GÜN + PARTNERS

40th Anniversary Keynote Address

Mehmet Gün

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My dear teachers, professors, members of parliament, clients, members of the press, my colleagues, friends from across the business and civil society, my family whose unwavering love and support mean the world to me, a very welcome to you all; it is a true honor to have you with us tonight. It is a profound joy to celebrate our 40th anniversary tonight together with all of you.



Before we look ahead, I want to take you back to where it all began —to Bozkır, the place that shaped the values I carry to this day. High in the Southern Taurus Mountains, on the Dikilitaş highlands, I was born beneath a dirt roofed hatch. In the village primary school, I attended classrooms where thirty to forty children were packed in.

Most of my childhood friends spent their lives working gruelling day and night shifts in Istanbul's workshops; only a handful managed to build something of their own. Every one of them was driven for success and deeply hardworking. Had they received a proper education, they would have achieved extraordinary successes. Of all those classmates, only two of us, Fahri and I—ever made it to university.

My path is thanks to my mother selling her cow and my uncle Faik took me to live with his family in in Kuşadası. The education I received at Kaya Aldoğan Middle School, earned me a full boarding at Teacher's Training College. I was on track to become a primary school teacher. But a regulation change forced me to sit the university entrance exams instead and I was admitted to the law school in 1976. I graduated in 1980, having weathered four brutal years dominated by anarchy and triple-digit inflation.

My legal career began under tough conditions. As Türkiye was opening its doors to the world, I set French aside and learned English at the age of 25. I founded my own practice in 1986. By the 1990s, I was representing the UK court-appointed administrators of Polly Peck International PLC. Working alongside legal minds from across the globe broadened my horizons—giving me a rare, comparative perspective on our own judicial system.

As I brought on colleagues, the firm began to grow, and with that growth came management hurdles I hadn't anticipated. At times, problems slipped past my notice. When I did catch them, I didn't always have the answers. And even when the path forward was clear, I simply had no time to act. To shield our clients from these growing pains, I spent endless nights working around the clock. It was during these gruelling stretches that a fundamental truth hit me: individual effort can only take you so far. True, lasting success demands institutional governance.



At a Friday meeting, I put forward my vision: to build the firm as an institution where everybody shares responsibility and every contribution is fairly rewarded. My colleagues embraced the dream as their own. Walking this path together, side by side, we turned our law firm into an enduring institution. We devoted a decade to building a truly institutional firm. We drew on the insights of leading domestic and international advisors, but we learned from our own journey—shaping a governance structure that was uniquely ours. And at its very foundation, we placed fairness and justice. Our core principle was simple; that every individual should receive a fair, proportional share of the collective value we create together.

Together, for Justice

To put this principle into practice, we built three interconnected systems. First, a transparent, merit-based career path plan. Second, an objective performance framework that measures institutional and professional contributions across every dimension—from individuals and teams to departments, practice groups, clients, and specific matters. And third, a transparent remuneration model that distributes the value we generate proportionally according to career progression and proven impact.

At the very heart of our operations lies Günce—our proprietary software, which we have continuously refined since 2008. It serves as the backbone of the firm, seamlessly integrating our resources, work processes, front-office workflows, and fiscal management. Quite simply, without Günce, we could not have built the institution we are today.

GÜNCE

Today, we stand as a robust, mid-sized enterprise—recognized with many national and international awards and driven by our own proprietary technology. By exporting most of our services, we generate significant foreign revenue for Türkiye while contributing hundreds of millions of Liras in taxes every year. **Across our 40-year journey, we have held one principle sacred above all else: our reputation.** We have always been conscious that a standing firm and inspiring confidence in challenging times is not merely about our firm; it carries the weight, integrity, and prestige of both our profession and our country.

We have built a workplace rooted in genuine equal opportunity. today, women represent 66% of our overall team and hold 67% of our partnerships.



Institutionalization in the legal profession faces structural hurdles —most notably, the regulatory bans on corporate incorporation. This restriction prevents practices from building enduring structures and limits the transfer of institutional knowledge across generations.

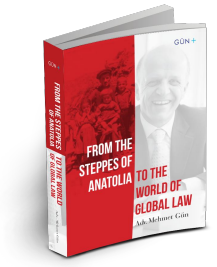
While century-old law firms thrive in other parts of the world, institutionalized practices remain a rare exception in Türkiye. As a result, countless historic law practices and decades of invaluable expertise have simply faded away. It is precisely this reality that drives our philosophy: we openly and generously share our knowledge, experience, know-how, and our Günce platform with the wider legal community.

Our commitment extends deeply into human rights, fair labor standards, the environment stewardship, and the fight against corruption. In 2014, we became one of the early signatories of the United Nations Global Compact. Today we publish annual sustainability reports and rigorously measure our carbon footprint against international benchmarks.

daha iyi yargı



We actively support numerous civil society organizations, having co-founded and led several of them over the years. Among these, the non-partisan Better Justice Association, holds a special place for me. For over fifteen years, through considerable personal dedication, we have been crafting forward-looking solutions to elevate our judicial system to world-class standards. By bridging the legal community with the business world, the Association regularly convenes high-level forums and publishes impactful research and policy recommendations across a broad range of issues. In our publication "Türkiye's Middle Democracy Issues and How to Solve Them", we examine the core pillars of a healthy society judicial independence accountability and fair representation. Building on this framework two years of rigorous work, culminated in our landmark book "Turkish Judicial Reform - A to Z", offering innovative, systemic solutions across nine critical headings. When we presented these reforms before the Council of Europe, the European Union and the UK House of Lords; the feedback was overwhelmingly encouraging.



To mark our firm's 25th milestone, I wrote my professional memoir From the Steppes of Anatolia... To the World of Global Law". Along the book, we launched an initiative to support the education of young girls in Bozkır. Over time, that seed blossomed into an enduring scholarship program for talented, underprivileged youth. Our sole criterion for selection is a young person's resolve to overcome hardship and their fierce drive to succeed. Just as my Uncle Faik changed the trajectory of my life, I want to offer today's youth the ultimate catalyst for achievement: hope.

Dear friends, all that we have built is a testament to our Republic. The Republic took a child of limited means from a modest earthen roof in the Taurus Mountains and paved the path for him to establish a prominent law practice with a world-class reach.

We offer our profoundest gratitude to our Nation, to our founding leader Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and to his fellow patriots who made it all possible.

Our institution stands where it is today is the collective achievement of everyone who has walked this path with us, sustained by your unwavering trust, and the quiet sacrifices of our families. On behalf of my colleagues and of myself, I extend my deepest gratitude to each of you for joining us tonight to share in our joy, our ideals, and this proud story.

I hope we always move onward, toward a better future—together!

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