



THE SCIENCE ACADEMY'S (BİLİM AKADEMİSİ) RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT ON DEVELOPMENTS AT BOĞAZIÇI UNIVERSITY, July 2023

The Science Academy continues to observe the deliberate academic destruction at Boğaziçi University with great sadness. As we have tried to point out in our Report on Academic Freedoms 2021-2022¹ and in our various announcements² Türkiye needs to break the suppressive hegemony over its universities and should seek ways to create an environment of freedoms.

At a time when the issue of full membership to the European Union is back on the agenda, the findings of the 2022 Academic Freedom Index on academic freedom in Türkiye are grave. According to this, between the years 2011-2021 Türkiye, together with Brazil and Thailand, fell by 0.4 percentage points and has become a country that poses a potential danger to students ('potential danger zone'). In this survey, where 1 is the highest score, Türkiye scored 0.5 points in 2011 and regressed to the C category of countries, while in 2021 it dropped by around 0.1 points to the E country category. In this lowest category, Türkiye is together with countries such as China, North Korea, Egypt, Iran, Rwanda and Syria.³

As a matter of fact, recent developments at Boğaziçi University indicate that this grave situation is getting worse:

- Our members Bülent Sankur and Orhan Yenigün, as well as including a large number of retired members Sumru Özsoy, Yaman Barlas, Uğur Ersoy, Alpar Sevgen, Cevza Sevgen, Ali Rıza Kaylan, Oya Başak, Ayfer Hortaçsu, Güler Fişek and Fatma Gök, were dismissed on the grounds that they supported the silent protests in front of the rectorate building of the university. The faculty members are banned from entering the University and their faculty ID cards and other rights were canceled;⁴

¹ <https://bilimakademisi.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/21-22-akademik-ozgurluk-170123.pdf>

² <https://bilimakademisi.org/tag/akademik-ozgurluk-raporu/>

³ Academic Freedom Report 2021-2022, s. 2-3; KATRIN KINZELBACH/STAFFAN I. LINDBERG/LARS PELKE/JANIKA SPANNAGEL, 2022, Academic Freedom Index 2022 Update. FAU Erlangen- Nürnberg and V-Dem Institute (DOI: 10.25593/opus4-fau-18612/ <https://v-dem.net/publications/democracy-reports/>).

⁴ <https://www.diken.com.tr/bogazici-universitesi-emeritus-prof-dr-bulent-sankurun-okula-girisini-yasakladi/>. <https://www.diken.com.tr/bogazici-universitesine-girisi-engellenen-emekli-akademisyenlerden-toplu-dava/>.

- Although Prof. Dr. Taner Bilgiç, a faculty member of the Department of Industrial Engineering, won the lawsuit he filed against the termination of his membership in the Board of Directors of Boğaziçi University by a decision of the Boğaziçi University Senate and was reinstated, with 2.5 years left for his term to expire the court decision was not implemented, and Prof. Bilgiç was suspended from his faculty position for three months, prevented from entering the campus and banned from using his institutional e-mail;⁵
- The Rectorate's decision not to extend the tenure of faculty member Can Candan for the third time, despite the administrative court's ruling that the rector's two rulings not to extend the tenure of Faculty Member Can Candan were unlawful and that he should be reinstated.⁶
- While a limited number of members are normally appointed by the Boğaziçi University administration to the board of trustees of the Boğaziçi University Foundation (BÜVAK) every year, the appointment of nearly a hundred people to the board of trustees of BÜVAK in four months with the aim of changing the management of BÜVAK;⁷
- The Rectorate of the University does not tolerate even the slightest democratic opposition; one of the most important events of a university's calendar, the graduation ceremony, was canceled again this year;⁸
- Faculty vacancy announcements were made and new faculty were recruited without consulting or informing of the faculty and department heads;⁹
- Dr. Mohan Ravichandran, was penalized for using his democratic rights to criticize the administration at Boğaziçi University when as a foreign faculty member in the Mathematics Department his term of office was not extended upon the request of the Rectorate; despite having won the lawsuit against this decision, he was now prevented from entering Türkiye by the Ministry of Interior on the grounds that he "posed a security threat".¹⁰

These policies trample on the rule of law, and in particular violate Article 138, paragraph IV of the Constitution, which states that court decisions are binding on the legislature, executive and administrations, and that no institution can delay the execution of court orders. The Higher Education Council should immediately start an investigation on the Rectorate of Boğaziçi University for failing to fulfill its constitutional duties. Keeping silent about these unlawful acts,

⁵ https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/turkiye/mahkeme-bogazici-universitesi-yonetim-kurulundan-cikarilan-akademisyeni-hakli-buldu2075699?utm_medium=ilgili%20Haberler&utm_source=Haber%20Detay&utm_campaign=ilgili%20Haberler

⁶ <https://www.diken.com.tr/bogazici-yonetimi-mahkeme-kararina-ragmen-can-candanin-gorevine-ucuncu-defa-son-verdi/>

⁷ <https://www.diken.com.tr/bogazici-universitesinde-vakif-operasyonu-98-atama/>

⁸ <https://www.birgun.net/haber/bogazici-akademisyenlerinden-toplu-mezuniyet-toreni-yapilmamasina-tepki-452354>

⁹ <https://www.birgun.net/haber/cem-say-bogazici-nde-baskani-oldugum-anabilim-dali-icin-profesor-ilani-verilmis-444138>

¹⁰ <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/bogazicinin-hindistanli-akademisyeni-turkiyeye-alinmadi-haber-1622440>.

which are clearly contrary, not only to Turkish Law but also to universal university standards, carries a severe responsibility. The loser, as always, is Türkiye's universities, science, future generations and democracy.

Respectfully presented to the public,
Executive Board of the Science Academy