REGION

EAST AND SOUTHEAST EUROPE
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ESEE Region at a Glance</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Objectives</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Tools</td>
<td>6-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Partners and Networks</td>
<td>8-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Focal Issues</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Products and Publications</td>
<td>10-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Balkans</td>
<td>12-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Europe</td>
<td>14-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia and Central Asia</td>
<td>16-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine and Belarus</td>
<td>18-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>20-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Caucasus</td>
<td>22-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacts</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Editorial: Freedom Endangered

Some 25 years ago, the people living in the East and Southeast European (ESEE) region were, with the exception of Turkey, still under communist rule. After a peaceful revolution in many of the region's countries, the societies succeeded in building systems of democracy and market economies. Newly acquired freedoms were used to lay the foundations for free societies; that in itself is a huge success for liberal ideas.

The Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom has supported these processes of democratization and the building of civil societies from the very beginning through political consultation and educational activities. The Foundation actively supported the region's economic restructuring process through public consultations and by conveying valuable liberal concepts.

Today, of the region's 22 countries, five are members of NATO and three are EU Members. Five of the 22 states are members of the Eurasian Economic Union and another five of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. These simple facts vividly describe the main lines of conflict in the region. Ever since the annexation of Crimea, earlier acts of border transgressions appear in a different light. But in recent years we have not only seen progress - some countries have slid backwards as far as democracy and the respect for human rights are concerned. Sometimes, there has even been a regression back towards authoritarian arrangements. There are significant weaknesses in the political culture of many societies, especially in the administration of justice and in socio-economic development.

Therefore, the stabilizing influence provided by co-operation with organizations offering advice and training, such as our liberal foundation, is still in very high demand. Apart from the countries that have already acceded to the EU or have greater prospects to do so, there are other countries that have made but slight progress on the road to democracy, the rule of law and the market economy. Our Foundation actively supports the important efforts of the enlarged EU to create closer partnerships and areas of co-operation.
with its new neighbours to the east, not only for the purpose of improving economic relations, but also for the establishment and consolidation of stable, just and open societies. Often operating under difficult conditions, our Foundation is active in these countries, committed to giving a push to the forces working in support of freedom, human rights, democracy, and the market economy.

More than twenty years of fostering democracy in the region have shown that only a vigorous policy of reform based on a broad public consensus can lead to success. This reform policy becomes a kind of social anchor essential for free elections and free markets to provide the whole population with the desired results of freedom and prosperity. Therefore, in the future, political cooperation with and promotion of liberal reformist forces will continue to be our core task in this part of the world. I invite you to learn more about the work of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom in the region of East and Southeast Europe (ESEE) by reading the chapters below.

Dr Rainer Adam
Regional Director FNF ESEE
The Foundation’s region of East and Southeast Europe (ESEE) consists of 22 countries in Eastern Europe including Turkey. The Foundation maintains project offices in six locations (Belgrade, Istanbul, Kiev, Moscow, Sofia and Tbilisi) and employs about 50 professional staff. Most offices cover more than one country but the Foundation does not have programmes on the ground in all of the 22 countries. The ESEE Regional Office in Sofia co-ordinates the Foundation’s work in the project countries. Moreover, the Regional Office has important administrative, auditing, evaluation and monitoring functions. Project activities amount to some 500 events per year with several thousand participants.

Our work is financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development, the German Foreign Office, and, to an increasing extent, the European Union and the European Parliament, as well as other institutions that co-operate in development.
Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger, Board Member of Friedrich Naumann Foundation, at the Regional Conference in Moscow, Russia, together with Project Directors, FNF staff and conference participants
Our Objectives

The political philosophy of liberalism was and is a driving force on the road to democracy, the rule of law and a market economy. It provides guidelines for political action that are in line with the principle of individual freedom. We want to foster the understanding of liberal values and to spread liberal ideas. We put liberal concepts from all policy areas at the heart of our work. We want to contribute to freedom and prosperity, and above all, to facilitate the sustainability of the on-going political, economic and social transformation processes in the countries of this region. We work for the strengthening of civil society. To that end, we support liberal organizations and parties. An active and open society is a necessary precondition for a country’s problems to be openly discussed and constructively resolved. Only civil society can ensure that democracy does not remain confined to formal processes but leads to real power for the people. Liberal organizations have an important voice in the pluralistic competition of opinions.

We support the further integration of the new Member States of the European Union and the integration of the EU’s eastern neighbours to European values and the Single Market. We enhance the exchange of liberal reform methods through our growing network of partners, and we want to intensify the transfer of liberal reform concepts from abroad back into Germany. Our partnerships are characterized by open and productive dialogue. As a German political foundation, we not only want to export knowledge and skills but also to learn ourselves and to promote the social learning process in Germany. The ESEE countries in transition have gained important experience while reforming their political and economic systems. These reforms include changes to tax regimes, fiscal discipline and the use of electronic media to promote greater citizen involvement. Their experience could be valuable for Germany as well.
Our work, based on years of experience, comes in many different forms and constantly improves. We put a focus on participatory methods involving active citizens.

To achieve our objectives, we use three tools:

- **Political education** enables more people to actively participate in political and civil society processes. We address opinion leaders and senior executives, i.e., individuals who will spread the skills and knowledge they have gained into their environment. Topics range from the functioning of democracy, the rule of law and the market economy to issues of significance for specific circles of citizens.

- In the framework of *political dialogue*, liberal politicians and representatives of civil society share their experience, either on national or transnational platforms. Thus, they have the opportunity to learn from each other and develop liberal solutions to their countries’ problems.

- Through *political consultation*, decision-makers from the liberal spectrum are provided with the skills, knowledge and experience which will enable them to strengthen their political parties or civil society organizations and implement liberal political models.

These forms of consultation involve both various substantive political issues and the techniques necessary to achieve success in political competition.
As a forum and a centre for international dialogue and cultural exchange, the International Academy of Leadership (IAF) was established in 1995 at the Theodor Heuss Academy in Gummersbach. Here, experts and decision-makers from around the world have the opportunity to share their different political experiences and work together on political concepts focusing on democracy, the rule of law and the market economy. Liberal approaches towards problem solving are developed, along with a common understanding of individual freedom and cultural diversity in a global framework.

Our information campaigns for liberal leaders and young decision-makers from East and Southeast Europe give them the opportunity to establish contacts and have discussions with representatives from civil society, government bodies, political parties, political associations, business and media in Germany and Europe. The experience gained helps the participants in their daily work. They receive many suggestions on how to apply liberal approaches and political concepts in their own countries.

Our partners from the ESEE region also contribute to conferences and events in Germany dedicated to hot issues and long-term development prospects in the project countries.

The information campaigns organized by our International Division are designed to inform and update political actors, the media, academic circles and interested citizens about liberal positions and possible solutions to various problems. It is expected that through mutual learning and exchange, know-how will also be transferred back to Germany.
Our Partners and Networks

A tight network of working relationships with liberal political parties, affiliated organizations, citizens groups, human rights organizations, think tanks and academic institutions is the basis for our activity in ESEE. We increasingly rely on transnational activities and co-operation with existing liberal networks. The promotion of organized liberalism in the region is the common concern of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom and the two international associations of liberal parties - the Liberal International (LI) and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats in Europe (ALDE), along with two liberal youth organizations, the International Federation of Liberal Youth (IFLRY) and the European Liberal Youth (LY-MEC). This co-operation ranges from jointly conducted skill-training sessions to the pooling of best practices, training courses in liberalism and special events related to European integration and international relations. In addition, the Foundation collaborates with the European Liberal Forum (ELF) - founded in 2007 - which is an association of think tanks, political foundations and other educational organizations from EU member states and candidate countries and is financed with funds from the European Parliament for the purpose of disseminating liberal ideas and developing reform concepts. Our joint transnational activities focus on subjects such as globalization, the strengthening of liberal civil society but also competence training.

The regional programme “Promoting Tolerance”, conducted annually since 1992 in co-operation with the American Jewish Committee (AJC), focuses on minority inclusion and human rights policies. This programme consists of an online-seminar, a regional workshop and a study tour to the United States. The participants get first-hand experience of practical approaches for the integration of different minorities in the truly pluralistic environment of the USA; afterwards, many have begun tolerance-related initiatives in their own countries.
Focal Issues

We focus globally on the following important issues:

◆ **The Best Education: Professional Standards, Individual Paths!**

Freedom cannot survive long without education. Likewise, without freedom there is no good education. Education and freedom of choice of educational pathways are the pillars, on which every person can unfold his talents. For the good of everybody.

◆ **Digital and Open Society: Freedom Creates Opportunities. Civil Rights are at the Core of Liberal Policy.**

The digital society offers a lot of possibilities for creativity development and economic progress. However, this should not be achieved at the expense of freedom and privacy. The open society is the opposite model to the totalitarian state forms like nationalism or communism. In an open society everyone has the freedom to be oneself. And in this way every citizen also has the opportunity to shape his or her own life.

◆ **The Future of the Social Market Economy: Ideas for One Liberal Society.**

Only the market economy can guarantee personal and social freedom and high standard of living. However, politics in the last years has had the tendency to undermine the fundamentals of the social market economy – especially the freedom of creativity and innovation. We, as liberals, believe that self-determined citizens should not allow this to happen.

◆ **Global Political Order: Freedom Needs Brave People Worldwide!**

A stable and free world order is in the best interest not only of Germany. The return of geopolitical competition is threatening the current equilibrium. Therefore, we try to expand our capacities to act within the Western and European community of shared values. A liberal and peaceful world, open markets and human rights globally are at the core of our foreign policy work.

Find more on freiheit.org
Our Products and Publications

The Regional Office provides information in various formats about the Foundation's work, political issues and long term developments in the region.

The Foundation’s regional website sooe.fnst.org presents reports, recent publications and press articles in English. Our Project Directors and experts also regularly report about and analyse important political events in the region. These analyses can be found on the new freiheit.org website of the Foundation in Germany in the German language.

An electronic English newsletter informs readers about events of regional importance and provides analyses of the Foundation’s view of current developments in the project countries and the region as a whole. A subscription to the newsletter can be requested from our website, sooe.fnst.org, section ‘Newsletter’.

The Regional Office also creates its own publications, which are available for free distribution both in print and electronically.
Our Products and Publications

Freedom Barometer

The Freedom Barometer is an index database of Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, which combines assessments of the degree of political freedom and the prevalence of the rule of law and economic freedom into one single index. The project was initiated by the Regional Office for Southeast and East Asia around five years ago. The Regional Office for East and Southeast Europe has published a European edition for two years now. The Freedom Barometer Europe Edition 2015 is the first cross-regional edition and includes 27 countries in Western and Eastern Europe. Find out the ranking and concise analysis of the country you are interested in and compare it to other countries on freedombarometer.org platform and www.facebook.com/FreedomBarometer.

FreedomTV Europe: youtube.com/c/FreedomTVEurope

FreedomTV Europe is the YouTube Channel of the Regional Office. Please subscribe to FreedomTV Europe to stay tuned to the Freedom video news from the region of East and Southeast Europe. Below you can see some of our most prominent new video products in FreedomTV Europe.

Freedom in 10 Seconds & Liberalism in 10 Seconds

Both series, “Freedom in 10 Seconds” and “Liberalism in 10 Seconds”, feature short video statements, presenting the views of our partners, colleagues and friends of what freedom or liberalism stands for. Short, sincere, spontaneous, simple, and catchy, both series present a mosaic of individual views and opinions of Freedom and Liberalism.

FreedomGraph

“FreedomGraph” is a series of infographics produced by the Regional Office ESEE. “FreedomGraph” aims to summarize, analyse and visualize in compelling ways the principles, ideas and issues that are important for the Foundation and for liberal thought. “FreedomGraph” gives you the freedom to inform yourself and reach your own conclusions. We hope it inspires debate and further research.
In 1992 FNF started its work in the Western Balkans. Since 2000 it has operated from its office in Belgrade. Based in Serbia, a key country in the region, FNF offers its partners political education, political dialogue and consultation. In Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Albania and Montenegro liberal partners in politics and civil society strive to change and guide their countries on the transition path towards more rule of law, a free market society and more European perspectives.

However this bumpy path is challenged by populist and authoritarian-style parties. Recent developments such as the economic crisis exposed the weaknesses within the new democracies. High unemployment rates, corruption and lack of prospects for the younger generation has led to brain-drain and migration.

Europe’s current refugee crisis puts a spotlight on the Western Balkans Route and its constituent countries. By taking responsibility for the safety of refugees passing through their countries, both Serbia and Croatia have shown a high degree of commitment, despite having a plethora of internal problems. Serbia’s prospects for joining the EU plays a crucial role in encouraging political elites to embark on reforms needed to further democratize their country.

FNF in the Western Balkans encourages its partners; six political parties and a number of NGOs in the fields of economic freedom and human rights - to develop concrete visions of hope for the people of their respective countries. Young politicians from all democratically elected parties meet for cross-border dialogues (Serbian-Kosovar, Serbian-Bosnian, and Serbian-Croatian). Local councillors expand their networks and exchange their experience of policies concerning their citizens. Universities in Osijek (Croatia) and Novi Sad (Serbia) have forged a new cooperation. This is how FNF Western Balkans invests
The Western Balkans: a Region in Transition

in people. To offer a generation of emerging leaders throughout the West Balkan countries a wider framework in which they can discover their opportunities to become “agents of change” is one of the foremost aims of its programmes. But changes need time.

“Accountability in Politics” is a specially designed programme to empower civil society and politicians to change the substance and style of politics in their countries. The programme enables opinion leaders to discuss the various aspects of this broad topic: bad governance, fighting corruption, rethinking the role of politicians vs their voters and to establish new mechanisms to strengthen citizens’ control of the parliament, such as an “open parliament” or a “truth-o-meter”. The key issue of all changes is Freedom. Thus the Western Balkans Region introduced a “Freedom Barometer” (www.freedombarometer.org) as a tool to measure the extent of freedom in the fields of economy, politics and the rule of law.

With its latest project “Smart Cities - Responsive Cities” the FNF project team builds on the knowledge and responsibility of the individual with regard to sustainable growth. Target groups involve local decision makers, young politicians and pupils. A new target group is young entrepreneurs and start-ups. This project kicked off as a project dealing with the impact of climate change on cities.

For more information, kindly visit www.westbalkan.fnst.org or check out our Facebook pages: www.facebook.com/FNFWesternBalkans and www.facebook.com/FreedomBarometer.
The Road to Europe

The Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom has been working in Romania and Bulgaria since 1990, supporting a difficult and ongoing transformation process. After these countries’ accession to the EU on 1 January 2007, our primary focus has been set to assist leaders of the liberal parties, the youth movements, and of civil society in adapting to the new challenges brought about by EU membership: adaptation to new standards, full integration, and improvement of competitiveness. The main instruments we use are those of political consultancy, educational and awareness raising activities, political dialogue, and publications.

The European Commission still periodically reminds these two new EU Member States, Bulgaria and Romania, of their need to deal with deficiencies in administration, the rule of law, political culture, and the fight against corruption. Our Foundation addresses these same issues in two ways. First, we encourage our partner parties and their youth organizations to debate them in public and second, we attempt to raise public awareness through addressing these same issues in our events and publications designed to promote European integration.

The Foundation uses the support of liberal think tanks to communicate the advantages of a free market economy. The prime objectives of this method are to generate support for private enterprise and to promote an understanding of the concept of economic freedom and how it creates economic prosperity and, consequently, an affluent society.

In the late Nineties, the Foundation expanded its project work in the region, launching activities in Macedonia and Moldova. The first has the status of a candidate for EU accession while the latter has a long-standing interest in eventually joining the EU. Both countries see the EU as the only feasible option they have in their efforts to secure a free and prosperous future. However, both countries have to comply with a number of economic and political conditions before the process of accession can continue.

Our projects in Macedonia and Moldova also have a Eu-
Southeast Europe: Supporting the Consolidation of Freedom, the Rule of Law, and Responsibility in a Diverse Region

European dimension, which has been secured primarily through transnational activities and the close networking with the liberal organizations throughout the subregion. In both countries the Foundation lends support to efforts in the following fields, mainly through political dialogue and political education: the adoption of legal and economic standards in line with those of the European Union, the transformation of public attitudes towards democracy with the aim of improving participation, entrepreneurial spirit, and the democratic decision-making process and, particularly at the local level, the initiation of measures that help to administrative efficiency and service delivery.

Our activities also include the establishment of regional dialogue forums for the cross-border exchange of experience and ideas in a variety of areas that liberals consider important: establishing the supremacy of law, promoting a “European” political culture and means of securing effective management.

In this light, we have conducted a number of special events for young people in Southeast Europe to determine which topics a liberal Foundation should focus on. The clear answers from all countries were anticorruption and transparency, freedom of media, economic independence and entrepreneurship, and education. Since 2014, we have dedicated at least one third of our activities specifically to those issues.

A Stronger Liberal Profile and Identity

We organize special events designed to improve the democratic structure and the efficient organization of political parties and their youth and women organizations and to enhance the skills and abilities of decision makers and opinion leaders within them.

The aim is to strengthen liberal organizations and thereby help them to cope with the new challenges they face brought by an increasingly competitive and internationalized environment. This is a central aspect of our work. To this end, our political consultancy and political education focus on creating and designing modern structures for liberal parties that are both efficient and participatory in nature. Master training programs on liberalism, communication skills and facilitation complement these efforts. At the same time, care is taken to ensure that a sustainable system of internal training is established.

The main instruments used for implementing our objectives are seminars and seminar series, conferences, workshops, forums and publications of important liberal works translated into local languages, information programs in Germany and Brussels, and the international events organized at the International Academy for Leadership (IAF) in Germany.
Dialogue for Liberal Values

Since the major demonstrations in 2011/12, civic freedoms have been continually restricted in Russia. The annexation of Crimea and the war in Ukraine have further worsened the relationship of Russia with the European Union and its partners. Yet Russia remains a major European country with a rich culture, the world’s largest territory and is a key player in global politics, facing many common challenges with its European neighbours. For two decades it has been going through a transformation that is full of contradictions and far from over.

Our Foundation, active in Russia since 1992, has been faced with big challenges in its work and, at the same time, with many small success stories. Despite an ongoing economic crisis, the economic growth of the last decade has created a sizeable middle class and average Russians were never as prosperous as they are today. But trends show that the need for economic and political reforms remains bigger than ever.

While major political developments in recent years have darkened hopes, there are still strong voices in Russia for an open society, for the rule of law, for human and civil rights, for a market-based economy and free trade, for tolerance, for peace and for freedom. We try to support their aim to preserve these liberal values and convey to the public the practical advantages of liberal politics as a part of the Russian debate.

Dialogue and Public Debate

Together with our partners, we organize events for enhancing the rule of law, the strengthening of civil society and the shaping of a liberal economic order. For over 20 years our programme “Liberal Clubs” has fostered open discussions in various Russian regions about current political and social topics which have been identified by FNF and our partners. We aim to support civil society and civic rights as well as entrepreneurship and regional economic development, to strengthen the openness of Russia’s society and the success of its economic development. To reach a wider public, we work with economic think tanks in order to highlight the concepts of private property, rule of law and free competition as major preconditions for economic growth and prosperity.

Our Foundation acts primarily as a facilitator, helping to share experience and to find partners for an open dialogue about political, cultural and social issues. We see this dialogue as very important because the relations between Russia and Germany are crucial for the future of both countries and their neighbours. Therefore, our Foundation maintains various programmes that give Russian politicians and civil servants, civil society activists, journalists and academics the opportunity to draw their own picture of the political and social situation in Germany and the EU.
Towards Free Societies and Markets in Central Asia

The regional programme of the Foundation for Freedom in Central Asia is managed from our office in Moscow. With two regional programmes we pave the road towards the rule of law and a market economy. We work together with the Central Asian Free Market Institute (CAFMI) located in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), the Tajikistan Free Market Centre (TFMC) in Dushanbe (Tajikistan), and the Institute for Development and Economic Affairs in Almaty (Kazakhstan) to explain and demonstrate to young people from Central Asian countries the basics of liberal thinking. At Free Market Clubs, economic forums and summer schools, participants discuss important issues of their region in order to develop liberal solutions to them. In Kyrgyzstan we also maintain close contact with the young liberal Reform Party and their allies.
With the “revolution of dignity” Ukrainians created the conditions for fundamental political and economic reform. They held two free and fair elections, presidential and parliamentary, under the most difficult conditions. Both clearly rejected extremist forces. However, Ukraine must still pass the litmus test – its own ability to reform. Those who have stepped in to realign their country face two significant challenges: Defining a clear strategy against the continuing aggression by the Kremlin and breaking the habit of state capture by just a few elites. New political forces do not compete on a level playing field.

The challenge of today is to make good use of the existing potential for change. Political will is all the more necessary since the state administration almost everywhere is out-of-date, unprofessional and bloated and the economic system characterised by monopolies and a lack of transparency. For Germany and the EU this means not relying on self-enriching elites, which imitate democratic practice, but rather on those that strive credibly for a liberal, marked-oriented system that works independently of specific individuals and is durable enough to be open to criticism.

The Foundation works with NGOs, politicians and those willing to assume responsibility and become active in politics. Further, local councils and other self-governing bodies offer a good starting point for bringing both democratically elected and administrative bodies closer to all citizens. The Foundation imparts knowledge and skills about how to engage in politics and to achieve relevant changes in the context of decentralisation. Only when transparency and access exist can decentralisation augment the chances for inclusion and participation of diverse societal groups. FNF partners established the “Network for Free Local Politicians”, a non-partisan platform that outlines approaches and potential solutions for effective municipal administration and politics, informs local activists about citizen participation procedures and promotes networking and best-practice-exchange between local politicians and activists.

Furthermore, the Foundation stimulates dialogue within civil society as well as between civil society and government institutions, in both Ukraine and in Germany. NGOs and think tanks are encouraged to tackle topics and issues of public interest that have the potential to prompt key reforms.

To support a modern small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) policy, the Foundation prepares policy papers and promotes international exchanges that contribute to
improved economic activities of SME in Ukraine. Experienced experts identify the needs of SMEs and make specific recommendations aimed at improving framework conditions. By promoting liberal policy approaches and expanding the knowledge of them, the Foundation initiates learning processes and fosters political change.

Working with students and lecturers of journalism and journalists has become increasingly important. In wartime, it is particularly challenging for media of all kinds to provide balanced reporting. In cooperation with its Ukrainian partners the Foundation not only explains international media standards and ethics, but moreover has developed and now offers specialised training measures about economics and decentralisation specifically aimed at journalists in the regions as the target group.

Finally, the Foundation for Freedom encourages contact with European political networks. Ukraine cannot transform without massive support by its western partners. This is why many Ukrainians see control within the framework of European integration as well as exercised by an open and participative civil society as indispensable prerequisites for democracy and the rule of law, fundamental and human rights and individualism and cultural pluralism.

**Since May 2009 One of Six Countries in the “Eastern Partnership” Launched by the EU**

Belarus is one of six countries that the EU seeks to develop an increasingly close relationship with. However, in light of the current political situation in Belarus there is no Action Plan. Together with Russia, Kazakhstan and Armenia, Belarus is a member of the Eurasian Economic Union.

Due to the limits set by the Belarusian leadership at the end of 2011, the Foundation is restricted in its project work. The team in Kyiv maintains contacts with liberal groups and individuals and observes developments in the country. Together with the European Academy Berlin and the Polish Robert Schuman Foundation, FNF supports the dialogue project “Europe in a Suitcase”, which brings together young people from all Eastern Partnership countries in order to discuss Europe, the European Union and European integration.

As soon as there will be a chance again to work for the values and principles of freedom and democracy in Belarus, the Foundation remains ready to intensify its project activities.
Since the founding of the Republic in 1923, Turkey has been on a long and bumpy road from the glorious, but ambivalent past of the Ottoman Empire toward new European horizons. What had started as nothing less than a “modernization dictatorship”, linked to the name of Turkey’s foremost modernizer, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, has become over recent decades a multi-party democracy with a flourishing market economy and an advanced administrative and legal system. At the beginning of the 21st century, Turkey has evolved into an important partner not only in the field of security architecture but as a regional factor for stability and an economic power-house as well.

In the early 1990s, during a period of profound economic and political reform, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) opened its office in Turkey’s capital, Ankara. A decade afterwards, FNF moved to the megalopolis at the “bridge” between Asia and Europe - Istanbul. From the very beginning, FNF was engaged in spreading knowledge about liberalism and liberal values in Turkey – information badly needed by a state, society and economy still very much under the backwash of centralism and statism. FNF was also engaged in promoting the features of a social market economy based on freedom, competition, and transparency. The third essential element of our work became the challenge of bringing Turkey closer to the ongoing process of European integration. By sharing knowledge about European values and the structures of a uniting Europe, FNF simultaneously aimed at spreading a European spirit in this country located at the margins of geographic Europe.

Since the beginning of our century, FNF is still involved in promoting European ideas and values despite a political climate that has become much less disposed to embracing European integration. FNF addresses the deficiencies
Turkey: Between Europe and Asia - between Democracy and Authoritarianism

Liberalism and liberal values are still at the core of our activities. We are sure that in the not too distant future Turkey will also have politically active liberal organisations of relevance and esteem which will provide a well-respected liberal voice for a movement demanding social change. Turkey, geographically located “between Asia and Europe”, still has to find its way between its tendencies of authoritarianism and outright support for democracy and the rule of law. FNF remains a reliable and supportive friend of those who are the foremost defenders of individual freedom, democracy, and the rule of law.

of Turkish democracy and the rule of law by particularly emphasizing the rights of religious, ethnic and social minorities. As a liberal foundation, we are looking for partners in various structures of Turkish civil society, with special reference to those who strive for the implementation of human rights, a full-fledged democracy and the rule of law.

In recent years, our work has become more endangered by a trend towards political authoritarianism. Decentralisation and the eminent importance of a secular state for a society as heterogeneous as Turkey’s traditionally is – in spite of decades of state-imposed acts of homogenization – do not enjoy the special attention of those in power. Here and in other areas of utmost importance for Turkey’s future, FNF is and will remain a solid partner of Turkish civil society and Turkish academia.
The Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom has been working in the South Caucasus since 1996 and has its sub-regional office in Tbilisi, Georgia.

**Supporting the Transition Process**

The focus of the Foundation's work in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan has been to support the transition of these former Soviet republics, with their centrally planned economies, limited democratic freedoms and frequent political unrest, towards becoming free and prosperous countries based on democracy, pluralism, the rule of law and a market economy. The Foundation supports this process by providing political education, consultation, and dialogue. In addition, youth exchanges between the three South Caucasian countries and the EU member states facilitate the exchange of experience and know-how.

Our goal is to empower committed citizens with knowledge, skills, and networks, and thus provide them with the opportunity to better understand and participate in the political process of their own countries.

Our overall objective is to support the development of a vibrant and politically active civil society which will play its role in the development of democratic institutions and, through its engagement with political parties, will contribute to the formulation of liberal solutions.

**Cooperating with Liberal Partners**

The target groups of the Foundation include the political and administrative elites from the liberal spectrum in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. In particular, project work is aimed at young, reform-oriented party activists, think tanks, media and civil society organizations working on relevant political topics. Among our partners are the Musavat Party of Azerbaijan, the Republican Party of Georgia, Free Democrats (Georgia) and the Armenian National Congress. Our partner spectrum also encompasses liberal youth organizations.

**Our Priorities and Work Methods**

A central aspect of our work is our cross-country approach. Our aim is to create a common platform in which all liberal forces from the three countries as well as the broader region will participate in and thus contribute to resolving the region's various conflicts. The Friedrich Naumann Foundation facilitates regional network meetings and platforms to promote dialogue and cooperation in the South Caucasus.

We support existing or emerging South Caucasian youth and economic networks and the Potsdam Process, a dialogue platform for senior political partners. We put a special focus on improving the quality of free and independent journalism. The
Foundation also conducts events on topics such as the principles of liberalism, decentralization, the rule of law and the free market economy along with special trainings to improve skills and the ability to conduct political work more successfully.

Our activities are targeted towards the improvement of conditions for domestic and foreign investment, the support of regional economic cooperation and issues related to minorities.

One of our main priorities is to support our partners in creating the framework for a stable peace in the region, for active participation in European institutions and for the long-term integration into the Euro-Atlantic space.

We provide information about the EU’s structure and policies and conduct information and study programs in Brussels and Germany. In addition, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation also brings European representatives from the fields of politics, media and civil society to the region in order to promote interest and knowledge about the South Caucasus.
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  The Regional Office in Sofia coordinates six project offices in the region, each of which is responsible for several countries.

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