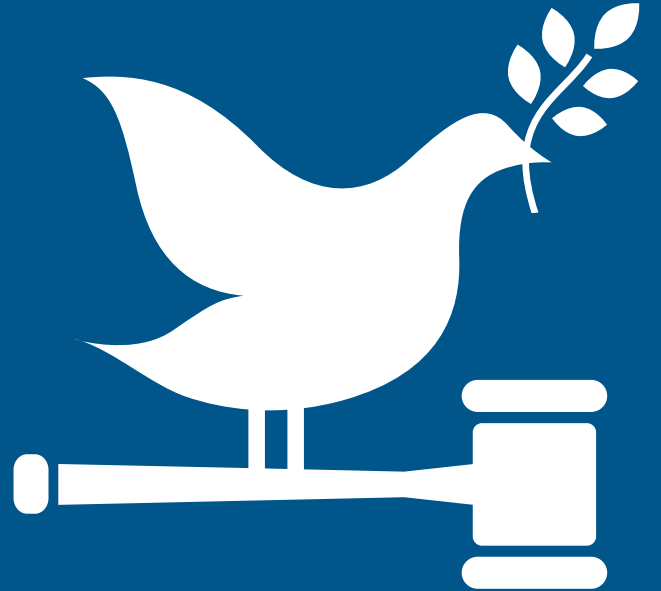


2023-2024 SDG 16 REPORT



16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions



Scholarly Output:
20



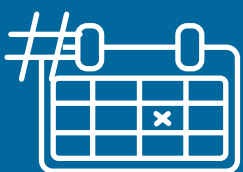
International
Collaboration:
8



Field-weighted
Citation Impact:
1.14



Number of Current
Projects:
28



Number of Annual
Events:
102

1. Strategic Narratives and COVID-19 Governance in Europe's Autocratisers

By the end of 2022, extensive research had been conducted on authoritarian consolidation during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a focus on how governmental measures weakened democratic checks and balances while strengthening regimes. However, limited insight has been gained into how the pandemic was narrated by political leaders to reinforce their power through both domestic and foreign policy choices. Therefore, in 2023 Deniz Sert, with her colleague from the University of Aberdeen, focused on major autocratisers in Europe—Hungary, Poland, Turkey, and Serbia—whose democracy scores have experienced the sharpest declines over the last decade. Through an analysis of the influential narratives identified in the discourses of state leaders and government representatives, they revealed how pandemic governance was leveraged. These narratives were constructed to legitimize repressive policies aimed at societal control and to contest both the European Union (EU) and the liberal democratic order. This research, recently published, aligns with SDG 16 by shedding light on the erosion of democratic institutions, emphasizing the critical need for inclusive, transparent governance and accountability across global political systems.

2. ÖzÜ Innovative Legal Lab: Post-Earthquake Legal Information Notes

Following the February 6 Kahramanmaraş earthquake, ÖzÜ Innovative Legal Lab at Faculty of Law has created accessible information notes to assist citizens directly affected by the disaster. These guides aim to support individuals in understanding and navigating their legal rights and options during this challenging time, contributing to a fair and informed recovery process.

This initiative aligns with SDG 16 by promoting access to justice and ensuring legal awareness for all, especially those most vulnerable after the earthquake.



Scan for more
information

3. Gender Equality Policies in Turkey's Opposition Municipalities

Ebru Ertugal in collaboration with a scholar at the American College of Institute (ACI) , examined in 2023 gender equality policy processes in Turkey's opposition-controlled municipalities operating under a national government with an authoritarian and anti-gender equality stance. Using interview data and documentary analysis, the study identifies four factors that either facilitate or hinder the advancement of gender equality policies. It highlights that the interaction between political party ideology and the personal perceptions of mayors creates openings for gender mainstreaming, where gender experts play a crucial role. Gender mainstreaming supports policy capacity, spreads gender awareness, and in some cases, reshapes politicians' perspectives on electoral outcomes. However, adversarial dynamics between government levels hinder transformative actions, although these actions hold potential for future feminist-oriented political engagement. By aligning with SDG 5, DG 10 and SDG 16, this research underscores the vital role of gender equality in building inclusive and accountable institutions. It emphasizes that fostering gender equality within governance structures not only promotes women's empowerment but also strengthens the effectiveness and legitimacy of institutions committed to equity and social justice.

4. Academic Freedom Policy

Özyeğin University became a signatory to the Magna Charta Universitatum on September 16, 2011, and declared its commitment to defend academic freedom and university autonomy. Since then Özyeğin University has embraced academic freedom and affirmed its commitment to be a place of free and open inquiry. ÖzU understands this freedom as a duty to search for truth, wherever it may be found. Such inquiry and the attendant open discussions, unrestricted exchanges of ideas, and examinations of widely divergent materials are all essential components of academic freedom. ÖzU expects its faculty and students to conduct research, publish findings, and discuss ideas according to the principles, methods, and practices of their respective disciplines.

Academic freedom to pursue the truth must involve tolerance for students and faculty to make mistakes of inquiry. In embracing academic freedom, ÖzU pledges to defend this quest for truth by its officers, faculty, staff, and students. Furthermore, ÖzU seeks to create an environment in which students and faculty may pursue truth aware that errors and mistakes are necessarily part of the process.

Özyeğin also acknowledges the responsibilities that attend academic freedom. These responsibilities begin with a commitment to honesty and integrity in dealing with officers of the institution, faculty, students, and the public. That integrity furthermore means a commitment to excellent scholarship.

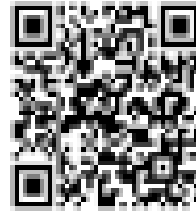
Özyeğin recognizes academic freedom in tenure and promotion decisions, research, scholarship, publication, teaching, for senior and junior faculty, and public statements as private citizens.

5. OzU: A Neutral Platform and A Safe Space

Özyeğin University is committed to providing a neutral platform and a safe space for diverse political stakeholders to openly discuss challenges, as emphasized in our Code of Ethics (Article 4) and in Sections 1 and 2 of our UNGC COP report. These outline our commitment to protecting and promoting fundamental rights and freedoms, ensuring our campus is a safe space. As seen in student club event visuals, we actively encourage these dialogues, fostering mutual understanding and collaboration on critical issues. Students invite various NGOs, government representatives, companies demonstrating this dedication. Besides On the World Food Day, FAO, as an NGO, the Water Institute of Turkey, as a government agent, and Pinar Holding, a plastic bottle company, and Mine Tekman, an activist on plastic pollution and faculty at OzU had a fruitful discussion on our campus, which is a testament to our university's dedication to facilitating constructive dialogue and collaboration among diverse political stakeholders. It is actively encouraged and supported such interactions to foster understanding and find common ground on important issues.



Poster Of World Food Day



Scan For Ozyegin The
Enhanced
Communication On
Progress Report



Scan For Code of Ethics

6. Under the Surface II: Marriage Consent Case” by Inter-Disciplinary Child Rights Laboratory (ICRLAB)

ICRLAB organized a mock trial titled “Under the Surface II: Marriage Consent Case” on April 19. The trial focused on the case of A.Y., a 16-year-old girl whose family petitioned for her marriage approval. Led by Sevgi Usta, Deniz Aslı Çoker, and Oben Södütemiz, the trial aimed to shed light on the legal implications of child marriages, exploring the topic from a holistic, human-centered perspective. Students from various disciplines contributed expert reports, and journalism students from Istanbul University also participated, discussing the media portrayal of child marriages.

Key legal references highlighted included the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which mandates that state parties prevent early marriages, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which defines anyone under 18 as a child and obligates protections against exploitation. The mock trial served to reinforce that child marriages infringe upon children’s rights to development, education, and personal safety.

The Social Inquiry Report underscored significant factors, such as community pressures and parental control, affecting A.Y.’s situation. Various student experts presented findings, including sociological insights on family dynamics and psychological evaluations of early marriage’s impact on adolescent development.

The case, highlighting a complex issue with lasting implications for Turkey and beyond, was adjourned until October 18, 2024.

The mock trial directly addresses SDG 4 by involving students in experiential learning that deepens their understanding of social justice and legal challenges. It also aligns with SDG 5 by confronting gender-based cultural practices that affect young girls’ rights and opportunities.

Most prominently, this event supports SDG 16 by advocating for the rule of law, child protection, and responsible governance. By emphasizing child rights and the importance of legal protections, the trial reinforces SDG 16’s commitment to upholding justice and safeguarding vulnerable individuals against exploitation and discriminatory practices. The inclusion of interdisciplinary student voices and expert insights highlights Özyeğin University’s dedication to promoting ethical practices and ensuring just institutions for all.



Fictional Case That Draws Attention to Child Marriages

7. University Impact Rankings for UN SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions ÖZU: The Second Top Foundation University in Türkiye

Times Higher Education has ranked 1,086 universities from 113 countries/regions for their contributions to the SDG 16. ÖZU ranked as the second best foundation university shows its success in promoting inclusive societies, enhancing access to justice and fostering transparent institutions. Through rigorous research, governance measures and collaborations with government entities, ÖZU addresses various forms of violence, advocate for non-discrimination, and contribute to strengthening national and international legislation.