



**TURKISH
WOMEN'S
LEAGUE OF
AMERICA**

**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**

BTF
BRIDGE TO TÜRKİYE FUND

TURKWEN
TURKISH WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS NETWORK

In collaboration with

In support of March 8th
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

5 GENDER
EQUALITY



**Evrım
Hızaler**

Managing Director
Anadolu Foundation



**Ferhan
İstanbullu**

Media and Cultural
Initiatives Leader



**Dr. Feride
Demir**

Art Historian and Digital
Fabrication Specialist



**Sevil
Özişik, Esq.**

Ozisk PLLC
Attorneys at Law



**Dr. K. Zeynep
Sayım - Yazal**

Moderator
President, TURKWEN
Turkish Women Entrepreneurs Network

“Standing for Her Rights: Justice and Action for Every Woman and Girl”

**MARCH 7th 2026
SATURDAY**

1 PM - 3 PM

Turkish House

Please RSVP until March 6th by twlanewyork@gmail.com

BACKGROUND

On March 7, 2026, the Turkish Women’s League of America (TWLA), in collaboration with the United Nations Department of Global Communications (DGC), The Bridge of Türkiye Foundation (BTF), and Turkish Women Entrepreneurs Network (TURKWEN), will jointly organize a panel titled “*Standing for Her Rights: Justice and Action for Every Woman and Girl*” in support of International Women’s Day (March 8).

Introduction

The panel aims to foster a multi-stakeholder dialogue on advancing women’s and girls’ full and equal enjoyment of human rights, strengthening access to justice, and reinforcing the role of gender equality within the broader framework of sustainable development.

Speakers representing academia, law, media, arts, and civil society will share perspectives on current challenges, promising practices, and action-oriented approaches.

The discussion will underscore the critical importance of women’s social, economic, and legal empowerment, equal opportunities for girls, and inclusive policies in building just and sustainable societies.

The session will be moderated by Ms. K.Zeynep Sayım - Yazal, President of TURKWEN Platform. Through interdisciplinary perspectives, the panel seeks to contribute to constructive dialogue and collective efforts aimed at advancing justice and equality for every woman and girl.

The event aspires to support ongoing global commitments toward the protection and promotion of the rights of women and girls.

PROGRAM

Opening Remarks and Introduction by

Berna Gurdal

Turkish Women's League of America (TWLA) President

Dr. Gul Bahtiyar

The Bridge of Turkiye Foundation (BTF)NY/NJ Circle Leader

Moderator

K.Zeynep Sayım- Yazal

President of TURKWEN

Panelists

Evrin Hizaler

Managing Director of Anadolu Foundation

Dr. Feride Demir

Art Historian and Digital Fabrication Specialist

Sevim Özışık .Esq

Immigration Attorney | Specialist in Employment-Based Immigration

Ferhan İstanbullu

Cultural Projects Director and Media Professional

Biographies



Evrım Hizaler (Managing Director of Anadolu Foundation)

Evrım Hizaler has been recognized by *The Economist* as one of Türkiye’s Top 50 Women CEOs for ten consecutive years. With more than 25 years of international leadership experience across publicly listed companies and mission-driven institutions, she brings strong expertise in strategy, marketing, governance, and sustainable growth within complex and highly regulated environments.

At **Anadolu Efes**, a joint venture between AB InBev and Anadolu Group, she served as Chief Marketing Officer in both Russia and headquarters roles, leading commercial strategy across Russia, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe. She later led a decade-long transformation at **Adel Kalemcilik | Faber-Castell**, driving digitalization, ESG integration, international expansion to over 50 markets, and a threefold increase in market capitalization.

Currently, as Managing Director of **Anadolu Foundation**, she advances education and healthcare initiatives, including Anadolu Health Center in affiliation with Johns Hopkins Medicine. Under her leadership, donor engagement has grown significantly, and national scholarship programs now manage over 240,000 applications annually.

In addition to her executive work, she serves on NGO and industry boards, contributing to initiatives aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and promoting equitable access to education and long-term social impact.



Dr. Feride Demir (Art Historian, Sculptor and Digital Fabrication Specialist)

Dr. Frida De Myr is a professor and interdisciplinary sculptor whose research-driven practice bridges art historical scholarship with advanced digital fabrication technologies. She holds a Ph.D. in Art Education and Art History, an MFA in Sculpture and Digital Media, and an MA in Art and Design.

Her work combines theoretical inquiry with material experimentation, integrating KUKA robotic systems, CNC machining, 3D printing, and traditional sculptural processes to explore memory, identity, and spatial narratives. Her work has been exhibited internationally in galleries and museum contexts.

In addition to her academic career, Dr. De Myr has contributed sculptural and fabricated elements to major Broadway productions including *Waiting for Godot*, *Aladdin*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *Hercules*, as well as television productions such as *Saturday Night Live* and *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. She also contributed fabricated elements to the exhibition *Jean-Michel Basquiat: King Pleasure*.

She teaches sculpture and digital fabrication at William Paterson University and Ramapo College of New Jersey. She previously served as Foundations Program Coordinator at Montclair State University and has also held senior-level project management roles within digital fabrication and technology-driven design environments.



Sevil Özışık (Immigration Attorney | Specialist in Employment-Based Immigration)

Ms. Sevil Özışık, Esq is a New York–based immigration attorney licensed in both New York and Istanbul, specializing in employment-based immigration law. She advises multinational corporations, entrepreneurs, and investors across sectors including technology, finance, energy, hospitality, and manufacturing, providing strategic guidance on temporary and permanent visa matters, including complex employment classifications and EB-5 investor petitions. An active member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association and the American Bar Association, Ms. Özışık has also contributed to pro bono initiatives supporting vulnerable women and children. She previously served on Turkey’s Overseas Citizens Advisory Board as one of eight representatives of Turkish citizens in the United States. A graduate of Dokuz Eylul University Faculty of Law and Temple University Beasley School of Law, she remains committed to advancing immigrant empowerment, strengthening international legal and economic collaboration, and supporting inclusive professional mobility across borders.



Ferhan Istanbulu (Cultural Projects Director and Media Professional)

Ms. Ferhan İstanbulu is a media professional and cultural initiatives leader with over two decades of experience in Turkey's publishing sector. She has served as editor-in-chief of leading international and national publications, including the launch of Time Out Istanbul and Marie Claire Turkey, and contributed as a columnist to major national newspapers. Holding a master's degree in museum management from Istanbul University, she has been actively engaged in independent art projects and the organization of cultural events supporting emerging artists. Based between Berlin and Istanbul, Ms. İstanbulu works at the intersection of media, culture, and international engagement, fostering cross-cultural dialogue through creative initiatives. She also collaborates with Anadolu Vakfı in mentoring university students and supporting scholarship programs, contributing to expanded educational opportunities for young people across diverse academic disciplines.



Moderator

Dr. K. Zeynep Sayım-Yazal, President, TURKWEN (Turkish Women Entrepreneurs Network)

Dr. K. Zeynep Sayım-Yazal is a dedicated university educator committed to lifelong learning and student-centered teaching. She has lived and worked in five countries and earned her postgraduate degrees (MA and PhD) in Human Resource Management in a sixth, experiences that have shaped her strong intercultural perspective and informed her teaching across undergraduate, graduate, and executive education programs in management and organization studies.

While living in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, she contributed to a project with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Office focused on career coaching and teamwork, alongside volunteering with several children's and women's charities. Her research has been presented at international academic conferences and published in leading peer-reviewed journals and edited volumes.

Dr. Sayim currently resides in New York, where she serves as an adjunct professor at the Gabelli School of Business at Fordham University and the School of Professional Studies at New York University. She is also leading the establishment of TURKWEN, a nonprofit organization supporting Turkish American women entrepreneurs through networking, training, and mentoring initiatives. She is married to a Turkish diplomat and is the mother of two teenage children, as well as two cats and two dogs.

Project Team



Berna Gurdal (Turkish Women's League of America President)

Berna Grdal graduated from Hacettepe University, Faculty of Nutrition and Dietetics, in 1997 and worked as a corporate dietitian at Panorama Food Company between 1997–1999. Between 1998–2005, she served as a clinical dietitian in the Department of Internal Medicine at Uludağ University, where she also delivered presentations at various medical congresses. Her work on diabetes treatment was published in the book Diabetes Mellitus in 2006.

Living in New York since 2005, Berna Grdal received the Child Nutrition and Cooking Program Certificate from Stanford University. In 2020, she completed the Nutrition and Healthy Living certificate program at Cornell University.

She is married and a mother of two. Her children are graduates of New York Atatrk School. She has been serving on the Board of Directors of the Turkish Women's League of America since 2017 and has been serving as its President since 2023.



Dr. Gul Bahtiyar (The Bridge of Türkiye Foundation (BTF)NY/NJ Circle Leader)

Dr. Gül Bahtiyar is a Clinical Professor of Medicine at NYU Grossman School of Medicine and serves as Division Chief of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism and Medical Director of Lifestyle Medicine at NYC Health + Hospitals/Woodhull. She also serves as Site Program Director for the SUNY Downstate Medical Center Endocrine Fellowship Program. A graduate of Istanbul University Cerrahpaşa Medical School, she completed her internal medicine training in the United States and has built a distinguished career in academic medicine and clinical leadership.

Beyond her medical career, Dr. Bahtiyar is a committed advocate for equitable access to education in Türkiye. She joined The Bridge to Türkiye Fund (BTF) in 2014, established its NY/NJ Circle, and later became a board member. She played a key role in securing UN consultative status for the organization and has actively engaged with the NGO Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York. She continues to support educational initiatives and post-earthquake recovery efforts, including programs assisting child amputees in Türkiye, guided by her belief that education is a fundamental human right.



Associated with the United Nations Department of Global Communications

Turkish Women's League of America

Established on September 17, 1958, as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in New York, Turkish Women's League of America (TWLA) aims to preserve and teach Turkish language and culture to the future generations. The organization is one of the oldest active Turkish American organizations in the USA and is the sole supporter of the NY Atatürk School which has been a pride since 1971. The Turkish Women's League of America's Board of Directors is comprised entirely of volunteer members. The organization and its members adhere to the principles of modern Turkey's founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the values of the Republic and adopt the national, moral, human, spiritual and cultural values of the Turkish Nation. Our Mission is to unite the Turkish women living in America under one roof, to provide solidarity and strength among them. We organize cultural and recreational activities to foster a better understanding between the people of Turkey and the United States. With this awareness, Turkish Women's League of America works devotedly with institutions and nongovernmental organization to achieve and preserve the deserved respected place of women in the society.

The Turkish Women's League of America is proud to announce our association with the United Nations Department of Global Communications as of December 10, 2021.



Bridge the Türkiye Fund is a community-driven initiative dedicated to strengthening humanitarian, educational, and cultural connections between Türkiye and the United States. The fund was established to mobilize resources, build sustainable partnerships, and support impactful projects that promote social well-being, education, and cross-cultural understanding.

Through collaborative programs, fundraising efforts, and community engagement, Bridge the Türkiye Fund provides assistance to communities in need, supports educational opportunities for children and youth, and contributes to long-term recovery and development initiatives. The organization works closely with nonprofit partners, volunteers, and civic leaders to ensure transparency, accountability, and meaningful impact.

Guided by the values of solidarity, compassion, and cultural bridge-building, Bridge the Türkiye Fund aims to empower communities while fostering lasting friendships between Turkish and American societies.



TURKWEN – Turkish Women Entrepreneurs Network is an initiative dedicated to supporting the entrepreneurial journeys of Turkish women living in the United States. We view entrepreneurship not simply as the process of starting a business, but as a journey of turning dreams into reality, unlocking potential, and creating lasting impact.

Our mission is to nurture and advance the entrepreneurial ideas of Turkish women by strengthening access to knowledge, funding, and new opportunities, expanding professional networks, and supporting the development of sustainable ventures.

Led by women with expertise across diverse fields, TURKWEN is a platform that brings together solidarity, vision, and an innovative spirit. We aim for every woman to feel supported in her entrepreneurial journey, confident that her voice is heard and that her story can inspire others.

We learn together, grow stronger together, and succeed together—because we believe that the entrepreneurial stories of Turkish women represent not only individual achievement but also a powerful force for social transformation.

- **#InternationalWomensDay#IWD2026#SDG5#GenderEquality#WomensRights#EmpowerWomen#JusticeForWomen#WomenAndGirls#CSW#CSW70**

