



— Network Turkey Event —

Invitation to “jour fixe” in Berlin:

“The Rise of the Newspaper *Zaman* as the Reflection of a Changing Muslim Identity”

Alexander Balistreri

Date

Thursday, April 16th, 2009 – 7:00 PM

at

Humboldt University Berlin
Luisenstr. 56/Room 144

One of the most important societal changes to occur in Turkey since democratization has been the strengthening of the “conservative” or “pious democrat” movement in the public sphere. While representation of Muslim identity in institutions such as political parties or civil society organizations has certainly increased, one of the most important indicators of this can be seen in the field of media. A predominant example of this is the newspaper *Zaman*, whose stated circulation exceeded 800,000 in 2008, making it Turkey’s highest-circulation daily.

April’s “jour fixe” discussion will examine the causes behind the astonishing rise of a newspaper in an era when most observers bemoan the decline of print media. Rejecting the overly positive or negative explanations often given for *Zaman*’s success, the paper argues instead that *Zaman*’s success is tied to its effective translation of readers’ needs to identify both as pious Muslims as well as loyal citizens of the Turkish Republic. Several questions can arise for audience discussion. Especially given past statements, can changes in Muslim discourse on democracy be considered genuine? How do organizations such as the Gülen movement capitalize on identity questions in Turkey, and what consequences does this have for democratic consolidation in the country?

Introductory speech by Alexander Balistreri

Alex completed his master’s degree at Princeton University in the Program in Near Eastern Studies. He began learning Turkish as an undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where he studied political science and wrote his thesis on “Turkish Entry into the European Union from a Security Perspective.” Most recently, Alex co-organized “Turkey in Motion,” an international conference at Princeton University on contemporary Turkish politics, and organized “The Germany Meets Turkey Symposium on Cultural Diplomacy,” a weeklong series of events in Berlin for young academics from both countries.

If you are interested in taking part in this discussion please email either Christoph Mielke (christoph_mielke@hotmail.com), Alexander Balistreri (alex@openembassy.org) or Deniz Julia Güngör (sternenmeer1001@hotmail.com).

Organizers



For further information please visit: www.netzwerk-tuerkei.org