

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



Peace and justice are essential for sustainable societies. Özyeğin University contributes by integrating human rights, ethics, and good governance into its curricula, conducting research on democratic participation and law, and fostering dialogue through civic engagement programs.

21

Scholarly Publications
(2020-2024)

0.86

Citation Impact
(FWCI)

2

Funded
Projects

26

Student-Led
Activities

Responsible Citizenship Course: Rights-Based Governance

Starting in the 2025–26 academic year, Özyeğin University will introduce TRL202/204 Responsible Citizenship, an interdisciplinary course designed to strengthen students' understanding of democratic participation, active citizenship, and rights-based governance. The course examines citizenship from legal, political, social, and psychological perspectives, helping students analyze societal challenges and design ethical, inclusive solutions that promote justice and accountability.

Working in multidisciplinary teams, students develop projects that apply human rights principles and participatory governance methods to real-world issues. The curriculum emphasizes transparency, ethical use of technology, and collaboration with local stakeholders, encouraging students to engage actively with communities and institutions. Through rights-based project design, fieldwork, and reflective practice, the course cultivates the values of civic responsibility and ethical leadership, preparing graduates to contribute to more just, peaceful, and accountable societies.

Inter-Disciplinary Child Rights Laboratory Mock Trial

The Inter-Disciplinary Child Rights Laboratory (ICRLAB) at Özyeğin University unites faculty and students from law, psychology, sociology, and social work to address child rights issues through multidisciplinary research and experiential learning. The laboratory equips students with the skills to approach complex child protection challenges using rights-based, evidence-driven methods.

On April 19, ICRLAB organized a mock trial titled "Under the Surface II: Marriage Consent Case," focusing on a family's petition to approve the marriage of a 16-year-old girl. Guided by faculty member Dr. Sevgi Usta, Faculty of Law, and research assistant Deniz Aslı Çoker, and Oben Südütemiz, students analyzed the case from legal, psychological, and sociological perspectives, producing expert reports on family dynamics, adolescent well-being, and social pressures. Journalism students from Istanbul University also joined, examining media representations of child marriage. The exercise engaged key international legal frameworks, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and CEDAW, while fostering practical understanding of justice and institutional responsibility in protecting children's rights.

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. The university 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. Academic freedom to pursue the truth must involve tolerance for students and faculty to make mistakes of inquiry. In embracing academic freedom, the university pledges to defend this quest for truth by its officers, faculty, staff, and students, creating an environment in which students and faculty may pursue truth aware that errors and mistakes are necessarily part of the process. The university also acknowledges the responsibilities that attend academic freedom, beginning with a commitment to honesty and integrity in dealing with officers of the institution, faculty, students, and the public. Özyeğin recognizes academic freedom in tenure and promotion decisions, research, scholarship, publication, teaching, for senior and junior faculty, and public statements as private citizens.



Connect Legal Lab:**Advancing Legal Frameworks for Digital Transformation**

The Connect Legal Lab, launched alongside the Department of IT Law, has been established as an effective research field in today's interconnected era. Recognized by technology leaders as essential, the lab addresses the need for fair and effective legal frameworks during rapid digital transformation, where everything from human cognition to vehicles is increasingly networked and digitized.

As an interdisciplinary research hub, Connect Legal Lab focuses on analyzing the legal implications of evolving technologies while fostering collaboration with various fields, including technology-focused disciplines and academia-industry participants. Research areas encompass interconnected and emerging technologies, such as next-generation wireless systems (5G and 6G), cybersecurity, data privacy, data protection, smart cities, brain-machine interfaces, and neuro-rights. Through this initiative, activities have been planned where students actively participate in research, events, projects, and hackathons. The lab also targets contributions toward enhancing undergraduate and graduate education on the legal impact of emerging technologies, serving as a forward-looking knowledge transfer center that pursues national and international research.

The founders of the Connect Legal Lab, Dr. Başak Ozan Özparlak and Dr. Müge Çetin from the Department of Information Technology Law, have recently joined the "Behavioral Next Generation in Wireless Networks for Cyber Security (BEiNG-WISE)" action conducted by the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) organization. The project proposes a paradigm shift by integrating human behavioral factors with advanced technological characteristics to develop responsible-by-design cybersecurity solutions, bringing together cross-domain expertise from cybersecurity, wireless communications, data science, sociology, psychology, and law.

Countering Foreign Information Manipulation

The Detecting and Countering Information Suppression from a Transnational Perspective (DE-CONSPIRATOR) project coordinated by Dr. Akin Ünver, faculty of Social Sciences, is a groundbreaking research project launched in January 2024 to combat Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI), which involves the deliberate spread of false information by foreign actors to undermine democratic institutions. The project specifically examines sophisticated information manipulation tactics employed by Russia and China within the European Union and its partner countries, which use FIMI as a modern warfare tool to manipulate public discourse, promote their agendas, and create division and polarization in European societies. The project's launch is particularly timely as 2024 is a pivotal year for democracy, with nearly two billion people worldwide participating in elections. DE-CONSPIRATOR aims to counter these threats to liberal democracies that depend on the free and open flow of information.

DeeP-MaRS: An AI-assisted bioweapon detection platform

Dr. Burçin Ünlü from the Faculty of Engineering is participating from ÖzÜ in the DeeP-MaRS project consortium, an AI-powered biological weapon detection platform developed to counter bioterrorism threats. Bioterrorism involves deliberate release of harmful microorganisms such as viruses and bacteria into air or water, resulting in mass casualties, epidemics, and environmental damage. This project aims to develop a multi-sensor platform that combines magnetic levitation-Raman spectroscopy, photoacoustic spectroscopy, and artificial intelligence technologies. The platform's primary goal is to rapidly detect bacterial contamination in municipal water and air supplies, enabling early intervention to prevent the spread of diseases caused by biological attacks.