

WE DEFEND THE VALUES OF THE UNIVERSITY, THE SOCIAL RESPONSABILITY OF SCHOLARS, ACADEMIC AUTONOMY AND SOLIDARITY AMONG LABORING PEOPLE!

Dear colleagues, students and friends at all the points where education and science is produced and needed,

The institutions listed below call you to support the 14 university members who have been dismissed from Istanbul BILGI University in Turkey in June 2011 and sued BILGI on the grounds of unlawful dismissal of its unionized employees. The second court hearing will take place on Monday, 14th of November in Istanbul. These young scholars have been all dismissed as a by-product of the 'takeover process' of the university by a for-profit university corporation, namely the Laureate Education, Inc.

They have been dismissed because they have defended the academic autonomy, stood up for an independent position of academia from short-sighted profit/loss calculations and fought for job security by initiating the first unionization movement in a foundation university in Turkey in 2010. They were seen as concrete and ideological obstacles to the plans of the university administration of cutting of personnel costs by introducing various precarization measures starting from the young generation with the most vulnerable position. They were fired and their posts at the Departments of Turkish Language, Sociology, History, Mathematics, Law, Comparative Literature, Economics and Cultural Studies have been or will be now filled with young precarious 'disposable' academics.

The whole process of 'corporatization of the Istanbul BILGI University' with its new ruling elite applying a business terminology sets an example of how the university landscape in Turkey, now summing up to around 200 public and foundation bodies, could look like in terms of academic job security and working conditions of the young generation of university scholars in near future. Yet the publicly secured job security at universities constitutes the basis of academic freedom and independence of scientific thinking. The prospective Law on Higher Education gives signals that it will soon allow for the entry of for-profit corporations into 'higher education market' in Turkey. What kind of knowledge, science, education and scholarly community will be created within the prospective 'higher education market'? Whose words would count in determining the priorities of higher education? We have to ***define and*** ***defend that what is dear to us now*** in order not to be swept away by a more market-authoritarian, more elitist, more unicolor and intellectually poorer university structure against our own will.

Strengthen their voice everywhere where they say, 'we want to continue producing knowledge, science and education independent from immediate profit-orientation and in defense of public interest!'

*Please join and spread our word about the press declaration that will be held by a joint-call of the following trade unions, professional chambers and research associations on Monday, the 14th of November, 2011 at 1.30 pm. in front of the Çağlayan Justice Palace in Istanbul. *

* *

*Eğitim-Sen The Turkish Education and Science Worker's Union İstanbul 6. Branch Office ** *University of Liverpool University and College Union (UCU) ** *İstanbul Chamber of Physicians İTO* ** İstanbul Coordination Committee of the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects TMMOB
* *** ***Association of University Professors ÜÖÜD*** ** DİSK/Sosyal İş Service Worker's Union İstanbul Branch Office * *** *DİSK/Dev-Sağlık-İş

Health Workers Union* ** DİSK / Birleşik Metal-İş Automotive and
Metalworkers Union* *** *Türk-İş/Petrol-İş Union of Chemical, Energy and
Rubber Workers* ** TÜRK-İş/Tez-Koop-İş Service Workers Union İstanbul 5.
Branch Office* ** DİSK/Limter-İş Union of Port, Shipyard and Dockworkers
**

*Association of Progressive Legal Practitioners ÇHD ** *Association of
Social Studies SAV* ** Network of Independent Social Scientists

BSB ** *Türk-İş/Türk

Harb-İş Union of Workers in the Military Sector***