to provide the students with a scientific platform to learn more about potential and successful counterstrategies to contestations

(3) to promote democracy, human rights, solidarity, peace, justice, equality, and prosperity in and outside Europe."

Ayhan Kaya
İstanbul Bilgi University

→ Click [here](#) to register for the course.

→ Click [here](#) to learn more about ValEUs.

ValEUs - LECTURE SERIES

The **ValEUs Lecture Series** is a core outreach and knowledge-exchange activity of the ValEUs Project, designed to foster critical debate on the **contestation of European values** in the context of **EU foreign policy and global governance**. The series brings together leading scholars, early-career researchers, and practitioners to engage with key political, social, and normative challenges facing the European Union today.

Hosted by partner institutions within the ValEUs consortium, the Lecture Series provides an open platform for academic discussion and interdisciplinary exchange. It is addressed to **academics, students, civil**

society actors, and policymakers interested in European studies, international relations, democracy, and values-based governance.

Themes and Academic Scope

Across its editions, the ValEUs Lecture Series has covered a wide range of interrelated themes, including:

- **European values and their external projection**
- **EU foreign policy and diplomacy**
- **Democracy, populism, and democratic resilience**
- **Migration governance and border politics**
- **EU enlargement, neighbourhood policy, and peripherality**
- **Regional perspectives on Europe**, including insights from Africa, Central Asia, Ukraine, and the EU neighbourhood
- **Geopolitics, double standards, and normative power debates**

The lectures combine **theoretical reflection, empirical research, and policy-oriented analysis**, offering nuanced perspectives on how European values are promoted, contested, and reinterpreted in different political and regional contexts.

Lecture Format and Accessibility

Each lecture features a focused presentation followed by discussion and audience engagement. To ensure broad accessibility and long-term impact, **all lectures are recorded and made available online**, allowing audiences to revisit the discussions and use them as teaching and research resources.

Selected Lecture Topics

Recent lectures in the series have addressed topics such as:

- The diplomatic system and institutional architecture of the European Union
- Perceptions of “European values” from Central Asia
- Double standards in EU–Africa relations
- Value conflicts and democratic challenges within Europe

- Electoral politics and leadership change in Europe
- Responses to populist parties and their impact on EU politics

Together, these contributions offer a comprehensive overview of current debates surrounding **values, power, and legitimacy** in EU external action.

Watch the Lecture Series

All lectures in the ValEUs Lecture Series are available online.

[Explore the full series and watch the recordings here!](#)

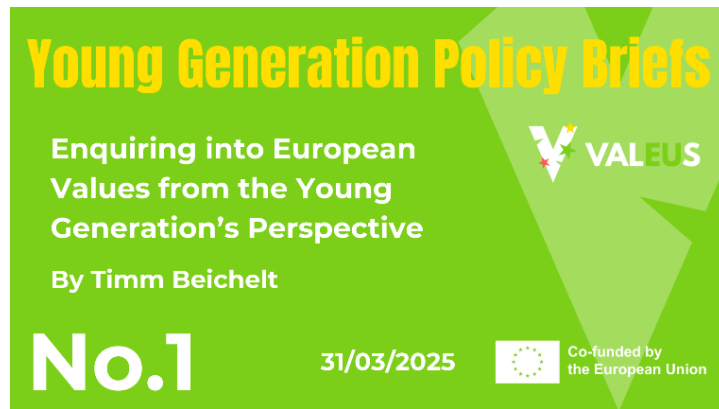
ValEUs - YOUNG GENERATION POLICY BRIEFS

As part of the **ValEUs Project**, the **Young Generation Policy Briefs** series brings together policy-oriented analyses written by university students and young researchers on contemporary European and global issues. The series aims to amplify **young perspectives on European values, EU policies, and current political challenges**, while fostering dialogue between younger generations, academia, and policy-making communities.

Each policy brief presents concise analyses and concrete policy recommendations, contributing to ongoing debates on democracy, migration, climate change, enlargement, social inclusion, and global responsibility from a youth-centred viewpoint.

The **Young Generation Policy Briefs** reflect ValEUs’ commitment to encouraging critical thinking, civic engagement, and the active participation of young people in discussions on European values and policymaking processes.

Young Generation Policy Brief no. 1: Enquiring into European Values from the Young Generation's Perspective



In this first issue, **Prof. Timm Beichelt** presents a practical guide on writing a policy brief and introduces the concept behind the Young Generation Policy Briefs by summarising key issues at stake in the proclamation and contestation of European values.

Timm Beichelt is a political scientist and professor of European Studies at the European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder), located on the German-Polish border. He is the principal investigator of ValEUs, a global research and education network scrutinising the European Union's foreign policy and attacks on its foundational values.

→ Explore all Young Generation Policy Briefs [here](#)!

Second Annual VAEUS Conference: “State (In)Stability and Eu Foreign Policy”

The **ValEUs Project** successfully convened its **Second Annual Conference**, titled *State (In)Stability and EU Foreign Policy*, in **Zagreb, Croatia, on 2–4 October 2025**. Hosted by **Libertas International University** and the **University of Zagreb**, the conference brought together international scholars and experts to engage in in-depth discussions on Europe's values, instability, democracy, migration, and the European Union's role in global politics.

The conference opened on **2 October** with a welcome reception and a keynote dialogue featuring **Ivo Josipović**, former President of Croatia, and **Mykhailo Minakov**, DAAD Guest Professor at the **European Institute** at European University Viadrina. The dialogue offered reflections on European values and the

contemporary challenges posed by political and societal instability.

Over the course of three days, the programme featured thematic panels and parallel sessions addressing a broad range of topics, including **values and populism, democratic resilience, EU foreign policy and geopolitics, migration and borders, EU enlargement and peripherality**, as well as the **promotion and contestation of European values**. Regional perspectives spanned **Europe, Ukraine, Latin America, Africa, the EU neighbourhood, and Central Asia**, providing critical insights into how the EU navigates instability in an increasingly turbulent global environment.

The discussions combined **theoretical approaches, empirical research, and policy-oriented analyses**, with contributions examining issues such as **migration governance, geopolitical transformations, democratic backsliding, climate justice**, and the EU's external action across multiple regions.

The conference concluded on **4 October** with a closing session that brought together key insights and reflections from across the panels, highlighting the conference's contribution to ongoing debates on EU foreign policy and instability.



→ Click [here](#) to view the full conference schedule.

ValEUs Summer School 2025: “Multiple Crises and The Contestation of EU Values”

11-15 August, 2025



Organised within the framework of the ValEUs Project, the Summer School on Multiple Crises and the Contestation of EU Values brought together students and scholars from around the world for an intensive academic programme. The Summer School was held simultaneously in Mexico, Denmark, and Turkey, with joint online sessions enabling real-time transnational academic exchange.

In Turkey, the **ValEUs Istanbul Summer School** was hosted by **İstanbul Bilgi University** at its **santralistanbul Campus** on the historic Golden Horn. The programme focused on **migration and EU enlargement in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine**, offering a comprehensive curriculum that addressed both local and regional dynamics.

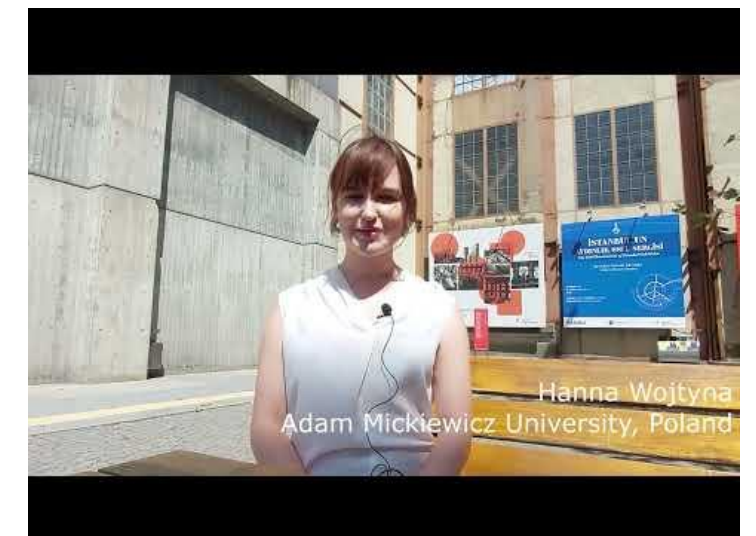
Sessions covered topics such as **EU migration and asylum policies, mass migration, the situation of Syrian refugees in Türkiye, and the externalization, diffusion, and contestation of European norms** across the **Balkans, Ukraine, Moldova, and the Caucasus**. These themes enabled participants to critically engage with

the EU's role as a normative actor amid geopolitical uncertainty and shifting enlargement prospects.

The Istanbul Summer School brought together an **international faculty and participants** for an **intensive academic experience** that combined **theoretical analysis with discussions rooted in real-world policy challenges**. The programme hosted **21 advanced undergraduate students** and was led by **Prof. Ayhan Kaya, Dr. Özge Onursal-Besgöl, Dr. Ozan Kuyumcuoğlu, and Didem Balatlıoğulları** from the **European Institute** at **İstanbul Bilgi University**.

→ Click [here](#) to read the official ValEUs article.

You can watch the **ValEUs Summer School: Multiple crises and contestation of EU values** video to get insights into our Summer School experience.



Insights from Participants of the ValEUs Summer School 2025

From Summer School to Institutional Practice: Engaging with European Studies

Dilara Korkmaz
Istanbul Bilgi University
International Relations



Participating in the VALEUS Summer School and my ongoing internship at the Bilgi European Institute became one of the most informative experiences of my academic journey at Istanbul Bilgi University. Both experiences allowed me not only to deepen my understanding of European studies and values so far, but also to observe how academic knowledge, various perspectives, and institutional work come together in practice.

One of the nicest aspects of the VALEUS Summer School was the opportunity to spend time with students from different countries and academic backgrounds. Sharing ideas inside the classroom and discovering Istanbul together outside made the experience truly memorable. Also, learning more about the cultural

perspectives of the other participants enriched my personal journey just as much as the academic one.

In my opinion, the seminars were very well designed because each session opened a pathway for us to make critical discussions about global politics and how the EU values are integrated into it. Also, the openness of the discussions and the ability to engage directly with academics encouraged me to understand how theoretical debates translate into concrete policy challenges, especially via the simulation practice during the summer school. It felt like every discussion opened another door for me and gave me the space to develop both academically and personally.

Moreover, my internship at the Bilgi European Institute has been very enriching through various research topics and interdisciplinary work that we have been accomplishing, which is deeply valuable for me in the purpose of learning more and widening my perspective, also in the sense of creativity. What made this journey truly meaningful was feeling involved in a group that values curiosity, dialogue, and cultural exchange. Being part of the Bilgi European Institute helps me to widen my academic interests, especially about EU norms, and strengthens my goal to pursue further studies in this area.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to participate and contribute to this project and the internship. These experiences will definitely guide me throughout my future studies.

A Collective Learning Experience at the ValEUs Summer School

Enes İçen
Istanbul Bilgi University
International Relations



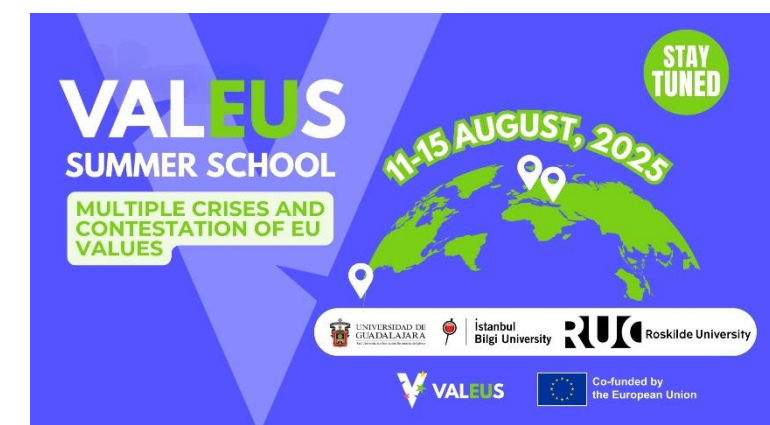
When the Summer School started, I was already quite excited because of the programme content and the international group of participants. As the week progressed, I realised that the experience went beyond theoretical discussions and offered a valuable opportunity to practise thinking together with students coming from different contexts. Spending a week closely with students from various countries made the programme meaningful for me both academically and personally.

The Summer School experience was not limited to lectures and seminars. Having time outside the sessions to spend time together, explore the city, and continue conversations in a more informal setting made the experience even more enriching. Sharing both academic discussions and everyday experiences with students from different countries helped me see how the same

topics can be approached from a variety of perspectives.

Throughout the week, the programme brought together discussions on European values, multiple crises, migration, and democracy, which were explored through lectures as well as open discussions. In this setting, learning often took place through exchange rather than instruction, which made the sessions more engaging for me. Some discussions also encouraged me to reflect on ideas I had previously taken for granted.

One of the most valuable aspects of the Summer School was the warm and inclusive atmosphere. The friendships formed in a short period of time and the shared experiences turned the programme into more than an academic activity; it became a collective learning space. In this sense, the Summer School offered an experience based not only on listening, but also on interaction and thinking together. Experiencing this firsthand showed me how meaningful and important such programmes can be for students.



Academic Exchange and Cultural Encounters in Istanbul: ValEUs Summer School

Parker Schab
University of Pittsburgh
Political Science



As a student pursuing a political science degree I have continued to incorporate the lessons I learned, both in and out of the classroom, from my time in Istanbul into my personal and professional life. Many of the topics discussed in the ValEu's Summer School, such as Turkey's role in EU security programs and the migrant crisis at the Polish-Belarusian border, have been extremely valuable in enriching my academic interests back in Pittsburgh, where I have further discussed these topics in policy reviews and in my broader coursework on international human rights. The summer school curriculum deepened my understanding of international migration policy and the asylum process, the politics of borders, and both the current and historical status of EU-Turkey relations.

Along with the knowledge I brought home from Istanbul, was the memory of a great week with newfound friends. The students I met, both those from Turkey and those who had travelled from other parts of the world to Turkey, were energetic, intellectual, and kind. We engaged in discussions about life in our home countries and shared stories about our individual college experiences. I found great inspiration in learning about the different cultures of the students attending the program.

At the conclusion of each class day, the student-assistants from Istanbul Bilgi guided us on tours around the city of Istanbul, sharing the history of many important locations including the Blue Mosque and Galata Tower. The passion of these student assistants and the love for their country was clear. During these daily trips, I felt deeply immersed in the culture and excitement of Istanbul, experiencing the warmth of the people, the delicious food, and the vibrant energy. Istanbul is a place I would love to return to and would

Merhaba, my name is Parker Schab, a third-year political science student at the University of Pittsburgh. This past August, I was given the wonderful opportunity to travel to Istanbul for the ValEUs Summer School on "Migration and Enlargement in the Wake of the War in Ukraine." Each day of the week-long program featured a different topic, taught by a different professor. Topic areas included migration to and from Turkey, the evolution of a Ukrainian national identity through history, and the EU's desire to quickly securitize Europe in light of recent geopolitical stressors. Learning these contemporaneously relevant topics from highly knowledgeable professors of diverse backgrounds is something that I will always be grateful for.

recommend the VALEUs summer school to any interested student.

UPCOMING EVENTS



ValEUs Lecture Series (17): "In the Spirit of the European Values" - Bulgarian-North Macedonia's Dispute Over History and Memory

Join our upcoming ValEUs Lecture "In the Spirit of the European Values"— Bulgarian-North Macedonia's Dispute over History and Memory with Dr. Naum Trajanovski. Trajanovski is a Guest Lecturer at the European University Viadrina (supported by the Meyer Struckmann Stiftung) and a researcher at the University of Warsaw.

About the Lecture: The lecture examines how disputes over history and memory become sites of societal and ontological security seeking in the context of the Bulgaria-North Macedonia relationship, highlighting the central role of intellectuals and commemorative practices in these processes.

In two recently written chapters co-authored with Ivan Nikolovski, we argue that when states are perceived as failing to adequately defend national identity, intellectuals step in as key securitization actors by framing foundational historical narratives and memories as existentially threatened, thereby linking ontological and societal security through memory politics. Empirically, the lecture focuses on three contested commemorations, showing how co-claimed historical figures generate divergent paths of renegotiating the Macedonian national master narrative. These cases illustrate varying entanglements between national icons, temporal security, and securitization, revealing how struggles over the past continue to shape contemporary identity insecurity and political conflict.

Date & time: 19/01/2026 | 1:00 – 2:00 PM (Germany, UTC+1)

Venue: European University Viadrina, Gräfin-Dönhoff-Gebäude, Room GD 102

Live stream: via Panopto

[Click here for the livestream](#)

Call for Applications



Graduate students (Master's and PhD) are invited to apply for the upcoming **online ValEUs Graduate Student Conference**, hosted by **Al Akhawayn University (Morocco)** on **29–30 May 2026**.

Application deadline: 16/01/2026

Apply to: ValEUs@au.ma

[Call for Papers \(PDF\)](#)

[Click here to read more!](#)

PLEDGE

Politics of Grievance and Democratic Governance



PROJECT ID

Title: Politics of Grievance and Democratic Governance

Call: HORIZON-CL2-2023-DEMOCRACY-01

Call Topic: The emotional politics of democracies

Start Date: February 2024

End Date: January 2027

Consortium: 15 partners – 11 countries

The project titled ‘**PLEDGE: Politics of Grievance and Democratic Governance**’ to which **Prof. Ayhan Kaya**, Faculty Member in the Department of International Relations at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities and the Director of the European Institute, applied as co-coordinator and **Prof. Pinar Uyan Semerci** and **Prof. Emre Erdoğan**, Faculty Members in the Department of International Relations, applied as researchers was entitled to receive the support of European Commission’s Horizon Europe programme.

Contemporary politics is angry and vengeful, with affective polarization and uncompromising antagonisms posing a significant challenge for European democracies and their governance. PLEDGE interprets political grievances as emotional signals of disaffection, frustration and insecurities that can develop into either anti- or prodemocratic outcomes. By engaging in collaborative research design and implementation involving academics, policy-makers, civil society actors, and citizens, the PLEDGE project intends to offer new understanding of anti- and pro-democratic trajectories of political grievances, and to co-create tools and practices of emotionally intelligent and responsive democratic governance and policy communication that promote prodemocratic forms of civic engagement.

The project will provide a framework of the emotional mechanisms of anti- and prodemocratic grievance politics that explain dynamic interrelations between the emotions, values, and identities of citizens and groups, and empirically decode the psychological, sociocultural, and political drivers of these emotional mechanisms into operationalizable measures and indicators, focusing on 11 countries and 3 major crises (pandemic, war in Ukraine, climate/energy crisis).

PLEDGE will achieve these objectives through a cross-national interdisciplinary research project involving 15 partners and its policy outputs, co-created and piloted in design coalitions, will inform democratic innovation of processes and practices and incorporate emotions in the designed-for outcomes, thus improving their efficiency.

İstanbul Bilgi University Team

Prof. Ayhan Kaya
Prof. Pinar Uyan-Semerci
Assoc. Prof. Emre Erdoğan
Dr. Özlem Cihan
Didem Balatlıoğulları, MA

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PUBLICATIONS, NEWS & EVENTS

Working Paper No: 19

Emotions, Grievances, and Democratic Governance

Ayhan Kaya, Emre Erdoğan, Pinar Uyan-Semerci, and Özlem Cihan



→Click [here](#) to read the working paper.

PLEDGE Workshop:
From Understanding to Action: Co-Creating
Democratic Innovation with CSOs

On **28 November 2025**, the **PLEDGE** project hosted the online workshop **“From Understanding to Action: Co-Creating Democratic Innovation with CSOs.”** The event brought together civil society representatives, project partners, and practitioners to explore how democratic innovation can be collaboratively designed with civil society organisations (CSOs/NGOs).

The workshop featured discussions on **practical approaches to democratic innovation**, ways to strengthen cooperation between research initiatives and civil society, and strategies for turning shared understanding into actionable projects. Participants exchanged insights on current challenges, identified opportunities for collaboration, and reflected on supporting democratic resilience across diverse civic contexts.

We thank all participants for their engagement and contributions, which helped make the workshop a valuable space for dialogue and collective learning.

Co-funded by
the European Union


PLEDGE


UK Research
and Innovation

EU Grant Agreement No.: 101192560
UKRI Grant Agreement No.: 10108342

WORKSHOP AGENDA

“From Understanding to Action: Co-Creating Democratic Innovation with CSOs”

Time
13:30-15:00 (CET)
28/11/2025

Online workshop
Register [here](#)

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

| Time Slot(s) | Activity |
|-----------------|--|
| ➤ 13:30-13:40 | Welcome, Workshop Agenda & Objectives of the workshop |
| ➤ 13:40 – 13:55 | Presentation – PLEDGE contributions to public administration and civil society, by <i>Kai Aihonen</i> (Dialogue Academy) |
| ➤ 13:55 – 14:05 | Experience Sharing – What are civil society practitioners facing? |
| ➤ 14:05 – 14:20 | Interactive session – Feedback on PLEDGE outputs: What would work best for you? |
| ➤ 14:20 – 14:35 | Keynote – Grievances, emotions and political engagement, by <i>Prof. Tereza Capelos</i> (University of Southampton) |
| ➤ 14:35 – 14:50 | Reflections and open discussion |
| ➤ 14:50 – 15:00 | Next steps & closing Remarks |


University of Southampton


UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE


Dialogue Academy


A&P


University of Birmingham


KIPRA


Innovat Wp University


UCL


University of Manchester


University of Liverpool


STIRLING

pledgeproject.eu

→ Click [here](#) for more information.

Joint Workshop:
From Research to Policy: Emotions and Policy
Making in Practice



On **29 October 2025**, the joint workshop **“From Research to Policy: Emotions and Policy Making in Practice”** brought together policy-makers, researchers, and stakeholders to discuss how emotions shape contemporary policy-making processes across Europe.

Organised within the framework of the EU Horizon projects **MORES**, **PLEDGE**, and **PROTEMO**, the workshop presented interim research findings on the role of emotions in agenda setting, policy learning, coalition building, and public support. Participants explored how emotional dynamics influence policy narratives and democratic processes from design to implementation.

The programme featured insights from **MORES** on big data analyses of emotional framing in European policy discourses, contributions from **PLEDGE** on citizens’ emotional needs and democratic design, and findings from **PROTEMO** based on an 11-country survey conducted in Spring 2025 examining emotions and support for protective policies.

The workshop provided participants with **evidence-based insights and practical perspectives** for fostering resilient, inclusive, and emotionally intelligent democratic governance, while also contributing to forthcoming policy recommendations.

→ Click [here](#) for more information.

Research Report: PLEDGE Conceptual Framework
v1



Research Report: PLEDGE
Conceptual Framework, v1
November, 2024

The *PLEDGE Conceptual Framework* provides a theoretical foundation for analysing the emotional dynamics of grievance politics and their impact on political engagement. Focusing on emotions triggered by perceived social and political injustices, the framework examines how such dynamics can lead to both pro- and anti-democratic behaviours. It introduces two key emotional mechanisms - **EMRes** (Emotional Mechanism of Ressentiment) and **EMSoS** (Emotional Mechanism of Solidarity-Oriented Sharing) - to capture divergent emotional pathways shaping political action. Developed as a shared and evolving reference model, the framework defines core concepts, links emotional processes to social and political contexts, and aligns closely with the PLEDGE Codebook, together forming the backbone of the project’s research strategy.

→ Click [here](#) to read the full report

New Policy Brief | PLEDGE
An Emotionally Intelligent ‘European
Democracy Shield’
Politics of Grievance & Democratic Governance

14 March 2025

This PLEDGE policy brief responds to the European Commission’s proposal for a **European Democracy Shield** by highlighting the central role of emotions in contemporary grievance politics and democratic governance. Drawing on interdisciplinary research, the brief argues that political grievances when left unacknowledged can fuel polarisation, disinformation, and anti-democratic mobilisation. It introduces emotionally intelligent policy principles, including **democratic listening mechanisms**, **emotion-aware communication strategies**, and **inclusive democratic design**, to help transform grievances into opportunities for democratic co-creation and societal resilience across the European Union.



→ Click [here](#) to read the policy brief.

PLEDGE Consortium Meets in Budapest for Midterm
Review and Strategic Exchange

23–25 April 2025 | Budapest

From 23 to 25 April 2025, partners of the PLEDGE project convened in Budapest for a three-day General Assembly hosted by the HUN-REN Centre for Social Sciences. The meeting provided an opportunity to review progress, strengthen collaboration across work packages, and shape the project’s next phase.

Scientific panels chaired by PLEDGE research leaders highlighted ongoing work on grievance politics and emotionally intelligent governance. The programme also included the 2nd Workshop on Democratic Design, focusing on emotionally responsive policy tools, as well as Impact Strategy discussions aimed at enhancing policy relevance and stakeholder engagement.

A Sibling Projects Roundtable brought together representatives from MORES, PROTEMO, CIDAPE, and ENCODE to explore synergies in communication and dissemination. The meeting further featured a Periodic Review session with external reviewers, followed by a Meet & Greet with local policymakers, civil society organisations, and NGOs—reinforcing PLEDGE’s commitment to bridging research and practice in support of democratic resilience.



New Book | PLEDGE
Managing Moral Emotions in Divided Politics

Edited by Gabriella Szabó



A new book published within the scope of the PLEDGE project, *Managing Moral Emotions in Divided Politics* explores the role of emotion-based morality in contemporary political conflict and polarisation. Edited by Gabriella Szabó, Senior Research Fellow at the HUN-REN Centre for Social Sciences, the volume brings together interdisciplinary perspectives on how moral emotions shape political judgement, mobilisation, and democratic engagement in divided societies. The book contributes to ongoing debates on emotions, governance, and democratic resilience—key themes at the heart of the PLEDGE project.

→ Click [here](#) to learn more about the book.

PLEDGE Newsletter | First and Second Issues
Published



The **first and second issues of the PLEDGE project newsletter** have been published and are now available.

The newsletters bring together key highlights from the project, including **recent research activities, publications, policy outputs, and events**, offering a comprehensive overview of ongoing work within the **PLEDGE Horizon Europe project**, which explores the role of emotions in grievance politics and democratic engagement.

While the **first issue** introduces the project’s objectives and initial activities, the **second issue (May 2025)** provides a more detailed update on recent research deliverables, policy briefs, international events, and upcoming activities.

→Click [here](#) to read the first issue.

→Click [here](#) to read the second issue.

PLEDGE Project Documents Now Available on Zenodo

The **PLEDGE Horizon Europe Project** has launched a dedicated **Zenodo community**, providing open access to key project outputs in one central repository. This platform brings together **project documents, publications, reports, and other research materials**, ensuring long-term accessibility and transparency. The Zenodo community will be continuously updated as new outputs become available, offering a valuable resource for researchers, students, practitioners, and all those interested in the project's work on grievance politics, emotions, and democratic governance.



→ **Explore** the PLEDGE Project on Zenodo!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sixth Helsinki Conference on Emotions, Populism and Polarisation (HEPP6)

18–20 May 2026 | Helsinki & Online

The Sixth Helsinki Conference on *Emotions, Populism and Polarised Politics, Media, and Culture* (HEPP6) will take place on 18–20 May 2026 in a hybrid format, hosted by the University of Helsinki. Closely aligned with the research focus of the PLEDGE project, the conference brings together interdisciplinary perspectives on emotions, grievance politics, populism, political polarisation, and mediated political communication. HEPP6 provides an important forum for scholarly exchange on the emotional dynamics shaping contemporary democratic and anti-democratic processes.



→ Click **here** more about the conference.

SELECTED BLOG POSTS

Youth Radicalism in Europe: Nativists vs Islamists*

Part I

Ayhan Kaya

Istanbul Bilgi University

Across Europe, growing numbers of young people—both from majority and minority backgrounds—are feeling increasingly disconnected from the societies they live in. Socioeconomic hardship, political disillusionment, spatial segregation, and everyday insecurity have become shared experiences that transcend cultural and religious boundaries. These forms of deprivation are well-known breeding grounds for radicalisation, whether expressed through **nativist** or **religious** idioms.

The word *radical* comes from the Latin *radix*, meaning “root.” In this sense, radicalisation can be seen as a process of *returning to the roots*—a search for belonging, dignity, and control in times of uncertainty. In its original use, the word suggests a return to something foundational, historically and politically. However, *radical* has evolved to mean *breaking up with the roots*, or *changing the roots* — seeking transformation from the ground up rather than a return to origins. So, while the etymology points to “roots,” the modern sense of *radicalisation* often implies *uprooting, redefining, or challenging* the status quo or existing systems.

When people feel lost or disconnected in today's fast-changing world, many look back to their “roots” for a sense of stability and belonging. But there's an important difference between *reactionism* and *rootedness*. Reactionism is a backward-looking impulse—it rejects the present and idealises a mythical past. Rootedness, on the other hand, can be a healthy search for meaning, as long as it stays connected to current realities. In other words, wanting to reconnect with one's roots isn't the problem; the problem arises when that search turns into an escape from the world we live in now. Radical movements often

draw their power from this tension: they feed on the desire for grounding but twist it into a rejection of the present. The real challenge, then, is to find ways of being rooted that don't require turning our backs on modern life.

Across Europe today, a growing number of young people are searching for meaning and belonging in divided societies. For some, that search takes the form of turning inward toward exclusionary nationalism; for others, it leads to a stronger embrace of religious identity in response to marginalisation. These paths might look different, but they mirror each other in important ways. Each side's fears and frustrations end up reinforcing the other's, creating a vicious cycle of mutual radicalisation. This “co-radicalisation” does not just deepen mistrust; it also slowly wears away the shared social ground that could otherwise bring these young people together.

Structural Roots Behind Radicalism

Both nativist and Islamist radicalisation can be traced back to similar structural conditions. Unemployment, racism, xenophobia, exclusion, alienation, humiliation, and the pressures of assimilation all feed into a deep sense of *anomie*—a breakdown of social norms and belonging.

Research consistently shows that individuals with migrant backgrounds often turn to **identity politics, ethnicity, nationhood, or religiosity**—and sometimes even violence—as means of resisting systemic inequalities and reclaiming recognition. Meanwhile, **native European youth** in deindustrialised small towns express their frustrations through **right-wing populism and nativism**, channeling economic and cultural grievances into narratives of national pride and resentment. Our PLEDGE research team elaborates on the politics of grievance, which has become prevalent among different segments of the European public, who feel neglected, disenfranchised, and “left behind”.

At first glance, these groups may seem worlds apart. Yet both are, in different ways, striving to **assert visibility and voice** in public life. Young people involved in right-wing populist movements often describe feeling ridiculed, rejected, or dismissed by mainstream society for their political views. Similarly, young Muslims across Europe frequently experience Islamophobia, everyday discrimination, and public suspicion. In both cases, **feelings of humiliation, alienation, and rejection** can

harden into defensive identities and reinforce “us versus them” worldviews.

For many Muslim-origin youth, religiosity becomes both a response to and a reflection of the discrimination they face. The more they are labelled, framed, or stereotyped as “outsiders,” the more central religion becomes to their sense of self. This dynamic of **mutual labelling and alienation** feeds a cycle of mistrust between Muslim minorities and segments of the majority society.

Returning to the “Roots”

When the present feels bleak and the future uncertain, it’s not surprising that people look to **religion, heritage, honour, ethnicity, language, tradition, and myth** to define who they are. These elements offer not only a sense of stability but also a feeling of dignity and belonging that seems otherwise unattainable in an increasingly fragmented Europe.

Ultimately, youth radicalisation—whether Islamist or nativist—reflects a deeper struggle over belonging, recognition, and meaning in a world that often leaves young people feeling unseen and unheard.

This return to roots may offer comfort, but does it also risk reinforcing the very divides that push young people further apart? The second part of this Blog post will focus on answering this question...

*** This blog post was written as part of the PLEDGE Project. To access the related blog page, [click here](#).**

Youth Radicalism in Europe: Nativists vs Islamists*

Part II

Ayhan Kaya
Istanbul Bilgi University

When identities harden into labels, the search for belonging can easily turn into a cycle of alienation. Across Europe, both Muslim-origin and nativist youth often internalise and reproduce narratives that blame one another for social and political decline. Yet beneath these antagonisms lie shared experiences of frustration and loss—born of deindustrialisation, economic precarity, and a pervasive sense of being unseen in public life.

Labels cause alienation and isolation...

Both Muslim-origin and nativist young people often produce narratives that blame one another for the negative outcomes of ongoing socio-political transformations. Yet, beneath these antagonistic discourses lie shared frustrations. Many from both groups experience the consequences of de-industrialisation, marginalisation in the labour market, perceived discrimination in education and everyday life, housing precarity, insecurity, and feelings of humiliation and social exclusion.

At this historical juncture, it is crucial to employ a unified analytical lens to examine the processes driving the radicalisation of European youths from diverse backgrounds. The economic, political, and cultural disruptions generated by globalisation function as key drivers of radicalisation—whether expressed through Islamophobic or Islamist forms. However, reducing complex social groups such as Muslim youth or nativist youth to oversimplified and stigmatising categories risks obscuring the structural roots of their discontent. The fusion of neoliberal governance with the stigmatisation of socioeconomic, spatial, and psychological deprivation enables policymakers to interpret the outcomes of structural inequalities through cultural or religious terms. This dynamic conceals the deeper political and economic factors at play, fuelling socio-political tensions and perceptions of mutual threat. Such processes often result

in *co-radicalisation* between self-identified Muslims and segments of the majority population with nativist inclinations.

By framing radicalisation primarily as a security issue, neoliberal politics tends to reduce responses to policing and surveillance, rather than addressing the structural injustices that foster alienation. This securitised approach, in turn, amplifies feelings of marginalisation among already disenfranchised groups. Ultimately, the tendency to label disenfranchised young people as “neo-Nazis,” “fascists,” “extremists,” or “Islamist radicals” risks deepening their alienation and isolation. Such labelling reinforces affective polarisation and societal fragmentation, undermining the prospects for dialogue, solidarity, and inclusive belonging.

Building Third Spaces to Counter Co-Radicalisation

Radicalism today stretches across borders and ideologies. From far-right movements to religious revivalism, its appeal often lies not in violence but in the **search for meaning, control, justice, honour, and dignity** in a world that feels increasingly indifferent. In Europe, the phenomenon of **co-radicalisation**—where nativist and Muslim-origin youth feed off one another’s fears and hostilities—reveals a deeper truth: alienation is rarely one-sided. Each group’s sense of threat, humiliation, and resentment reinforces the other’s, creating a loop of mutual mistrust.

Yet, these cycles are not inevitable. They are shaped by structural inequalities, neoliberal policies, and divisive political rhetoric—but they can also be disrupted. If antagonism grows in the soil of **separation, stereotypes, and media-fuelled caricatures**, then **connection and shared experience** can become its antidote.

From Polarisation to Possibility

As the PLEDGE team, we try to contribute to the idea of building public spaces and social infrastructures that generate social capital, trust, and reciprocity, and that enable the capacity to aspire by transforming individual needs into collective solutions oriented towards justice. Theories of **intergroup contact** and **dialogical spaces** remind us that prejudice is not set in stone. When people from different backgrounds meet in environments that are creative, open, and inclusive, something changes. Empathy replaces suspicion; shared grievances come to

light; common goals begin to take shape. This is where the idea of **“third spaces”** comes in. These are not merely physical places, but social and emotional arenas—**community centres, youth hubs, cultural collectives, art workshops, sports clubs, or even dance stages**—where individuals can encounter each other beyond rigid labels of “us” and “them.”

In these spaces, young people can express frustration, share their struggles, and collaborate on projects that reflect common aspirations rather than civilizational divides. Such encounters don’t erase differences, but they **transform them into opportunities for connection** instead of conflict.

The Problem with the Political Centre

While grassroots initiatives can build bridges, the responsibility also lies with political institutions. Across Europe, **decision-makers at local, national, and EU levels** have largely failed to tackle the structural inequalities that push people to the margins. The **neoliberal logic** dominating today’s political mainstream has, paradoxically, **hollowed out the “centre”**. By reducing social problems to individual responsibility, it has weakened the bonds that hold societies together. This **dissolution of the social** breeds anomie, alienation, and resentment—fertile ground for radicalism of all kinds.

As individuals grow more distant from one another—divided along cultural, religious, or civilizational lines—the very notion of a shared “we” becomes harder to sustain.

Beyond the Binary: Rediscovering Common Ground

Third spaces, then, are more than community projects; they are **acts of resistance** against this fragmentation. They provide a setting where people can rediscover a sense of belonging that does not depend on exclusion. Instead of defining themselves against others, participants in these spaces can **identify similarities born of shared deprivation, frustration, and hope**. In doing so, they challenge the binaries that dominate public discourse—**good vs. evil, majority vs. minority, secular vs. religious, Christian vs. Muslim**—and open up new ways of being together.

In the age of populism, many political movements promise to restore something “authentic,” “traditional,” or “pure.” But these nostalgic identities often deepen the divides

they claim to heal. Modern societies seem trapped in a **binary imagination**, constantly sorting the world into opposing camps.

“Third spaces” invite us to think—and live—differently. They remind us that the answer to radicalisation isn’t more separation or surveillance, but **more connection, conversation, and creativity**. Only by building such spaces—literal and metaphorical—can we begin to transform co-radicalisation into **coexistence**.

* This blog post was written as part of the **PLEDGE Project**. To access the related blog page, [click here](#).

Discover More on the PLEDGE Project Blog

Building on these reflections on youth radicalisation, co-radicalisation, and the search for belonging, the **PLEDGE Project Blog** offers a broader collection of analytical essays exploring the **emotional, social, and political dynamics of grievance politics** across Europe and beyond.

Other blog posts address themes such as **disinformation and emotions, gender justice and resentment, far-right politics and social media, civic engagement, and pro-democratic emotions in times of crisis**. Together, they provide accessible yet theoretically grounded insights into how feelings such as fear, anger, resentment, and hope shape political attitudes, democratic participation, and polarisation.

Readers interested in the intersections of **emotion, democracy, identity, and governance** are invited to explore the full blog series and engage with ongoing debates at the heart of the PLEDGE Project.

Read more blog posts [here](#).

PLEDGE Blog post #10 by UBILGI Team: Youth Radicalism in Europe: Nativists vs Islamists
December 27, 2025

Part II When identities harden into labels, the search for belonging can easily turn into a cycle of alienation. Across Europe, both Muslim-origin and nativist

[Read More >](#)

PLEDGE Blog post #9 by UBILGI Team: Youth Radicalism in Europe: Nativists vs Islamists
November 22, 2025

Part I Across Europe, growing numbers of young people—both from majority and minority backgrounds—are feeling increasingly disconnected from the societies they live in. Socioeconomic hardship,

[Read More >](#)

PLEDGE Blog post #8 by UVEG Team: Fear, anger and uncertainty: when disinformation feeds on emotions in natural disasters
November 9, 2025

When crisis hits, emotion becomes the jet fuel of our information ecosystem. As Serrano-Puche (2021) argues, platforms cultivate “affective publics” where fear, anger and indignation

[Read More >](#)

PLEDGE Blog post #7 by UNIWARSZAW Team: Who gets to be a victim? Rethinking gender justice in terms of resentment
October 15, 2025

As Jonathan Haidt notes in The Righteous Mind, the urge to avoid causing harm appears across societies [1]. Despite this, the entire population remains divided,

[Read More >](#)

PLEDGE Blog post #6 by PMBSNU Team: Ukraine’s Cardboard Revolution: Pro-Democratic Emotions in a War-Torn Society
September 15, 2025

Are collective pro-democratic emotions possible in a war-affected society? Ukraine’s recent experience suggests they are not only possible but can take highly creative and symbolic

[Read More >](#)

PLEDGE Blog post #5 by FUB Team: Do emotions move people towards civic engagement? Yes, but not always in the same way.
August 29, 2025

Emotions like fear, anger, and hope aren’t just fleeting feelings—they’re powerful motivators that can inspire people to rally, volunteer, or speak out. For decades, scholars

[Read More >](#)

DAAD - German Academic Exchange Service

About the DAAD

The DAAD is an association of German institutions of higher education and their student bodies. Convening in a general assembly, they elect the Executive Committee which oversees the organisation’s day-to-day operations. Since it was founded in 1925, the DAAD has supported more than 2.9 million academics in Germany and abroad. It relies on a strong organisational structure, a worldwide network of partners and alumni and a motivated staff of over 1,100 employees.

DAAD Fellowship

Dr. Deniz Güneş Yardımcı* served as the DAAD Lecturer at the European Institute between September 2019 and September 2025 within the framework of the cooperation between Istanbul Bilgi University and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). During her tenure, she contributed to the Institute’s academic activities by strengthening institutional relations with German universities, advising on DAAD scholarship opportunities, and teaching within the International Relations program.

**She received her PhD from the Department of Media Arts at Royal Holloway, University of London. Her doctoral research examined representations of Turkish migration and the Turkish diaspora in Germany through a comparative analysis of German, Turkish-German, and Turkish cinema. She was previously affiliated with institutions including Humboldt University of Berlin and the University of Duisburg-Essen.*

Dr. Yardımcı’s research interests include Turkish–German migration, migration and media/film, transnational cinema, and contemporary cultural expressions related to migration. Her recent work focuses on Turkish–German hip-hop culture and the cinematic representation of the Syrian refugee crisis.

For more informations about the DAAD, please click [here](#).

PUBLICATIONS, NEWS & EVENTS

Higher Education, Research, and DAAD Scholarships in Germany

23 January, 2025



Istanbul Bilgi University



European Institute
Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence

ONLINE SEMINAR

Higher Education, Research, and DAAD Scholarships in Germany

Dr. Deniz Güneş Yardımcı

Thursday, January 23, 2025, 14:00



The **European Institute at Istanbul Bilgi University** hosted an online information session titled “**Higher Education, Research, and DAAD Scholarships in Germany**” on **January 23, 2024**, within the framework of its cooperation with the **German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)**.

The session was conducted by **Dr. Deniz Güneş Yardımcı** as part of her activities under the **DAAD Lecturer programme** and focused on application requirements for higher education in Germany, available research opportunities, and DAAD scholarship schemes. The event provided practical guidance to students and early-career researchers interested in academic and research pathways in Germany.

The session was held online via Zoom and brought together students and researchers interested in study and research opportunities in Germany.

In Conversation with the Consul General of Germany in Istanbul Dr. Regine Grienberger, and the Cultural Attaché Katharina Dolezalek
Insights into Diplomacy, Global Politics, and Turkish-German Relations

7 May, 2025

On **7 May 2025**, the **European Institute of Istanbul Bilgi University** hosted the **Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Istanbul, Dr. Regine Grienberger, and Cultural Attaché Katharina Dolezalek** as part of the university’s **Europe Week** activities ahead of **Europe Day (9 May)**.

The visit, organized upon the invitation of **Dr. Özge Onursal-Besgöl**, Director of the European Institute, and **DAAD Lecturer Dr. Deniz Güneş Yardımcı**, brought together university leadership, faculty members, and students for discussions on **diplomacy, global politics, and Turkish–German relations**.

The programme included an official reception at the Rectorate, an interactive session with students from the Departments of **International Relations** and **Political Science and Public Administration**, and a guided visit to the **Silahtarağa Energy Museum Archive**, highlighting the long-standing historical and cultural ties between Turkey and Germany.

You can access the full report [here](#).





German – Turkish Scientific Cooperation and Cultural Exchange: DAAD Turkey Regional Meeting 2025 at Istanbul Bilgi University

14-16 June, 2025



As part of the DAAD's 100th anniversary celebrations, the DAAD Turkey Regional Meeting 2025 was held at Istanbul Bilgi University between 14 and 16 June 2025. The meeting brought together DAAD lecturers and teaching assistants from across Turkey, DAAD alumni, representatives of partner institutions, and delegates from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in Bonn. The European Institute of Istanbul Bilgi University played an active role in the organisation and implementation of the event.

The opening session featured welcoming remarks by Prof. Dr. Gonca Günay, Vice President for Research at Istanbul Bilgi University, and an introductory address by Dr. Nilgün Yüce (Ege University), who also moderated the scientific cooperation panel. Antje Schlamm-Götze, Head of the DAAD's ST21 Department, joined online to present current DAAD funding programmes, with a particular focus on mobility, early-career researchers, and alumni networks.

Among the academic contributions, Dr. Deniz Güneş Yardımcı, DAAD Lecturer at the European Institute, presented the DAAD- and TÜBİTAK-funded bilateral research project "Distant Neighbours – Political Narratives and Visual Culture in German–Turkish Relations," carried out in cooperation with the University of Duisburg-Essen. The presentation highlighted the project's interdisciplinary approach and its contribution to both scientific collaboration and cultural exchange between Germany and Turkey. Additional presentations addressed ongoing joint research and institutional partnerships, including contributions by Prof. Dr. Sevinç Hatipoğlu (Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa) and Prof. Dr. Mahmut Karakuş (Istanbul University).

The programme also included a special alumni panel marking 100 Years of DAAD, featuring personal reflections by Prof. Dr. Canan Şenöz Ayata, Manuela Volz, Maurice Vollerigh, David Nicolas Fanz, and Aysel Karatekin. Sessions on teaching and lecturing explored innovative formats in German Studies, Erasmus-funded mobility schemes, and practice-oriented approaches to language and cultural education.

Overall, the regional meeting underscored the central role of DAAD-supported cooperation in strengthening German–Turkish academic relations. Through long-standing partnerships, joint research projects, and vibrant alumni networks, the DAAD continues to contribute significantly to the internationalisation of universities and to sustainable scientific and cultural exchange.



You can access the full report [here](#).

The full programme is available [here](#).



GERMAN STUDIES UNIT



Established in 2008 as part of the **European Institute's** research units and in collaboration with the **German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)**, the **German Studies Unit (GSU)** complements the Institute's long-standing cooperation with the **European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder), Germany**.

The GSU is founded on the objective of fostering Turkish–German relations within the context of the European Union by promoting cultural interaction and the exchange of knowledge and ideas. Its core aim is to address contemporary social, political, and cultural debates in German society and to bring together researchers, students, policymakers, stakeholders, and the wider public to discuss current trends and shared challenges in both countries and in Turkish–German relations.

Over time, the GSU has expanded its scope and now provides a platform for interdisciplinary exchange that extends beyond academia. Its activities include:

- Articles and op-ed contributions in English, Turkish, and German
- Outreach activities in the form of conferences, workshops, and public events
- The German Studies Seminar Series
- An annual German Studies Colloquium for graduate students
- Annual study visits to Germany for groups of students
- Information events on study and research scholarships in Germany

As of January 2020, the GSU has relaunched its bi-monthly online publication, *Germany Brief*. This well-established initiative continues to provide critical insights into recent debates in German society. Recent contributions by Dr. Deniz Güneş Yardımcı, Lalla Amina Drhimeur, Melanie Weißenberg, Dr. Constantin Schäfer, and Dr. Yaşar Aydın focus on current discussions surrounding the rise of right-wing extremism and migration policy in Germany.

PUBLICATIONS, NEWS & EVENTS

WORKING PAPER No. 16

Exploring Cooperative Practices in the Everyday: The Power of Narratives, Visual Culture, and Transnational Identity in Turkish-German Relations

Deniz Güneş Yardımcı & Frank Gädinger

In this working paper, the principal investigators of the DAAD–TÜBİTAK co-funded project *Distant Neighbors: Exploring Political Narratives and Visual Culture in Turkish-German Relations*—Frank Gädinger (University of Münster) and Deniz Güneş Yardımcı (Istanbul Bilgi University) — introduce the project's theoretical and methodological framework. The paper examines how narratives and visual culture shape group identities, (de-)legitimize political realities, and enable transnational cooperation within Turkish–German relations. Emphasizing everyday practices and culturally hybrid communities, the authors argue that such narrative and visual strategies play a stabilizing role in sustaining cross-border relations. This publication is the first working paper in a series produced within the project, supported by TÜBİTAK (Grant No. 221N423) and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) (Grant No. 57628225).



Click [here](#) to read the Working Paper.

WORKING PAPER No. 17

Orchestration of Civil Society? Turkish-German Cooperation in the Field of Classical Orchestral Music

Serkan Topal

This working paper examines Turkish–German cooperation in the field of classical orchestral music, focusing on how musical collaborations function as cultural and political bridges within civil society. Drawing on an analysis of concert programmes, media coverage, and audience responses, the study demonstrates how orchestral music both reflects and fosters cross-cultural understanding and integration. Authored by Serkan Topal (University of Duisburg-Essen), the paper forms part of the DAAD–TÜBİTAK co-funded project *Distant Neighbors: Exploring Political Narratives and Visual Culture in Turkish-German Relations*. This is the second working paper in the series produced within the project, supported by TÜBİTAK (Grant No. 221N423) and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) (Grant No. 57628225).



Click [here](#) to read the Working Paper.

WORKING PAPER No. 18

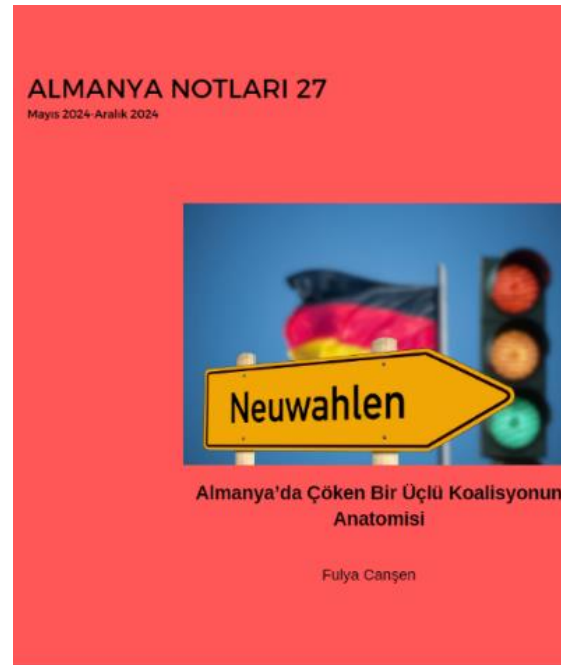
Emotions and Narratives: A Brief Literature Discussion

Mustafa Gökcan Kösen

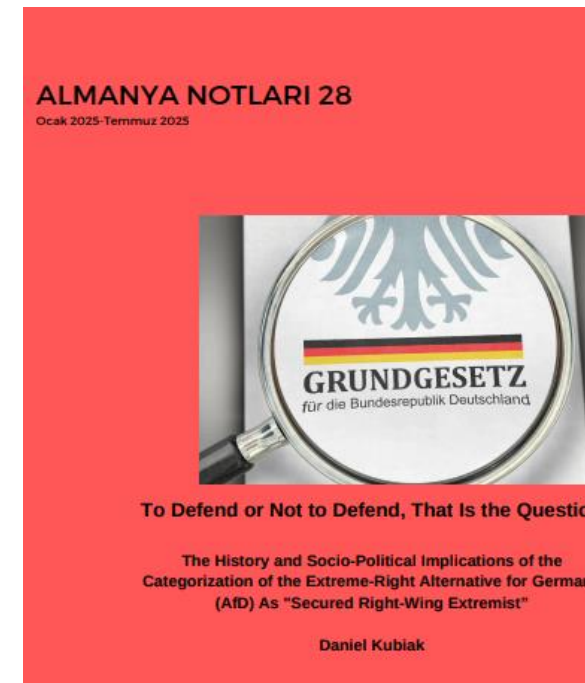
This working paper explores the role of emotions and narratives in the field of international relations. Authored by Mustafa Gökcan Kösen (Istanbul Bilgi University), the paper first clarifies the conceptual distinction between emotion and affect, before providing an overview of how emotions have been addressed within international relations scholarship. It then examines the interplay between narratives and emotions, highlighting how these two dimensions are mutually constitutive and shape political meaning-making processes. This publication is the third working paper in the series produced within the DAAD–TÜBİTAK co-funded project *Distant Neighbours: Exploring Political Narratives and Visual Culture in Turkish-German Relations*, supported by TÜBİTAK (Grant No. 221N423) and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) (Grant No. 57628225).



Click [here](#) to read the Working Paper.



Click [here](#) to read the full publication.



Click [here](#) to read the full publication.

ALMANYA NOTLARI 27

Almanya'da Çöken Bir Üçlü Koalisyonun Anatomisi
The Anatomy of a Collapsing Tripartite Coalition in Germany

Fulya Canşen

This issue of *Almanya Notları* examines the collapse of Germany's "Traffic Light Coalition" formed by the SPD, Alliance 90/The Greens, and the FDP. Written in Turkish, the publication analyses the political and economic tensions within the coalition and discusses their implications for Germany's political landscape ahead of the 2025 federal elections.

ALMANYA NOTLARI 28

To Defend or Not to Defend, That Is the Question
 The History and Socio-Political Implications of the Categorization of the Extreme-Right Alternative for Germany (AfD) as "Secured Right-Wing Extremist"

Daniel Kubiak

In this issue of *Almanya Notları*, Dr. Daniel Kubiak (Berlin Institute for Empirical Integration and Migration Research, Humboldt University of Berlin) examines the classification of the AfD as a "secured right-wing extremist" organization by the German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV). Tracing the party's trajectory from its anti-euro origins to its ideological radicalization, the article critically assesses the legal, political, and societal implications of this designation for Germany's democratic resilience.

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

cifeieei Centre international de formation européenne
 Institut européen • European Institute

CENTRE INTERNATIONAL DE FORMATION EUROPÉENNE (CIFE)

Founded in 1954 in the aftermath of a critical moment for European integration, the **Centre International de Formation Européenne (CIFE)** emerged from the conviction of its founder, **Alexandre Marc**, that a united and federal Europe could not be built by states alone. Instead, Marc argued, European citizens needed to be educated to actively shape and sustain this project.

In its early years, CIFE focused on promoting the idea of European unity among citizens from diverse professional backgrounds. Over the past three decades, the institution has evolved into a leading provider of **interdisciplinary**

and itinerant master's programmes for international students. Today, CIFE offers **seven master's programmes** alongside a range of short-term educational formats. Its expanding activities have been supported by an operating grant from the **European Union**.

CIFE's longstanding contribution to a peaceful, prosperous, and more just Europe has been shaped by its distinguished leadership. Former presidents include **Grégoire Gafenco, Enzo Giacchero, Jean Rey, Lord George Thomson, Gaston Thorn, Émile Noël, Michel Albert, Jean-Claude Juncker, and Philippe Maystadt**, with **Herman Van Rompuy** currently serving as President. The institution's development has also been guided by its directors—**Alexandre Marc** and **Ferdinand Kinsky**—and by the commitment of its academic and administrative teams across Europe.

The partnership between **Istanbul Bilgi University** and CIFE has been in place for more than a decade. Each year, students from the **Master in Advanced European and International Studies (MAEIS)** programmes—**European Integration & Global Studies** and **Mediterranean Studies**—spend two months at Istanbul Bilgi University. This period offers a rich academic exchange that encourages cross-cultural dialogue and enhances students' educational experience.

Click [here](#) to access the **2024-25 Annual Report** for the **Master in Advanced European & International Studies (MAEIS) - European Integration & Global Studies** offering detailed insights into the programme's progress and milestones.

Click [here](#) to access the **2024-25 Annual Report** for the **Master in Advanced European and International Studies - Mediterranean Studies**, offering detailed insights into the programme's progress and milestones.

For further information about the CIFE, please visit the [website](#).

AZIZ NESIN PROFESSORSHIP

AZIZ NESIN GUEST LECTURESHIP EXPERIENCE IN THE EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY VIADRINA



Prof. Gencer Özcan
Istanbul Bilgi University
Department of International Relations

I recall with great pleasure the month I spent as the Aziz Nesin Chair lecturer at The European University Viadrina in June 2025, where I was invited to teach a course on Current Issues in the Middle East. First and foremost, I wish to emphasise my profound appreciation for the interest demonstrated by the students attending my course. The coincidence of my stay in Frankfurt-Oder in June with the Gaza War, particularly the 12-Day War, facilitated in-depth discussions regarding regional issues within the course. The brilliant students at The European University Viadrina were of a calibre that any university lecturer would wish to have in their class. In addition to attending classes regularly, the students engaged in thorough discussions during lectures, accompanied by their questions and comments. During my residence in Frankfurt-Oder, I experienced the attentive support and collegiality of the teaching staff and administrative personnel at Viadrina University, notably from Rector Prof. Dr. Eduard Mühle and Dean of the Faculty of Social and Cultural Studies Prof. Dr. Timm Beichelt. I departed from Frankfurt-Oder with many cherished memories.

Interview with Prof. Dr. Gencer Özcan – Guest Professor at the Aziz Nesin Chair at the MES

An interview with Prof. Dr. Gencer Özcan, Guest Professor at the Aziz Nesin Chair at the European University Viadrina (MES), discussing his academic work, research interests, and perspectives on contemporary political developments.

For more information, please visit the Viadrina's official [website](#).

Prof. Dr. Gencer Özcan is a Professor of International Relations at Istanbul Bilgi University and a guest lecturer at the European University Viadrina in the summer term of 2025. He studied political science in Ankara and received his PhD from Boğaziçi University. His research focuses on Turkish foreign policy, diplomatic history, and security decision-making in the Middle East.

PROGRAMMES ON EUROPEAN STUDIES

BİLGİ MA in European Studies

The MA Program, launched in 2000 and run by the Social Sciences Institute, is designed to provide a thorough knowledge of the European Union, its historic development, its institutions, systems and policies. Turkey's longstanding EU integration process, which started in 1963, continued with the Customs Union (1996) that made Turkey part of the European Single Market. Within the framework of the program, Turkey's EU accession period is analyzed and researched with a focus on recent developments. The Program, concentrating on themes such as enlargement and the societal transformations it brings to the countries involved (peace, stability, democratization, regional cooperation, human rights, rule of law, etc.) and European Neighborhood Policy, also offers a wider perspective of European Studies with emphasis on issues such as migration, environmental issues, and intercultural dialogue.

**The programs are restructuring and there will be no recruitment to the programs this year.*

VIADRINA DOUBLE DEGREE MA PROGRAMME



As one of the core countries of European integration since the early days of the European Coal and Steel Community, Germany with its political, social and economic structure deserves special attention in studies regarding the European Union. To this end, the European Institute of Istanbul Bilgi University has developed close relations with many universities and institutes in Germany. The academic cooperation with the European University Viadrina is an exemplary relationship, which started as a two-way exchange of students and academics, leading finally to an enhanced collaboration agreement between the two universities funded by the German Foreign Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). Graduates not only gain an insight into life in two very different European cities, but also prepare themselves for a rapidly changing world of work across the European continent. The program is run by the Social Sciences Institute.

With 30% of foreign students from over 70 countries and an extensive network of partner universities, European University Viadrina is one of the most international universities worldwide. The study courses and university degrees are internationally acknowledged. Its atmosphere is personal and warm, and with excellent student support and guidance European University Viadrina is able to offer outstanding study conditions. Viadrina is located at the German-Polish border, only one hour by train from Germany's capital, Berlin.

The University's proximity to Poland and to Eastern Europe is clearly a distinctive feature of the degree program. Students are able to both learn about the expansion of Europe to the east whilst actively experiencing life on both sides of the German-Polish border. In addition, extensive supervision is offered, along

with small seminar groups and outstanding technical facilities. Should Frankfurt be too small, then there is always Berlin, only an hour away by train.

The programs are restructuring and there will be no recruitment to the programs this year.

For further information, please visit the [website](#).

FROM OUR RESEARCHER

A RESEARCH STAY AT THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE: FIELDWORK REFLECTIONS FROM ISTANBUL



Maria Vittoria Quarta
University of Turin

My name is Maria Vittoria Quarta, and I am a master's student in International Sciences at the University of Turin. I had the valuable opportunity to spend one month at the European Institute of Bilgi University to conduct field research for my master's thesis. The guidance of Professor Kaya—who generously agreed to supervise my work and provided essential academic direction—played a central role in shaping and advancing my research.

My project examines the forms of precarity produced by contemporary border regimes and the ways in which these systems confine individuals to conditions of permanent liminality, restricted mobility, and limited

agency. Such conditions are often institutionalized through legislative and bureaucratic mechanisms that, rather than offering protection, tend to reinforce irregularity and expose individuals to practices that can amount to inhumane and degrading treatment.

Conducting research in Istanbul was crucial, as my case study focuses on the precarious situation experienced by Syrian refugees in Turkey, who are granted a status of temporary protection. While presented as a humanitarian measure, this status in practice curtails freedom of movement and choice, placing individuals in a state of continuous uncertainty. Moreover, the presence of the Syrian population has been repeatedly instrumentalized by the Turkish government for both domestic political purposes and international bargaining, particularly in the context of relations with the European Union.

Beyond the academic importance of this research stay, my time in Istanbul was profoundly enriching on a personal level. Engaging with diverse cultural contexts, exchanging perspectives, and gaining insight into the lived realities behind political phenomena is both a privilege and an essential element of scholarly growth. This experience has significantly contributed to my understanding of the complexities surrounding forced displacement and the governance of migration.

RECOMMENDED
PUBLICATIONS & PODCASTS

PODCAST

VALEUS PODCAST: BEYOND BORDERS



We recommend the **ValeUs Podcast Series** to readers interested in **European studies, EU foreign policy, contestations of values, democracy, migration, culture, and identity politics** in Europe and its wider neighbourhood.

The series brings together scholars from across the ValeUs network to discuss key contemporary issues, including **EU enlargement and the Western Balkans, external actors and Europe’s periphery, Russian exceptionalism and anti-liberal narratives, populism and nativism in Europe, and the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy**. Several episodes also focus on the **politics of culture and cultural spaces**, examining whether artistic and cultural initiatives can foster democratic engagement, critical debate, and alternative political imaginaries.

In addition, the podcast explores themes such as **grassroots activism and protest movements, religion, dissidence, and political resistance**, and **the role of values in shaping EU external action**, while also featuring reflections on ValeUs academic activities, including the **ValeUs Summer School hosted at Istanbul Bilgi University**.

Episode 13: The politics of cultural spaces in the former Yugoslavia

In this episode, David Orlov of Nazarbayev University speaks with Claske Vos, anthropologist and Assistant Professor at the Department of European Studies at the University of Amsterdam, about contestations surrounding EU foreign policy intervention in the Western Balkans. Vos examines the perspectives of the independent cultural and arts scene in former Yugoslav states, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Montenegro, and how these actors respond to and challenge EU initiatives and narratives. The discussion explores the EU’s growing emphasis on culture as a tool for democratization and peaceful inter-community relations, questioning whether cultural and artistic spaces can truly facilitate alternative political engagement, critical debate, and free expression, or if their transformative potential remains limited by structural and political constraints.

[Episode 13 on Spotify](#)

[Episode 13 on YouTube](#)

Episode 12: The western Balkans and Europe

In this episode, David Orlov of Nazarbayev University speaks with Dr. Vladimir Filipovoc, Associate Professor at Libertas University in Zagreb, about the prospects and politics of European Union enlargement, with a particular focus on Western Balkans. Dr. Filipovoc discusses the strategic significance of the region, assessing Croatia’s role as a potential model for aspiring member states. He also examines the growing involvement of external actors, such as Russia, China and Turkey, and how their influence shapes EU decision-making. The conversation considers the likelihood of current candidate countries advancing toward membership and explores shifting attitudes within the EU toward further enlargement, revealing both enduring challenges and new opportunities for Europe’s future.

[Episode 12 on Spotify](#)

[Episode 12 on YouTube](#)

Episode 11: Russkiy Mir — Russia’s exceptionalism and its clash with the western world

In this episode, Jean-François Caron from Nazabayev University is discussing Vladimir Putin’s anti-Western rhetoric and the ramifications of his opposition against liberal values.

[Episode 11 on Spotify](#)

[Episode 11 on YouTube](#)

Episode 10: A discussion about the ValeUs Summer School

In this episode, we are welcoming students who attended one of the ValeUs Summer school held at Bilgi University. They are discussing their experience and sharing their thoughts about the EU and immigration.

[Episode 10 on Spotify](#)

[Episode 10 on YouTube](#)

Episode 09: Activism Then and Now — A European Journey (Democracy, Populism, and Protest in Modern Europe)

In this episode, David Orlov of Nazarbayev University speaks with Professor Belinda Davis, a historian of modern Germany and Europe at Rutgers University. Drawing on her forthcoming book, *The Inner Life of Politics: Grassroots Activism in West Germany, 1962–1983*, Professor Davis reflects on the legacy of grassroots movements in Cold War-era Germany and explores their relevance for contemporary political mobilization across Europe. The conversation covers themes such as populism, antifascism, polarization, and democratic participation.

[Episode 09 on Spotify](#)

[Episode 09 on YouTube](#)

Episode 08: Empire of lies — Russia vs. European Value

In this episode, David Orlov of Nazarbayev University speaks with Dr. Stipe Buzar, Assistant Professor at Libertas International University in Zagreb, about his upcoming publication, “Empire of Lies: Russian Contestation of Western Values and International Order.” Dr. Buzar discusses how Russia frames the war in Ukraine as a civilizational struggle against a morally corrupt West. Drawing on Aleksandr Dugin, official policy documents, and the concept of Russkiy mir, he examines how Russian elites construct an alternative moral order rooted in tradition, sovereignty, and spiritual identity, while rejecting liberal universalism.

Episode 08 on Spotify
Episode 08 on YouTube

Episode 07: The orthodox church and dissidence in Kazakhstan

In this episode Daniel Scarborough, of Nazarbayev University, speaks with Hieromonk Lakov Vorontsov in Almaty, Kazakhstan. They discuss Fr. Lakov’s public opposition to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and his call for the separation of the Orthodox Church of Kazakhstan from the Patriarchate of Moscow, which resulted in his defrocking by a diocesan court on June 15th 2024.

Episode 07 on Spotify
Episode 07 on YouTube

Episode 06: Podcast with the team from University of Pittsburgh

In this 6th podcast, Nancy Condee, Erica Edwards, Zsuzsanna Magdo and Randall Halle from the University of Pittsburgh are presenting their views about Europe and its values and the role of their institution in the ValEUs consortium.

Episode 06 on Spotify
Episode 06 on YouTube

Episode 05: EU Foreign Policy – Interests, Values, Contestations

In this episode, Prof. Beata Przybylska-Maszner and Prof. Jarosław Jańczak engage in a scholarly discussion on the foreign policy of the European Union, drawing upon perspectives from International Relations and Border Studies. The central theme of their analysis is contestation, understood both in relation to the fundamental values upon which the EU is founded and the broader role of the Union in the international system. The discussion critically examines the evolving global order, the EU’s institutional reforms, the dynamics of multilateralism, and the Union’s geopolitical strategies. By addressing these dimensions, the podcast provides insights into the challenges and transformations shaping the EU’s external relations in an era of increasing complexity and uncertainty.

Episode 05 on Spotify
Episode 05 on YouTube

Episode 04: The Trump’s administration foreign policy and its implications on European values

In this 4th episode of the ValEUs podcast series, Prof. Jean-François Caron is questioning Prof. Stipe Buzar, from Libertas University, and Prof. Petar Popovic, from the University of Zagreb, about the Trump administration’s foreign policy and its implications on Europe and its values.

Episode 04 on Spotify
Episode 04 on YouTube

Episode 03: Populism and Nativism in Europe

In this episode, we are hosting Prof. Ayhan Kaya from Istanbul Bilgi University, an expert on populism, migration, and identity politics. Prof. Kaya shares his thoughts on the rise of populism and its various forms. He also delves into the concept of nativism, a recurring theme in his research, and explains its significance in today’s political landscape. We discuss the increasing prominence of populism, its causes, and the role of islamophobia within this context.

Prof. Kaya explains why he uses the term “islamophobia” and unpacks its connection to the populist discourse. Finally, we explore the implications of these trends on Turkey’s relationship with the European Union.

Episode 03 on Spotify
Episode 03 on YouTube

Episode 02: The EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy

In this podcast Dr. Maja Savevska from Nazarbayev University discusses the European Union’s Common Foreign and Security Policy which remains the biggest challenge to the EU federalist aspirations. The talk focused on examining core geopolitical risks, the transition of the EU from a Civilian Power to Strategic Actor, and the core institutional features of the CFSP and the various security strategies adopted by the EU. The talk concluded by reviewing how successful is the CFSP in forging a consensus among member states with divergent national preferences.

Episode 02 on Spotify
Episode 02 on YouTube

Episode 01: Introducing the ValEUs network

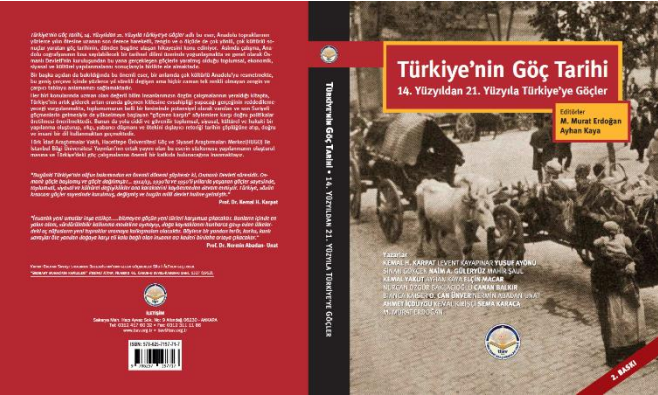
The first episode of the ValEUs Project serves as an introduction to the initiative, featuring an interview with Prof. Timm Beichelt from the European University Viadrina. In this inaugural episode, the ValEUs Project is introduced, outlining its goals, scope, and significance. This episode sets the stage for future discussions, interviews, and analyses that will be central to the ValEUs Project, offering a deeper understanding of how European values function in global politics.

Episode 01 on Spotify
Episode 01 on YouTube

BOOK

Türkiye’nin Göç Tarihi - 14. YY 21. Yüzyıla Türkiye ye Göçler (Türkiye’s Migration History - 2nd Edition)

Editors: Prof. Dr. M. Murat ERDOĞAN and Prof. Dr. Ayhan KAYA



ISBN: 978-625-7197-71-7

We recommend this book to readers interested in migration studies, population movements, and their long-term social and political consequences in Türkiye. Edited by Ayhan Kaya and M. Murat Erdoğan, the book offers a comprehensive analysis of Anatolia’s migration history from the Ottoman period to the present, examining how migration has shaped social structures, political transformations, and cultural pluralism.

SHORT NEWS

- Our Institute Director, Prof. Dr Ayhan Kaya, has returned after a research leave for the 2024–2025 academic year at Humboldt University and the Stiftung für Wissenschaft und Politik in Berlin.
- As of September 2025, Dr. Ozan Kuyumcuoğlu and Dr. Özge Onursal Beşgül have been reappointed as Vice Directors of the European Institute, continuing their roles in the Institute’s academic and administrative coordination.
- Student Conference on Critical AI Studies at Istanbul Bilgi University!

Istanbul Bilgi University will host the Student Conference on Critical AI Studies in the Social Sciences and Humanities on 9 May 2026 at the santralistanbul Campus. The event invites

undergraduate (senior), graduate, and PhD students to present research that critically examines the social, political, legal, and cultural impacts of artificial intelligence across disciplines including law, communication, sociology, philosophy, and more.

The deadline for abstract submissions is 13 March 2026, and accepted abstracts will be published online by the European Institute.

[Learn more](#) and submit your proposal.

Tebliğ Çağrısı

Lisans ve Lisansüstü Öğrenci Konferansı

**Sosyal ve Beşerî Bilimlerde
Eleştirel Yapay Zekâ Çalışmaları**

Bildiri özeti son teslim tarihi: **13 Mart 2026**
Kabul edilen bildiri özetlerinin duyurulması: **30 Mart 2026**
Tam metinlerin son teslim tarihi: **24 Nisan 2026**
Konferans tarihi: **9 Mayıs 2026**

9 Mayıs 2026

İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi
santralistanbul Kampüsü

Detaylı bilgi:

- **The European Institute** would like to extend its sincere thanks to **Dr. Deniz Güneş Yardımcı** for her **six years of dedicated service as DAAD Lecturer**, carried out within the framework of the cooperation between **Istanbul Bilgi University** and the **German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)**. Between **2019 and 2025**, she made **significant contributions to the Institute's academic life** through her **teaching, research-related initiatives, and outreach activities**.

PUBLICATIONS, EVENTS & NEWS FROM OUR INSTITUTE TEAM

AYHAN KAYA

Publications

- Kaya, Ayhan (2026). "Chapter 24 Refugees: The Instrumentalization of Migration in the Populist Era," in De Gruyter Handbook of Global Security Challenges, Berlin: Der Gruyter: 377-392.
<https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111519869-026>
- Kaya, Ayhan and Nermin Aydemir (2026). "Migration and Diaspora," in Mesut Uyar, Edward J. Erickson (eds.), The Routledge Handbook of Modern Turkish History. London: Routledge, pp. ISBN 9781032418957.
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- Kaya, Ayhan, Andrea Membretti and Anna Krasteva (2025). "Endogenous and Imported Populism vs Local Citizenship in Marginalised and Remote Places of Europe", Filippo Barbera and Emma Bell (eds.). Commons, Citizenship and Power: Reclaiming the Margins. Brand: Policy Press.
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Stiftung für Wissenschaft und Politik Comment, C.15, (16 April), doi:10.18449/2025C15, <https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/youth-co-radicalisation-in-tuerkiye-new-conflict-induced-migration>

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- Kaya, A., E. Erdoğan, P. Uyan-Semerci, and Ö. Cihan (2025). "Emotions, Grievances and Democratic Governance," Istanbul Bilgi University European Institute Working Paper Series No.19, https://eu.bilgi.edu.tr/media/files/Working_Paper_19.pdf
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- Kaya, A., E. Erdoğan, P. Uyan-Semerci, and Ö. Cihan (2025). "An Overview of the Secondary Literature on Emotions, Grievances and Democratic Governance," State of the Art Report I, WP1 PLEDGE Project, <https://www.pledgeproject.eu/>

Conference Papers

- "Ressentiment and Youth Radicalism Among Nativist and Islamist Groups in Europe," Online Talk, CATS Jour Fixe, Stiftung für Wissenschaft und Politik, 24 April 2025, Berlin
- "The Intricate Relationship Between Ressentiment and Youth Radicalism Among Nativist and Islamist Groups in Europe," Paper Presented at the Centre for Religious Studies Conference, Uppsala University, 2 April 2025
- "Kentsel Alanda Demokratik İletişim ve Yönetişim: Üçüncü Alanların Önemi", World Cities Day Webinar, Human-Based Smart Cities and Democratic Governance, Arguden Governance Academy, 31 October 2025

- "EU's Historical Evolution, Structures, and Policies: Europe and the EU", Jean Monnet Lecture for Necmettin Erbakan University, Konya, Online, ValEUs and Pledge, 28 February 2025.
<https://youtu.be/VgfqxLdMXxY?si=Gw6f98W2rr14qCV2>
- "Ressentiment, Victimhood and Revanchism: Unpacking Erdoğan's Populist Mastery in Contemporary Turkish Nationalism," Paper presented at the Helsinki Conference on Emotions, Populism and Polarisation, Helsinki, 6 March 2025
- Keynote Speech on "Conflict-Induced Migration from Turkey: Youth Radicalisation and Highly Qualified Immigrants", Workshop on Highly Qualified Migrants and Refugees: Europe and Türkiye, Organized by Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin, 10-11 June 2025

Interviews and TV programmes

- "Türkiye-Almanya ilişkilerini neler bekliyor? (Turkey – Germany Relations after the 2025 Elections", Daktilo 1984, 9 March 2025.
<https://daktilo1984.com/roportajlar/turkiye-almanya-iliskilerini-neler-bekliyor-ayhan-kaya-merz-pragmatik-ve-perakendeci-bir-yaklasimla-bakmaktadir/>
- "Almanya'nın Seçimleri," (2025 Elections in Germany) Medyascope and Istanbul Policy Centre, 27 February 2025. https://www.youtube.com/live/AhT_Oriprss
- "The Rise of Populism in Europe", Reelpolitik, BRT TV, 5 February 2025.
<https://youtu.be/2imeHQt2rb4?feature=shared>
- "Syrians in Agonize Turkey Over A Return Home", New York Times, Column by Alia Malek, 17 January 2025.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/17/magazine/syrians-turkey-return.html>

ÖZGE ONURSAL-BEŞGÜL

Publications

Özge Onursal-Beşgül and Suna Gökçe Kızılkaya (2025) "Roma Rights in Turkey: De-Europeanisation as a Form of Contestation", Southeast European and Black Sea Studies, 2025.

<https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14683857.2025.2513116>

Conferences

Özge Onursal-Beşgül "Global Commitments, Local Impacts: The Role of International Organisations in Refugee Youth Integration through Higher Education", paper presented at EURIE 2025: Eurasia Higher Education Summit, Istanbul, Turkey, 8-10 April 2025.

Seminars

Özge Onursal-Beşgül "Norm Diffusion and the European Union: Europeanization and Global Governance", lecture in ENGAGE-SDG Jean Monnet Module Seminar Series, Marmara University, 27 November 2025.

Guest Lecturer

Özge Onursal-Beşgül "Module-European Integration and External Action", CIFE MAEIS European Integration and Global Studies, Istanbul, Summer 2025.

Projects

Özge Onursal-Beşgül August 2024 to Oct. 2027 Member of Cost Action CA22121

<https://e-services.cost.eu/action/CA22121/management>

Working Group 1, Research genealogy: bringing together higher education and political science studies, Cost Action: Rising nationalisms, shifting geopolitics and the future of European higher education/research openness.

OZAN KUYUMCUOĞLU

Publications

Kuyumcuoğlu, O. (2025). "Tek Parti Döneminde Dış Politika: Yeni Ulus-Devletin Hayatta Kalma Stratejileri", *Cumhuriyet'in 100. Yılı Türkiye Siyaseti: Dönemler, Aktörler, Meseleler*. (ed.) İsmet Akça. İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı: 91-112.

Bachman, J, Bizusew Ashagrie, Ozan Kuyumcuoğlu, Isabell Schierenbeck (2025). "Geocultural Power in the Red Sea Region". *Foreign Policy Analysis* 21(2): 1-12.

Kuyumcuoğlu, O (2025). "Reinterpreted Liberal Norms: Türkiye's Anti-Westernism in the Horn of Africa". *Southest European and Black Sea Studies*: 1-20.

Kuyumcuoğlu, O (2025). "Türkiye'nin İsrail-Filistin Sorununa Farklı Kimliklerle Yaklaşımı". *Reflektif* 6(2): 645-666.

DENİZ GÜNEŞ YARDIMCI

Information Sessions and Meetings

Higher Education, Research, and DAAD Scholarships in Germany

The European Institute at Istanbul Bilgi University hosted an information session on higher education, research opportunities, and DAAD scholarship programmes in Germany.

Click [here](#) to access the news.

German–Turkish Scientific Cooperation and Cultural Exchange: The Turkey Regional Meeting 2025

Istanbul Bilgi University hosted the DAAD Turkey Regional Meeting 2025, bringing together German and Turkish scholars to discuss scientific cooperation and cultural exchange within the framework of DAAD's 100th anniversary.

Click [here](#) to access the news.

Report on the Visit of the Consul General of Germany in Istanbul and the Cultural Attaché

The European Institute welcomed the Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Istanbul and the Cultural Attaché for an institutional visit focusing on academic cooperation and German–Turkish relations.

Click [here](#) to access the news.

Publications

Germany Brief 28

"To Defend or Not to Defend, That Is the Question: The History and Socio-Political Implications of the Categorization of the Extreme-Right Alternative for Germany (AfD) as 'Secured Right-Wing Extremist'"

Click [here](#) to access the publication.

ERKAN SAKA

- Fellow, The Center for Advanced Studies,
- Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, 2025 January
- Editorial Board Member, *Current Anthropology*, 2024-2025- Scientific Advisory Member, MESAM

Saka, E. (2025). **Methodological Challenges in Researching Disinformation on WhatsApp in Turkey.** In *WhatsApp in the World. Disinformation, Encryption, and Extreme Speech* (pp. 241-253). New York University Press. <https://opensquare.nyupress.org/books/9781479833306/>

Saka, E. (2025). **İletişimciler ve Sosyal Bilimciler İçin Yapay Zeka Çalışmaları Üzerine Bir Literatür Çalışması.** In *Yeni Medya ve İletişim: Yeni Yaklaşımlar* (pp. 1–40). Al. LabsPublishing. <https://ailabstr.com/yayinlar/>

AZER KILIÇ

Publications

Kılıç, A. (2025). Universal Basic Income as a Response to Automation? Attitudes of Human Translators Facing Neural Machine Translation. *Critical Sociology*, 51(6), 1225-1240.

Project

TÜBİTAK BİDEB 2247-B project yürütücülüğü, "Anticipating reproductive futures: A study of women's experiences and expectations," 1 Haziran 2025'ten itibaren.

Invited Speaker

Yurtdışı akademik kurumda davetli konuşmacı, "Fears, dreams and desires about AI under capitalism," Seminar of the Sociology of Markets series, Laboratory for Studies in Economic Sociology, HSE University, Moskova, 18 Mart 2025.

Conference

Kılıç, A. (2025), "Sosyoloji perspektifinden sağlık alanında yapay zeka kullanımı Algoritmik yanlılık meselesi," Uluslararası Sağlıkta Dijitalleşme ve Yapay Zeka Kongresi, Sinop Üniversitesi, 21-23 Mayıs, Sinop.

Kılıç, A. (2025), "Yumurta Dondurma Politikasını Çözümlmek Fikirler Çıkarlar ve Kurumsal Ortamın Rolü," IV. Ulusal Siyaset Bilimi Kongresi, İzmir Ekonomi Üniversitesi, 20-21 Eylül, İzmir.

Kılıç, A. ve M. E. Yıldırım (2025), "Nesnel ölümlerden öznel deneyimlere AMH testi ile yumurtalık rezervi takibi" STS Türkiye 2025 Yıllık Konferansı, HECAS, 6-7 Kasım, İstanbul.

SERAP ATAKAN

Publications

Iscioglu, T.E. M.G.S. Atakan and O. Kirezli, 2025, "A Qualitative Study on Consumer Coping Strategies to Deal with a Pandemic: The Case of an Emerging Country" in *Evolving Designs, Applications, Technological Advances, and the Future of Qualitative Research*, eds. Segura, L.C., A.L.F.de Souza Vasconcelos, and V.G. Slomski, Chapter 14, 355-386, IGI Global, Pennsylvania, USA.

Publications

Boşnak, B. 2025. "Contesting the EU from below? Migration governance and civil society struggles for rights in EU-Turkey relations" *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/14683857.2025.2514352>

Conferences

Boşnak, B. (2025). Discussant for ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops 2025 Workshop on Gendering Democratic Resilience, Charles University, Prague, 20-23 May 2025, 21 May 2025. "The German CDU's 'Frauen Union': Self-Perception as a Critical Actor Against Right-Wing Anti-Feminism and Its Role in Democratic Resilience by Pauline Ahlhaus."

Boşnak, B. (2025). "Gender activism and democratic resilience in Turkey" paper presented at ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops 2025 Workshop on Gendering Democratic Resilience, Charles University, Prague, 20-23 May 2025, 20 May 2025.

Boşnak, B. (2025). "Toplumsal Cinsiyet Çalışmalarında Araştırma Yöntemleri: Eleştirel Çerçeve Analizi", Sosyal Bilimlerde Metotlar ve Sınırlar: Disiplinlerarasılığın Neresindeyiz? Sunum, Panel: Sosyal Bilimlerde Feminist Metodoloji, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, **santralistanbul** Kampüs 10-11 Mayıs 2025, 10 Mayıs 2025.

Boşnak, B. (2025). "The intersection between social movements, the EU and the Syrian forced migration in Turkey" paper presented at the Jean Monnet Module "Identity and European Values in the External Borders. From the Baltic to the Mediterranean (EUBALMED) "Eu Values, External action and European Neighbourhood", 8 May 2025, University of Cadiz.

Boşnak, B. (2025). "Changing Dynamics of Civil Society and Gender: A Historical Perspective to Rethinking Norms" paper presented at Jean Monnet Chair Rethinking Norms: Europe, and Turkey in a Changing World, 26 February 2025.

Boşnak, B. (2025). "Contesting the EU from Below? Migration governance and civil society struggles for rights in EU-Turkey relations" paper presented at Special Issue Jean Monnet Chair on Norms and Turkey-EU Relations #BILGINormsEU Workshop, 10 January 2025.

Ongoing Scientific Projects



November 2025- ongoing. Principal investigator in "Civil Society and Social Movements in Times of Crisis in Turkey: Earthquake and Women's Mobilisation", The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK), 3501-Career Development Program, TÜBİTAK (Turkey).

2024- ongoing. Principal investigator in "Feminist Responses to Anti-gender Mobilization in Turkey: The Case of the Istanbul Convention (FEMIST)" 125,416.55 TL, Istanbul Bilgi University Scientific Research Project (BAP).

2022-2025. Expert researcher and lecturer in "Identity and European Values in the External Borders: Russia and the EU Neighbourhood. From the Baltic to the Mediterranean", the European Commission Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Module program, University of Cadiz (Spain).

March 2022-2025. Expert researcher and lecturer in "BILGINormsEU: JM Chair on Norms and EU-Turkey Relations", the European Commission Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Module program, Istanbul Bilgi University (Turkey).

ABOUT İSTANBUL BİLGİ UNIVERSITY

"Non scholæ sed vitæ discimus"
Okul için değil, yaşam için öğrenmeli "

Established in 1996 as a foundation university, **İstanbul Bilgi University** continues to define its role as a dynamic centre of higher education rooted in academic freedom, critical inquiry, and social engagement. Through its three campuses—**Kuştepe, Dolapdere, and santralistanbul**—the University provides an urban, interdisciplinary environment that integrates education, research, and societal interaction.

In recent years, BİLGİ's commitment to global engagement and educational excellence has been recognised through measurable achievements:

- **International Student Mobility:** According to the 2025 Higher Education Monitoring and Evaluation Report by the Turkish Council of Higher Education (YÖK), İstanbul Bilgi University ranks among the top 20 universities in Türkiye for international exchange activities and is **in the top three among foundation universities for both outgoing and incoming student mobility**. Additionally, the University is highlighted for high student satisfaction in accessibility and inclusive campus support.
- **Quality and Accreditation:** BİLGİ holds **institutional accreditation** under Türkiye's Higher Education Quality Council (YÖKAK), demonstrating comprehensive quality assurance across leadership, teaching, research, and societal contribution. The University has also received **5 Stars from QS Stars** in areas including teaching, internationalisation, graduate employability, programme strength, and inclusivity—an international recognition of excellence across multiple performance dimensions. Is
- Additional accredited achievements span **language education, professional psychology training, engineering programmes**, and internationally recognised **information security standards**, affirming BİLGİ's broad institutional quality.

Today, Bilgi's **20,000+ students, 60,000+ alumni**, and over **1,000 academic staff** engage in a wide spectrum of undergraduate and graduate programmes that reflect the University's commitment to critical thinking and societal impact.

İstanbul Bilgi University at a Glance

- Founded in 1996 as a foundation university
- 3 urban campuses in Istanbul
- Recognised for international student mobility and accessibility
- Institutional accreditation and multiple quality awards
- A vibrant academic community with global connections

For more information, please **visit** Istanbul Bilgi University's official website

ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

FACULTIES

Faculty of Law

Faculty of Communication

Faculty of Business

Faculty of Architecture

Faculty of Engineering and Natural Sciences

Faculty of Health Sciences

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

Faculty of Applied Sciences

VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

Vocational School of Justice

School of Advanced Vocational Studies

Vocational School of Health Services

INSTITUTES

Institute of Graduate Programs

European Institute

Institute of Information and Technology Law

SCHOOLS

School of Informatics Technology

GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Economics-Business Administration Programs

Economics Master’s Degree Program

Financial Economics Master’s Degree Program

Banking and Finance [Online] Master’s Degree Program

Marketing Master’s Degree Program

Human Resources Management [Online] Master’s Degree Program

Management Information Systems [Online] Master’s Degree Program

Economics PhD Program

Law Programs

Information and Technology Law Master’s Degree Program

Turkish-German Business Law Master’s Degree Program

Private Law Master’s Degree Program

Human Rights Law Master’s Degree Program

Public Law PhD Program

Private Law PhD Program

Communication Programs

Film and Television Master’s Degree Program

Cultural Management Master’s Degree Program

Marketing Communication Master’s Degree Program

Media and Communication Systems Master’s Degree Program

Communication PhD Program

Architecture Programs

History and Theory of Architecture Master’s Degree Program

Architectural Design Master’s Degree Program

Engineering Programs

Computer Engineering Master’s Degree Program

Bioengineering Master’s Degree Program

Electrical-Electronics Engineering Master’s Degree Program

Electrical-Electronics Engineering PhD Program

Health Programs

Trauma and Disaster Mental Health Master’s Degree Program

Nutrition and Dietetics Master’s Degree Program

Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Master’s Degree Program

Social Sciences Programs

Clinical Psychology Master’s Degree Program

Organizational Psychology Master’s Degree Program

History Master’s Degree Program

Cultural Studies Master’s Degree Program

Political Science and International Relations Master’s Degree Program

Political Science PhD Program

Management Programs

MBA (English)

MBA (Turkish)

e-MBA (Turkish)

e-MBA (English)

Business Administration PhD Program

RESEARCH CENTERS

Centers

Center for Atatürk Studies

Center for Civil Society Studies

Child Studies Unit

Center for Conflict Resolution Studies

Center for Environment, Energy and Sustainability Studies

Center for Financial Studies

Center for Migration Research

Center for Sociology and Education Studies

Center for Work Ethics Studies

Comparative Labor and Social Security Law Research Center

Competition Law and Policy Research Center

Cultural Policy and Management Research Center

Distance Learning Center

Higher Education Studies Research Center

Human Rights Law Research Center

Intellectual Property Law Research Center

Marine Law Research Center

Murat Sertel Center for Advanced Economic Studies

Research Center on International Trade and Arbitration

Turkish Language Teaching and Research Center

**Online master programs will only accept students in the fall semesters as of the 2024-2025 Academic Year.*



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