

Think  **Freedom**

REGIONAL OFFICE FNF EAST AND SOUTHEAST EUROPE

Stories about

Choice

Stories about

Freedom



Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom

For six decades now, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom has been advancing liberal democracy in Germany and in more than 60 countries around the globe. The goal of the Foundation is to be a creative and innovative platform for the promotion of freedom worldwide.



Nowadays, liberal values are in danger globally. The Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom's project "Think Freedom" highlights the life stories of six inspiring liberal-minded individuals. The characters of the "Think Freedom" documentary film series embody the core liberal principles of freedom, choice and responsibility. The overarching theme is their self-determination to pursue freedom by overcoming challenges in the shrinking spaces of their democracies. The six documentaries address the fundamental questions these individuals face every day at a crossroad in their lives such as "To speak or to stay silent?", "To stay or to go?", "To stay yourself or to conform?".

"**Think Freedom**" is a cooperative project by the Regional Office for East and Southeast Europe of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation ("FNF ESEE") and Tanuki Films. "Think Freedom" was conceived by Dr Rainer Adam, Regional Director of FNF ESEE, and directed by David Djambazov and Anna Stoeva of Tanuki Films.



Tanuki Films is a production company devoted to the creation of documentary, fiction, and investigative stories with a social and political impact. Based in Sofia, the company has produced and collaborated on projects in Bulgaria, Germany, UK, Russia and the US. David Djambazov is a filmmaker, producer, and a founding partner of Tanuki Films. Educated at Caltech in the US and the legendary film school FAMU in Prague, David left a career as a Wall Street trader in New York to pursue filmmaking.



Freedom to Breathe



Belma Berlin, Germany

Feeling suffocated by Turkey's increasingly authoritarian regime and afraid to freely speak their mind even on the streets, Belma and her family pack their bags and their dearest memories of home and leave Istanbul to live in exile in Germany. In Berlin, free and able to breathe, she offers her help to others who have left Turkey seeking freedom.



“If I can't speak openly, if I can't do my job, if I can't be what defines me, then I can't breathe. That's how I felt in Turkey.” - *Belma*



Freedom to Write a Song

Jamal Berlin, Germany

Jamal is arrested and beaten in Azerbaijan after writing and publicly performing a protest song. Facing prosecution and prison time for expressing his frustration with the government, he decides to make the rational choice – to flee Baku and settle in Berlin. He continues to make music and works for independent Azerbaijani TV Channel Meydan TV.



Freedom to Carry the Torch



Sebastian Bucharest, Romania

After spending 12 years in the US and attending prestigious universities, Sebastian feels that it is time to return to his home country, Romania, where corruption and authoritarian tendencies drive people out to the streets to protest. Following the advice of his dying grandfather, he starts an opposition political party called "Pact for Romania".



"You really do have the choice to do something with your life. As long as you want that." - *Geneveva*



Freedom to Take a Risk

Geneveva and Anelia Sofia, Bulgaria

Geneveva comes from a poor neighbourhood in Varna, Bulgaria, where her family pushes her to fit socially accepted gender norms and become a hairdresser. She takes a risk by opposing them and insisting on her freedom of self-determination. Despite facing many challenges and prejudice as a woman, she becomes a successful international entrepreneur.



Freedom to Speak Your Mind



Olga Bonn, Germany

After the assassination of Boris Nemtsov, a Russian politician and critic of the Putin regime, Olga, his assistant and close friend, uses a trip to Vilnius to flee from Russia with her son Petya, afraid of the consequences of speaking her mind freely. Safe in Bonn, Germany, she works with Nemtsov's daughter to promote freedom of speech.



"I simply had to decide between the big suitcase and the small suitcase. I took the big one." - Olga



Freedom to Cross Your Own Border

Stefan Zwickau, Germany

Stefan was born and raised in poor, post-Soviet Bulgaria. Feeling alienated from its unfree society, he crosses many European borders and comes to Germany to study. Now, as an economics professor at the University of Zwickau, a small East German city, he teaches his students how important it is to have the freedom to become what you wish to be.

Regional Office:

FNF East and Southeast Europe

Regional Director:

Dr Rainer Adam

T: +359 2 969 60 10

E-Mail: sooe@fnst.org



FNF East and Southeast Europe

The Regional Office in Sofia covers 22 countries in East and Southeast Europe; currently, it is actively supporting programs in 17 of them. The Regional Office coordinates the following six Project Offices in the region, each of which is responsible for several countries: Southeast Europe, Western Balkans, Russia and Central Asia, Ukraine and Belarus, South Caucasus, and Turkey.

 facebook.com/FNF.ESEE

 youtube.com/FreedomTVEurope

 instagram.com/fnfesee

eese.fnsf.org

Freiheit.org
eese.fnsf.org