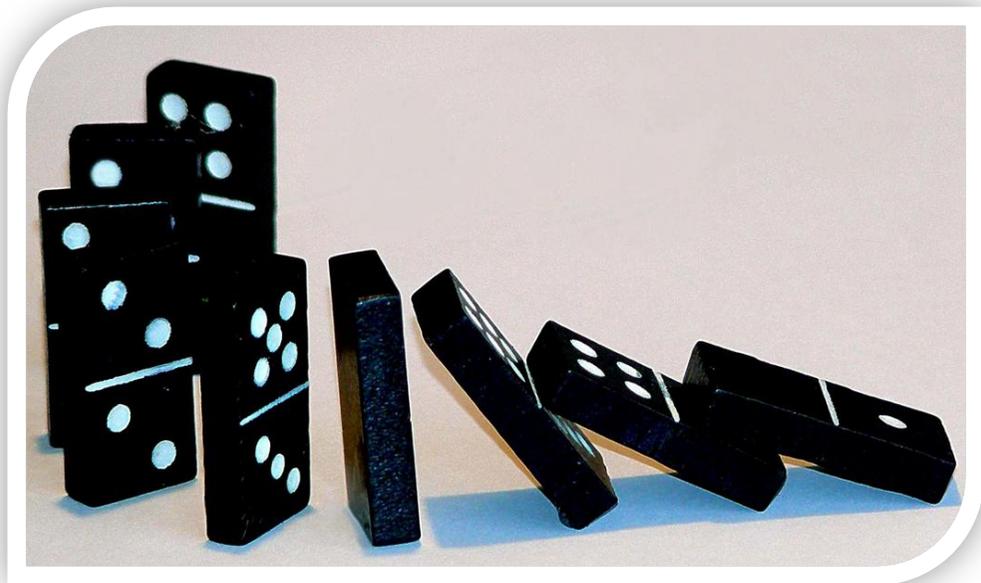




2012 Report on Activity and Impact



The STRESEMANN FOUNDATION is committed to the preservation and advancement of the liberal-democratic legal system. It follows the example of the great statesman Gustav Stresemann who always understood the necessity of shielding Germany from extremist forces from the left as well as from the right.

The STRESEMANN FOUNDATION promotes research on the historical development of the values of the Western community as well as of the threats of collectivist political and religious ideologies.

The STRESEMANN FOUNDATION develops solutions to current problems and debates, particularly on issues of immigration, good governance, democracy and direct citizen participation, as well as the future of the European Union, its currency and values.

Our Greatest Successes in 2012:

- ✓ In early July, we signed in the European Parliament, along with numerous human rights organizations from all over Europe and the U.S., the *Brussels Declaration* on strengthening civil rights and civil liberties.
- ✓ At the end of July, we presented our discussion paper on Islamic finance in Germany. It showed that Muslims living here have little interest in Sharia-compliant funds and financial products. On the occasion of the application of the Islamic bank *Kuveyt Türk* for a full-banking license in Germany, the study of the STRESEMANN FOUNDATION was quoted in all large German newspapers with focus on economy.
- ✓ In October, we took part in the Conference on Human Rights of the OSCE (*Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe*) in Warsaw and informed the participating countries on key issues related to freedom and blasphemy laws in Europe. The recommendations of the STRESEMANN FOUNDATION were documented in the OSCE final report in detail. Together with delegates of the *International Civil Liberties Alliance* (ICLA), we revealed that a member of the official U.S. delegation, Salam Al-Marayati, had founded the controversial *Muslim Public Affairs Council* (MPAC) and also claimed that Israel was behind the terrorist attacks of 11th September 2001.

- ✓ At the end of the year, we launched the *Initiative for Freedom of the Press* for the preservation and revitalization of independent, quality journalism. The prominent human-rights activist Ayaan Hirsi Ali gave the campaign its face and voice.

- ✓ With four discussion papers on current social debates, two books about values and self-image of Europe, numerous recommendations for federal ministries and other policy makers, and the magazine *Citizen Times*, in its first year of operation, the STRESEMANN FOUNDATION already has a strong political profile and has positioned itself as a think-tank in Germany.

Mission Statement: A Lobby for Liberty

“Freedom is not for free.” To a life of freedom, you cannot force anyone, without forfeiting freedom itself. Therefore, we do not want to indoctrinate, rather advocate for the idea of freedom via our work. We believe that the flame of freedom in every person can start a fire of enthusiasm. In this respect, we see ourselves as an interest group, a lobby for freedom.

We educate and inspire.

We believe that mature citizens with an educated worldview are the best guarantee for a liberal democracy. In the sense of Kant's dictum “Sapere Aude – have the courage to use your own reason,” we want to enable people to rise out of their “self-incurred immaturity” because freedom always comes with full responsibility for one's own actions.

Therefore, we enable and inspire on an individual level through our publications and presentations, and on an organizational level through counseling and training.

We research and document.

In particular, we want to create the space for thought and reason that enables people to express their experiences even when their opinions are not “politically correct.” The goal is that no one be excluded at the beginning of public discourse solely due to his or her opinion.

Therefore, we publish our foundation's magazine *Citizen Times*, discussion papers that address current debates and support them

with facts and the book series *Freedom & Responsibility*, in which our values and views are reflected.

We scrutinize and advise.

Through political consultation, we support and demand a policy that does not blindly follow ideologies, rather a policy based on ideals and social reality and the will of the people at the same time.

Therefore, we insist that policymakers justify the decisions they make and advise them on policies that will lead to a freer society. We participate in international conferences such as the yearly OSCE Human Rights Implementation Meeting (HDIM) and public-discourse campaigns.

Publications in English

The STRESEMANN FOUNDATION regularly publishes articles in English in the *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.

Two of the discussion papers published in 2012 especially focused on international issues are also available in English:

Felix Strüning: The Polemic Term Islamophobia. A Review of Surveys in Germany

The term “Islamophobia” is often used to defame criticism of Islam. Based on scientific surveys, this discussion paper shows that the necessary conditions for “Islamophobia” – defined as an unfounded fear or condemnation of Islam – are not prevalent among the German populace. Though Islam is disapproved by two thirds to three quarters of Germans, those surveyed name specific reasons for their opinion, and this factual criticism is independent of any bias of the respective individuals. On the other hand, only a small percentage of the people surveyed condoned openly hostile acts against Islam. Thus, speaking of “Islamophobia” appears to be inapplicable; in fact, we find a renunciation of certain ideological characteristics or behavioral patterns associated with or traced back to Islam.

Rebecca Schönenbach: Intrinsic Barriers of Islamic Finance, Sharia Scholars and the Low Muslim Income

Currently, Islamic finance only has a very small market in Germany. A comparison of the legal systems in other European countries, however, suggests that the small demand for Islamic finance is not due to the specific legal framework of Germany, rather the following intrinsic barriers of the Islamic financial system itself: first, Muslim immigrants have lower than average incomes because of lacking formal education and low labor participation rates of Muslim women. Thus, their investment potential for financial products is rather marginal and focused on real estate in Turkey; second, the system of Sharia scholars causes some trouble due to insufficient economic knowledge and conflicting legal opinions.

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