

2013 REPORT ON ACTIVITY AND IMPACT

Stresemann Foundation

In 2013, the *Stresemann Foundation* concentrated on establishing itself as a think tank and human rights organization. The focus was on the further development of discussion papers, exertion of influence in the OSCE, as well as creating new sources of information on the internet.

- www.stresemann-foundation.org
- www.stresemann-stiftung.de
- www.citizenimes.eu

In Warsaw, in September, the *Stresemann Foundation* presented the discussion paper, *Freedom of Speech is a Human Right* at the human rights conference of the *Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe* (OSCE). This publication, available in German and English, discusses how Islamic protagonists are threatening our basic rights by attempting to criminalize criticism of Islam and Muslims in Europe and the USA. The presentation made it possible for the *Stresemann Foundation* to call attention to the anti-human rights efforts of the *Organization of Islamic Cooperation* (OIC) and to discuss the foreseeable consequences with numerous international human rights organizations. Further, it was possible to present and hand in interventions in all relevant meetings of the OSCE assembly.

Furthermore, a new format was developed in the framework of the *Stresemann Foundation's* activities at the OSCE, for the purpose of preparing other NGOs for the strategic agenda setting in the international arena. The *NGO manuals* provide pragmatic, goal-oriented solutions for a vital civil society. They support organizations and initiatives in independent and effective work, so that they can achieve greater societal benefit.

As early as March, the discussion paper *Islam and Violence* appeared, in which contemporary discus-

sions about the Islamic religious legitimization of violence and terrorism are taken up and discussed against the background of the Koran and the biography of the Prophet. Besides historical and theological classification, the essay points out the path to an open discussion, freed of previous relativizing and generalizations.

In 2013, the foundation magazine, *Citizen Times* which has shown a stable growth in readership, was supplemented with two research and documentary projects for the internet. In March, *Islam Debate Germany* (www.islamdebatte.de) went online; in June followed the first version of *Leftist Extremism in Germany* (www.linksextremismus.org). Both projects contribute to the providing of background information on ideologies which pose an acute danger to our democracy and liberal democratic constitution. That is how our readers are empowered to develop their own comprehensive understanding of long-term and basic processes.

All in all, in its second year of operational activity, the Stresemann Foundation experienced a distinct qualitative increase in its profile, which, in its turn, increased its quantitative reach and influence, as measured by regular requests from politicians, authorities and media for specialist essays and analyses, as well as lectures.

The *Stresemann Foundation* regularly publishes articles in English in its magazine *Citizen Times* in order to strengthen the transatlantic relationship and provide information on general developments in Germany for English-speaking readers. In addition, many of our German articles have been translated and published in British, American, Spanish and Polish websites and magazines.

Interventions at OSCE--Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM)--Warsaw (September, 2013)

The *Stresemann Foundation* presented three interventions and a response as recommendations to the OSCE and participating states. The primary subject was the relationship of freedom of expression and freedom of religion, as well as various human rights clarifications.

- www.stresemann-stiftung.de

One of the discussion papers published in 2013 especially focused on international issues is also available in English:

Felix Strüning: Freedom of Speech is a Human Right. How Islamic Organizations Are Threatening Our Basic Rights

Freedom can only exist where every person can freely express his or her opinion and freely receive information, because the fundamental right to freely express one's opinion is the prerequisite for many other human rights such as: freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, freedom of religion and freedom of science. Yet that which is a human right for the western world and constitutes a state of law is a crime for others. In Islam, nothing that questions its claim to truth may be publicly expressed.

In this discussion paper, the core differences between the universal and Islamic understanding of human rights with regard to the freedom of expression will be explained. How national and international Islamic associations are increasingly putting pressure on Western politics by gradually criminalizing any critique of Islam will be demonstrated.

Thanks

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Not least in making the activities of the foundation possible has been the sponsorship of the *Middle East Forum* and its president, Dr. Daniel Pipes. We are grateful for the trust invested in us.

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