

Short Biographies of Speakers

“Turkey’s Youth: Between Exit and Voice”

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Sinem Adar is Head of the Centre for Applied Turkey Studies (CATS) at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP). Prior to that she was Research Associate at CATS. Her work focuses on Turkish foreign and security policy, and domestic politics. Since 2024, she has been leading, with Muriel Asseburg, the working group entitled “Autocratisation as a Challenge for German and European Foreign Policy” at the SWP. Adar holds a PhD from Brown University in the US and a Master's degree from the London School of Economics.

Yaşar Aydın is Research Associate at the Centre for Applied Turkey Studies (CATS) at German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) with a background in sociology and economics. His research interests include international affairs, geopolitics and German Turkish relations, as well as migration, integration and diaspora, and the socio-political and economic effects of migration in Turkish-German context. He previously worked as a researcher at the Hamburg Institute for International Economics, the Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung/ bpb) and as a guest lecturer at the Turkish-German University in Istanbul. He is author of numerous articles in scientific journals and books on migration, Turkish political system und Turkish ultranationalism. Dr Aydın received a graduate degree in social economy from the University of Hamburg, a master's in sociology from the University of Lancaster, and a doctorate from the University of Hamburg.

Özge Genç is a Visiting Fellow at the Middle East Council on Global Affairs in Doha, where she focuses on geopolitics, conflict, mediation, security, and civic participation across Türkiye and the broader MENA region. Her research highlights Türkiye's evolving mediation role, the Kurdish peace process, Syria's transition, and the inclusion of women & youth in diplomacy and peacebuilding. She previously led research at PODEM and directed TESEV's Democratization Program in Turkey, and has held senior roles with UNDP and the Education Above All Foundation. A regular contributor to the Middle East Council's Afkâr blog and Al Jazeera English, she has recently published analyses on the PKK's shift from armed struggle to politics, Türkiye–Syria relations, electoral politics, and Turkish youth perceptions of democracy and foreign policy.

Pınar Gürer is an Istanbul-based social impact and communications expert, and a founding member and Project Director of the Collective Research Institute (CORE), as well as co-founder of Core Insight Consultancy. She has over 17 years of professional experience in senior management and leadership roles within foundations, associations, and research organisations, working closely with civil society,

philanthropy, and the private sector. Her expertise lies in strategic communication, social impact assessment, and the design of research and learning processes that translate evidence into institutional strategy, advocacy, and public engagement. Pinar has led and coordinated numerous national and international projects on youth, democracy, gender equality, education, and post-disaster response, combining qualitative and quantitative research with stakeholder dialogue and participatory methods. She has extensive experience in managing multi-actor processes, producing impact-oriented publications, and supporting organisations in strengthening their positioning, visibility, and long-term social impact.

Ayhan Kaya is a Professor of Politics and Jean Monnet Chair of European Politics of Interculturalism at the Department of International Relations, Istanbul Bilgi University. He is the Director of the European Institute and the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence at Bilgi. He has been a member of the Science Academy, Turkey, since 2015, and a member of the British Academy since 2024. He received his PhD and MA degrees from the University of Warwick, England. He has recently completed a European Research Council Advanced Grant project on youth radicalisation in Europe. As a Guest Professor, he also taught at Humboldt University Berlin, European University Institute, New York University (Florence Campus), European University Viadrina, and Malmö University (Sweden) as the Willy Brandt Chair. His research has focused on youth cultures, radicalism, populism, democracy, resentment, social movements, Islamophobia, identities, multiculturalism, interculturalism, migrant integration, diasporas, transnationalism, and refugees. His forthcoming books are *Youth Radicalism in Europe: Nativists vs. Islamists* (Routledge) and *Migration and the Politics of Integration* (Springer, co-authored with Karin Borevi). His latest books are *Populism and Heritage in Europe. Lost in Diversity and Unity* (London: Routledge, 2019). He is a former CATS Fellow.

Seren Selvin Korkmaz is the co-founder and co-director of the Istanbul-based think tank. She is currently part of the SoS4Democracy Horizon Europe project team. In 2024, she was honoured as a Turkey Europe Future Fellow, an initiative of Mercator Stiftung and TÜSIAD, and in 2023 she received the Marshall Memorial Fellowship from the German Marshall Fund of the United States. She has previously served as a non-resident scholar at the Middle East Institute in Washington, DC; a Fox International Fellow at Yale University; a Mercator-IPC Fellow at Sabancı University’s Istanbul Policy Center; a research fellow at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul; and a political specialist at the U.S. Department of State’s Consulate General in Istanbul. Her research interests include populism, political parties, voter behaviour, election strategies, opposition politics under authoritarianism, and youth politics. She teaches at Stockholm University on Turkish and Middle East politics. She is a frequent commentator in national and international media, including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Financial Times*, *Deutsche Welle*, and *The Wall Street Journal*.

Reha Ruhavioğlu is a Researcher and Analyst. He is the founder and director of the Kurdish Studies Center, which conducts political and social research on Kurds, especially those living in Turkey. He is also the coordinator of the Kurdish Barometer project, which monitors the agenda of the Kurds on a global scale.

Ulaş Tol is General Director at Core Research Institute. He received his master’s degree in Political Science from Ankara University in 2001, writing his thesis on the Turkish left of the 1970s. He completed his PhD in Political Science at Middle East Technical University (METU) in 2009, focusing on urban Alevi

communities and the transformation of identity and space. For more than two decades, he has worked as an independent researcher beyond formal academia on neglected and politically sensitive topics. He has played a founding and leading role in several research organisations, including Yaşama Dair Vakıf, ADHOC Research, TEAM Research, and the CORE Research Institute. Across these institutions, he has led and contributed to large-scale studies on voter behaviour and civil society, generating original data on Alevi and Kurdish issues, youth political participation, gender dynamics, and the social impact of civic initiatives. His work has contributed to empirical research in areas that have received limited academic and institutional attention in Turkey.

Zeynep Yanaşmayan is the head of Migration Department at the German Centre for Integration and Migration Research (DeZIM). She holds a PhD in Social Sciences from KU Leuven, Belgium. She is an interdisciplinary scholar working at the intersection of political science, sociology, and socio-legal studies with research on citizenship, migration and mobility studies, transnationalism and diaspora politics. She is the author of *The Migration of Highly Educated Turkish Citizens to Europe: From Guestworker to Global Talent* (Routledge) and co-editor of *The Failure of Popular Constitution-Making in Turkey: Regressing to Autocracy* (CUP). She publishes widely on issues of migration and asylum in both academic and non-academic outlets.

Mesut Yeğen received B. Sc. and M. Sc. degrees in sociology from Middle East Technical University and Ph. D. in sociology from Essex University. He taught at the Department of Sociology of Anatolia University and the Department of Sociology of Middle East Technical University. He was a full-time professor at Istanbul Şehir University from 2010 until the university was shut down by a presidential decree in 2020. Currently, he is working in an Istanbul-based research company, TEAM. His research and publications have focused on Turkish nationalism, Kurdish question and citizenship in Turkey. His most recent publications: [“Authoritarianism, Geopolitics and Nationhood: New Forms of Inclusion and Exclusion in Turkey”](#), *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 25 (3), 2025. “Ethnopolitics to geopolitics: the Turkish State and the Kurdish question since 2015”, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 2022; “Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey: 1898-2018”, in H. Bozarslan, V. Yadırgı & C. Güneş (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Kurds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).