THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE EU

Dr. Nihan Akıncılar Köseoğlu

SUMMER SCHOOL STUDENT POSTER PRESENTATION

Erasmus+
PROHREU
FBU Jean Monnet Module
FENERBAHÇE ÜNİVERSİTESİ 2016
FBÜ FENERBAHÇE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
FENERBAHÇE ÜNİVERSİTESİ 2016
AVRUPA ÇALIŞMALARI UYGULAMA VE ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
Funder
European Union

FBU SUMMER SCHOOL on
The Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in the EU
24 June – 4 July 2024 – Assoc. Prof. Nihan Akıncılar Köseoğlu

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İskeçe Turkish Union's Struggle for Human Rights

The topic of my poster presentation is a case of violation of the freedom of assembly and association. According to the article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights "everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests."

İskeçe Turkish Union was found in 1927 and in November 1987, along with other Turkish organizations of western Thrace, was banned. Assembly and association constitutes a huge part of human social life. It is a right to be enjoyed by all people unless it creates disorder and crime.

After, exhausting all domestic remedies twice, İskeçe Turkish Union has made applications in 2005 and 2012 to European Court of Human Rights. In the 2008 judgment, the Court held that there had been a violation of Article 11 of the Convention on account of the dissolution of the first applicant association by decision of the domestic authorities. In the 2015 judgment, the court didn't change its decision.

Contrary to the article 46 of the Convention, Greek State has been insisting not to comply with the Court's decision and continuing to deprive the locals of İskeçe of their right to come together and protect their interests. People of İskeçe have been fighting and struggling to counter the acts of Greek State against human rights since 1986.

Poster



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FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Freedom of expression is everyone's right.

Freedom of expression was first recognized and protected as a constitutional right during the French Revolution. Article 11 of the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen reads as follows: "Everyone has the right to express his thoughts and opinions freely, either orally or in writing or through the press.

The first photo on the poster was placed to represent the first national civil engineering conference. Prof. Dr. A lawsuit was filed by assistant professor N.C.A. based on a critical statement by Vehbi Doğan Sorguç, such as the fact that a few people in the associate professorship panel of civil engineers became associate professors without their competence and articles, and that the associate professorship panels were not held by competent people.

In the case filed by Vehbi Doğan Sorguç against Turkey, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled that Article 10 of the Convention was violated. The court found that the applicant's freedom of expression was unjustly restricted and ruled in his favour.(CASE OF SORGUÇ v. TURKEY)

Poster



2nd national civil engineering symposium



European Court of Human Rights

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The Environment and Human Rights

The main reason I chose this topic is that there is an increasing need to address environmental problems that are noticeably affecting European citizens and constitute a direct consequence of climate change.

This poster explains the concept of the right to a healthy environment, which is a precondition for the attainment of human rights. Although the ECHR lacks a right to a healthy environment, the EtCHR has developed case law based on Article 8 of the ECHR, which states that "everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence." Peaceful means, such as demonstrations, are the most appropriate way to achieve recognition of the right to a healthy environment in Europe. However, this right should not only be recognized at the European level but also at the global level, as climate change is a global problem that can only be solved by the collaboration of citizens from different parts of the world (represented in the poster by the image of hands circling the Earth).

It should be noted that States may interfere with the fulfillment of this right if three conditions are met: (1) there is a legitimate need with interferences related to a strong public interest, including economic well-being, national security, public health and safety, crime prevention; (2) States must comply with national legislation; and (3) the interference is proportionate to that legitimate need and necessary in a democratic society. The ECtHR has relied on the "margin of appreciation" to determine proportionality.

In the CASE OF LÓPEZ OSTRA v. SPAIN, Mrs López Ostra lodged an application with the Commission on 14 May 1990, complaining of nuisance (polluting smoke, odors and noise) caused by a waste treatment plant located twelve meters from her home and request in that the plant should be closed completely. The nuisance was producing a negative effect on the health of the applicant and her daughter. Although the local council temporarily rehoused the residents in a freeway, the Spanish authorities remained with a passive attitude regarding the possibility of permanently closing the plant. Finally, the ECHR held that there had been a violation of the right to respect for her home, making it impossible for the applicant to maintain her private and family life (art. 8 of the ECHR).

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Right to Education and Freedom of Belief

The reason I chose this topic is to emphasize the effects of *religious education practices* in Turkey on civil and political rights, the right to education and freedom of belief, and to draw attention to the fact that these practices can lead to racism and intolerance.

CASE OF HASAN and EYLEM ZENGİN v. TURKEY is an important example that questions the effects of compulsory religion courses in Turkey on students who do not have Sunni Islamic beliefs and whether these courses are impartial, critical and pluralistic. This case shows the importance of protecting fundamental rights, such as the right to education and freedom of belief, and how to fight against violations of these rights.

The decision of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) on this issue is of critical importance in terms of assessing whether religious education practices in Turkey comply with international human rights standards. Therefore, investigating this case is of great importance in order to raise awareness about ***the protection of religious freedoms*** and ***the prevention of disaffection in education.***

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Migrant Children and Mubilanzila Mayeka and Kaniki Mitunga Case

Refugee and migrant children –some travelling with their families, some alone– risk everything, even their own lives, in search of a better life. Millions of uprooted families flee their homes to escape conflict, persecution and poverty in countries including Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and Sudan.

All children on the move are vulnerable to abuse and other grave forms of violence during and after their journeys. It is estimated that more than one child dies every day along the perilous Central Mediterranean route from North Africa to Italy. Of the almost 100,000 refugees and migrants travelling via this route in the past year, around 15% are children.

For instance, in the case of Mubilanzila Mayeka and Kaniki Mitunga v. Belgium, the European Court of Human Rights found that the detention of five-year-old Tabitha alongside adults upon her arrival in Belgium constituted inhuman and degrading treatment and was unlawful. The court determined that this situation violated Tabitha's rights and emphasized the obligation of European countries to protect the rights of migrant children.

According to data from the European Commission, of the several hundred thousand refugees seeking asylum in the European Union, one in four are children. In addition, thousands of unaccompanied children are trafficked into and throughout the European Union.

The protection of the rights of migrant children and their families requires international cooperation and partnerships beyond politics and borders. Refugee and migrant children are first and foremost children. States must respect their rights, including their right to information, their right to be heard and to a life free from violence.

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Human Rights for Everyone

Human beings, especially women are treated as a commodity since the emergence of Industrial Revolution. Together with this, especially poor women became equal to objects, they objectified for the purposes of capitalist and patriarchal system. However, treatment to those people is not about their biological sex, it is all about their gender which is given by society. When we search about it, we can know that it is created artificially for the sake of some people and effected just one gender, like all of unequal treatments of humanity.

However, we should know that whole humanity deserves equal treatment. Because our physical appearance is not what defines us, it is our mind and hearts what can be a prior effect about our identity. Anyone can do everything, and they can do it with their skirts and dresses as well. There is just one need, which is our faith about what we do.

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Istanbul Convention and Nahide Opuz Case

Women's rights is a concept that advocates for women to have equal rights and opportunities. However, women around the world are subjected to various forms of violence because of their gender. In Turkey, unfortunately, we see a lot of news about violence against women.

The decision to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention, an international convention adopted to combat violence against women, has caused a huge reaction in Turkey. The Convention defines violence against women as a violation of human rights and obliges state parties to take measures to prevent violence, protect victims and punish perpetrators. Turkey was one of the first countries to sign the Istanbul Convention, but withdrew from the convention in 2021 by presidential decree.

Unfortunately, Turkey was the first country to be convicted at the ECHR for failing to protect women. The reason for this conviction was the case of Nahide OPUZ, who sued Turkey in the European Court of Human Rights for domestic violence against women. Nahide OPUZ repeatedly applied to the prosecutor's office because of the violence she suffered from her husband, but to no avail. Nahide OPUZ, who lost her mother as a result of her husband's assault, complained to the ECHR against Turkey for not taking measures. In 2009, the court found Opuz right and sentenced Turkey to compensation on the grounds that Turkey had failed to protect a citizen who had been subjected to violence from her husband despite her applications.

Following this decision, the Council of Europe drafted a new human rights convention (the Istanbul Convention) under Turkey's leadership to protect individuals from domestic violence. Years later, Turkey's withdrawal from the convention still provokes reactions.

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Stop Hate Speech, Step Towards Tolerance

When we look at the meaning of hate speech, it is briefly harsh speech that includes anger, hatred and hostility against a person or group based on identity characteristics such as religion, language, race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation. This situation is prohibited in the European Union. Because among the founding purposes of the European Union is to ensure peace between European countries and to support peace and religious rights in other world states. In fact, the EU has created a series of laws and regulations to achieve this situation. Thanks to these laws and regulations, it has also been explained how hate speech can be balanced with freedom of expression. An example is the regulation "A More Inclusive and Protective Europe: Extending the List of EU Crimes to Hate Speech and Hate Crime" adopted by the European Union Council in 2020. With this regulation, the EU is providing more cooperation and harmony with its member states in the fight against hate speech.

The reason I chose this topic is the second world war and the holocaust that took place during this war, which was the main reason for the establishment of the EU and deeply affected human history. Because the foundations of the Holocaust and the war and its legitimization among the people are Hitler's use of hate speech, especially against Jews and homosexuals, during his propaganda. As a result, hatred and discrimination against Jews emerged among the people, and thus the process leading to the Holocaust and the discrimination movements against Jews began. For example, in his Reichstag speech on January 30, 1939, Hitler said that "the time has come to destroy the Jews, who are the enemies of the world and the parasites of the German nation." Therefore, one of the main reasons for the EU's established is to prevent the war from occurring between European states again as a result of hate speech and to prevent an event like the Holocaust from happening.

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Exploring Intersectionality in Women's Rights Advocacy

The academic poster on women's rights highlights intersectionality, recognizing the ways in which women's experiences of privilege and oppression are shaped by the intersections of race, class, and other identities. The acknowledgement of women's rights as essential human rights, protected by international treaties like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is at the center of this conversation. In addition to highlighting the significance of abortion rights as essential to reproductive health and gender equality, it also draws attention to the important concerns of body autonomy and advocates for freedom from practices like female genital mutilation. These interconnections highlight the necessity for inclusive strategies that address the particular difficulties faced by women in a variety of social, cultural, and economic situations and highlight the complicated terrain of women's rights activism. Sojourner Truth delivered her powerful speech, "Ain't I A Woman?" at the Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio in 1851, challenging prevailing notions of women's inferiority. Born into slavery, Truth passionately argued for the equality of women, asserting that they deserved the same rights and respect as men. She emphasized her own strength and resilience as a woman of African descent, countering stereotypes of women as inherently weaker or less capable. Her speech highlighted the intersectional oppression faced by African American women, confronting both racism and sexism in a powerful plea for justice and equality. Sojourner Truth's words continue to resonate as a cornerstone of intersectional feminism, inspiring generations in the ongoing struggle for gender and racial equity.

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Prohibition of Torture

On this poster, the prohibition of torture, which is the 3rd article of the European Convention on Human Rights, has been tried to be explained. In the 3rd paragraph of this article, it is stated that no one can be subjected to torture or torment; It is clearly stated that no one can be subjected to punishment or treatment that is incompatible with human dignity.

Jabari vs. Türkiye case is an important case involving Türkiye's asylum application evaluation process and allegations of violation of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Jabari is an Iranian woman. After escaping from Iran, she took refuge in Türkiye and applied for asylum there. Jabari requested asylum from Türkiye because she was facing accusations of adultery and feared that she would face severe punishment in Iran. However, this request was rejected because the asylum request was made late. When Turkish authorities were about to send her to Iran, Jabari appealed to the European Court of Human Rights to request assistance.

In its decision dated 11 July 2000, the ECHR decided that Türkiye violated Article 3 (prohibition of torture and ill-treatment) and Article 13 (right to effective remedy) of the European Convention on Human Rights. The court found that returning Jabari to Iran posed a risk of torture or inhumane treatment there.

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REFUGEE and MIGRANT CHILDREN

Stand Together in EUrope!

Refugee and migrant children in the European Union often face challenging and complex living conditions.
Firstly, language and cultural differences often hinder the integration process. Children must make efforts to receive education and participate in social life in their new country.
Additionally, they may have experienced psychologically traumatic events, which can prolong the emotional healing process.
In some cases, factors such as language barriers or the complexity of healthcare systems can pose obstacles to accessing appropriate healthcare.
While European Union countries have developed various policies and programs to support these children, practices and approaches vary between countries. Some countries provide support systems that encourage rapid integration of children, while others may adopt stricter migration policies.
In conclusion, life for refugee and migrant children in Europe can be both a journey filled with challenges and a hopeful process of integration. The experiences of these children play a crucial role in shaping the migration policies and social services of European countries.

For The Rights of Refugee and Migrant Children in EUrope!

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Fundamentals of Refugee and Migrant Child Protection

This poster highlights the rights of refugee and migrant children in the European Union (EU) as guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), emphasizing their fundamental protections under international law.

Key Articles from the European Convention on Human Rights:

Article 2 - Right to Life: Every child, regardless of their migration status, has the right to life and protection from harm.

Article 3 - Prohibition of Torture: Refugee and migrant children are protected from torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 5 - Right to Liberty and Security: Children should not be unlawfully detained and have the right to liberty and security of person.

Article 8 - Right to Respect for Private and Family Life: Children have the right to maintain relationships with their family members and enjoy a private family life.

Article 14 - Prohibition of Discrimination: Refugee and migrant children are protected against discrimination in the enjoyment of their rights under the Convention.

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DON'T CALL ME ~~ILLEGAL~~



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Freedom of Expression

Freedom of Expression; Protection and Safety of Journalists.

The topic of my poster is the Freedom of Expression, protected by the Article 10 of the ECHR. In accordance with that, "everyone should have the right to freedom of expression". Although the article envisages limitation by legal restrictions in case harmful or criminal expressions, it also stipulates that everyone should have freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impact information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers" (EHCR, Article 10).

Freedom of expression is a **sine qua non** of functioning democracy and one of the basic human rights principles. Only when the right is sustained, one can have a flourishing society where diversity of opinions of its members are represented. Within this context, especially, media, known as "fourth pillar of democracy"and freedom of press, play an important role.
Protecting freedom of press is essential to allow circulation of diverse opinions and hold governments accountably, by openly broadcasting their activities. Therefore, in some authoritarian regimes, governments often practise crackdown on media outlets to restrict journalist and limit access to information.

I decided to focus on the case of RFE/ RL Inc. Others v Azerbaijan (2023), as the ECHR ruled out that Azerbaijani government has violated the right to the freedom of expression of four media outlets. Accordingly, the government blocked these websites on territory of the country, following the amendments to national Law of Information in 2017 (ECHR, 2023). Media outlets believed that actions of governments were carried out to restrict dissemination of critical information within the national territories. This case is critical to understand, because it illustrates very well, how the governments can find legal ways (amendments etc) to carry out undemocratic practices.

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CHALLENGES OF IMMIGRATION

The reason why I chose this topic is that immigration is a global issue, and causes many problems for both immigrants and citizens of host countries. It is stemmed from various reasons such as environmental factors (climate change, natural disasters, and resource scarcity etc.), economic factors (poverty, lack of economic opportunities, and the pursuit of a better standard of living motivate many to immigrate), and political factors (conflict, persecution,and political instability etc.). Immigrants face a lot of challenges. The most important ones are social discrimination and exclusion. There are even cases regarding expulsion from the country. Rights of immigrants must be protected. Article 3 of the Geneva Convention states: " No Contracting State shall expel or return ('refouler') a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion."

Hirsi Jamaa and Others v. Italy [GC]- 277 65/09

The case is about a group of immigrants who left the Libya with the aim of reaching the Italian coast. They were intercepted by Italian military ships off the coast of Italy and returned to Libya. The Italian authorities handed the immigrants over to the Libyan authorities without identifying them or providing them with any information. The ECtHR found that Italy had collectively expelled the immigrants without examining their individual situations, in violation of the ECHR. This action increased the risk of the applicants being subjected to misdemenour. The Court decided that Italy violated the applicants' rights by sending them to Libya and breaching the prohibition on collective expulsion.

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Migrant Workers

The issue of minority worker rights in Europe is crucial for promoting equality in the labor market. Minority groups often face discrimination and marginalization, affecting their economic and social standing. Biases in hiring processes, barriers to career advancement, and discriminatory workplace practices negatively impact minority workers (Fleischmann & Dronkers, 2010, pp. 337-354). To protect and enhance minority worker rights, various EU policies and regulations have been developed. However, effective implementation requires robust monitoring and awareness-raising training sessions (OECD, 2019, pp. 50-55). Beyond legal regulations, trade unions and civil society organizations play an active role. Trade unions' advocacy for minority worker rights and amplifying their voices are critical for democratizing and making labor movements inclusive (Wrench, 2004, pp. 7-30). Addressing specific issues faced by minority workers and ensuring their participation in labor rights struggles is key to a fairer labor market.

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THE ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS

According to the 8th article, a new lawsuit was developed for night sleep problems due to the noise caused by the airport, but the state could not establish a balance between the environment and society by claiming that the airports were not affiliated with them. Night flights have caused sleep problems for people living in the airport area. Failure to review the State's inadequate research for compliance with Article 8 has resulted in human rights violations. As seen in my poster, it is very important to unite for human rights and environmental problems and produce fair solutions to problems. We need to unite for the airport problem, which we have given as an example, in a bright and fair order, and solve the problem with laws as strong as the roots of a tree. Human rights and the environment constitute important policies within the EU. Along with the existence of fundamental rights such as shelter and nutrition, which are the basis of human rights, environmental policies are also protected. As we see in the airport problem, human rights have been violated to a great extent due to the noise emitted into the environment. For a healthy environment, human rights must be protected. The state's intervention in the environment and human rights is very important, because the environment is a living space that belongs to humans, and human rights will be shaped along with environmental rights. My motto is respect for the environment and respect for human rights.

Poster



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Environment and Human Rights

The Turkish authorities failed to implement court orders to shut down three polluting thermal power plants in south-west Turkey. The applicants, living 250 kilometers away, claimed their right to a healthy environment was violated. Despite a 1996 court order, the plants continued operating without proper permits, causing significant pollution. The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) found this non-compliance violated the applicants' right to a fair hearing under Article 6 § 1 of the Convention and awarded each applicant 1,000 euros for emotional distress. This case highlights the critical link between environmental protection and human rights. A healthy environment is essential for fundamental human rights, such as health and well-being. The ruling underscores that governments must enforce environmental regulations effectively to uphold these rights, demonstrating that environmental justice is integral to human rights protection.

CASE OF OKYAY AND OTHERS v. TURKEY (12/10/2005)

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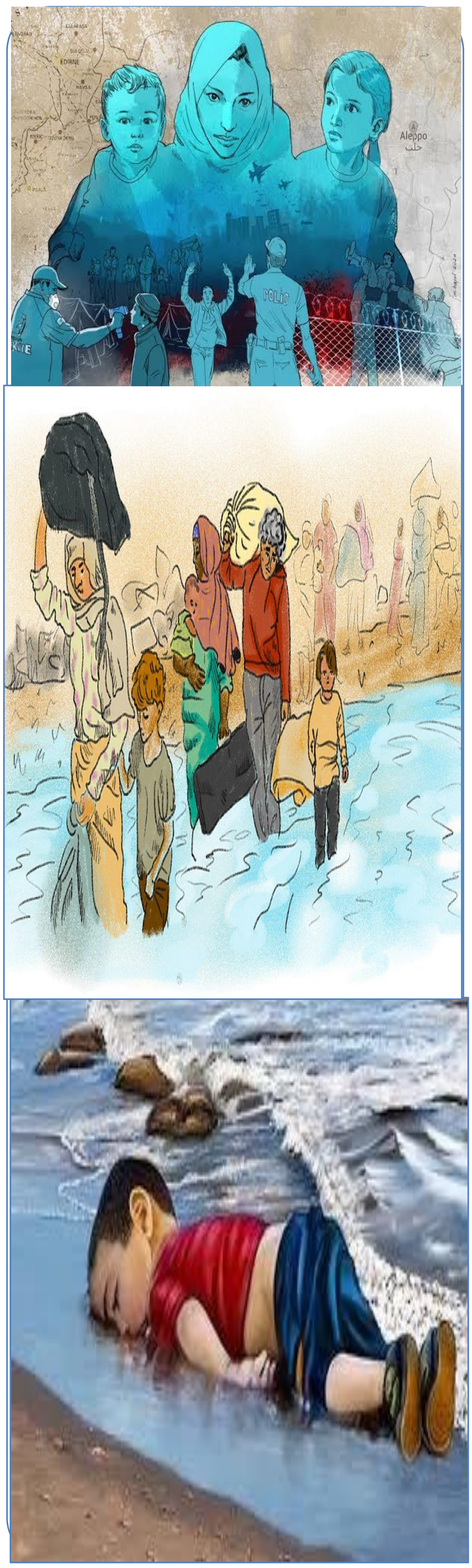
Refugee and Migrant Children

Refugees are individuals forced to flee their countries and seek international protection. Upholding their rights is crucial for safeguarding human dignity and universal human rights.

Refugee rights reflect the international community's responsibility to find effective solutions to crises while raising awareness to prevent discrimination. Protecting refugees under international law contributes to peace and security.

Despite increasing hate speech against refugees, commitment to protecting their rights remains vital in ensuring justice and equality for all.

Poster



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THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE EU

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SUMMER SCHOOL STUDENT POSTER PRESENTATION

Funder
European Union