



IKVM MONTHLY



ISSUE:5 MARCH 2015

www.ikv.org.tr / contact: ikv@ikv.org.tr

GENDER (IN)EQUALITY IN TURKEY

EU accession process has greatly contributed to accelerating the efforts to promote gender equality in Turkey.



Gender equality is (and has always been) a key issue in Turkey. In fact, Turkey is one of the countries where the first legal acts regarding equality between men and women date back to the 1920s. In 1925, a political party for women's rights (Women's People Party – *Kadınlar Halk Fırkası*) was established with the aim to increase the participation of women in politics. Five years later, Turkish women were granted the right to vote in municipal elections. On 5 December 1934, they were granted full suffrage and in the first elections women obtained 18 seats in the Parliament (4.6% of total seats).

Legal and Institutional Developments for Promoting Gender Equality

Considering the fact that women in some of the oldest (i.e., France, Italy) and relatively newest (i.e. Slovenia, Malta, Bulgaria and Romania) EU Member States gained the right to vote and to be elected in the 1940s, Turkey stands as one of the pioneering countries for providing gender equality in Europe. EU accession process has been the main contributor for accelerating these efforts. In 1985, Turkey signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

(CEDAW) which is the most comprehensive legal regulation at international level. Furthermore, with the aim of harmonising Turkish legislation on gender equality with the EU *acquis*, Turkey has introduced a series of amendments in the Constitution, the Turkish Civil Code, Labour Law and the Penal Code which are the main legislation regulating gender policy throughout the 2000s. In addition to these legal regulations, institutional changes also have been brought to realize the goals of eliminating discrimination against women in line with CEDAW standards. To that end, the General Directorate of Women's Status, Ministry of Family and Social Policies and Equal Opportunities Commission

in the Turkish Grand National Assembly were established. Yet, it is important to note that the replacement of the State Ministry for Women and Family Affairs with the Ministry of Family and Social Policies were subject to severe criticism and is considered a step-back in promoting gender equality due to removal of "women" from the title of the Ministry.

Gender (In) Equality in Turkey: What Do the Figures Say?

Although Turkey initiated comprehensive policies for promoting gender equality in the early days of the Republic and maintained its efforts during the EU accession process, Turkey finds itself well below many countries on global rankings. In fact, when gender equality in Turkey is compared to those of EU Member States, Turkey ranks as the country representing the highest gender inequality. According to 2014 Global Inequality Index of United Nations which is one of the widely-used indices of gender equality, Turkey ranks 69th out of 187 countries while the worst-performing EU Member State Bulgaria ranks as the 58th.

Furthermore, in 2014 Global Gender Gap Report (GGGR) published by the World Economic Forum, Turkey ranks 125th out of 142 countries (only leaving countries such as Algeria, Ethiopia, Oman, Egypt and Saudi Arabia

behind). According to GGGR, female-to-male ratio of economic participation and opportunity in Turkey is 0.43 compared to the average level of all countries which is 0.59. In other words, men are twice more likely to be able to participate in the labour force than women in Turkey. The figures for political empowerment of women in Turkey represent a more pessimistic picture: female-to-male ratio of political empowerment in Turkey is 0.08 compared to the average value of 0.214.

Considering the steps taken by Turkey within the framework of EU accession process, these figures represent a big controversy between the legal and institutional developments with regards to gender equality in Turkey. The major reason for such a gap between the policies and practices is likely to stem from limited implementation of the regulations due to dominant social norms and practices in Turkey. Such norms and practices which are already deeply-rooted in the society are also supported by high-level political figures which impede further development of gender equality in Turkey. As indicated in the 2014 Progress Report, Turkey does not fulfil the economic and political criteria for maintaining the equality between men and women and should increase efforts to foster women participation in labour market, policy making and decision-making in the public sector for further alignment with EU standards.



IKV DELEGATION'S VISIT TO BRUSSELS

IKV Delegation, Secretary-General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas, Deputy Secretary-General and Research Director Melih Özsoz and Brussels Representative Haluk Nuray held meetings in Brussels with representatives of EU institutions.

In February, IKV Delegation met with Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn's Head of Cabinet Michael Karnitschnig and Cabinet Member Christine Grau; Commission President Jean-

Claude Juncker's spokesperson Margaritis Schinas; High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Federica Mogherini's Chef de Cabinet and former Head of EU Delegation in Turkey Stefano Manservigi and Turkey's Permanent Representative to the EU Selim Yenel. IKV delegation

pursued their meetings in Brussels in March and met with Head of Turkey Cabinet of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Anna Vezzyroglou and European Policy Centre's (EPC) Researcher Amanda Paul.

PAGE 2



IKV DELEGATION'S VISIT TO BRUSSELS

FROM THE FIRST PAGE

During these meetings, IKV delegation has exchanged views regarding the latest developments in Turkey-EU relations, the accession process, the visa liberalisation, the possible revision of the Customs Union and the eighth round of the TTIP negotiations between the EU and the US. General elections that will take place in Turkey in June, the Internal Security Package and the Readmission Agreement between Turkey and the EU were also among the topics addressed during these meetings.

During their visits, IKV Delegation gave detailed information to EU representatives about IKV and its activities. Furthermore, the delegation presented also the activities foreseen within the framework of the 50th anniversary of the Foundation. Moreover, IKV Delegation had an opportunity to share some concrete ideas regarding a revitalisation of Turkey's EU negotiation process.

DIRECTOR GENERAL RUETE VISITS TURKEY REGARDING VISA LIBERALISATION

Director General for Migration and Home Affairs at the European Commission Matthias Ruete visited Ankara on 23-24 February 2015. The next steps on visa liberalisation dialogue, the progress made by Turkey in fulfilling the visa liberalisation roadmap and the implementation of the Turkey-EU Readmission Agreement were the main topics of the agenda. In this context, Director General Ruete held meetings with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry for EU Affairs and Ministry of Interior. During the meetings the terrorist attacks that occurred in European cities were also addressed and the need to enhance further cooperation against global terrorism was emphasized.

During his visit to Turkey, Director General Ruete paid an official visit to the Governor and local authorities in Gaziantep in order to better assess the situation of Syrian migrants in Turkey. He also visited Nizip Accommodation Center and observed the current conditions in the region. Director General Ruete emphasized the importance of Turkey's open door policy towards Syrian refugees.

IKV CHAIRMAN AT ULUDAĞ ECONOMY SUMMIT

IKV and DEIK Chairman Ömer Cihad Vardan attended the 4th Uludağ Economy Summit in Bursa on 13-14 March 2015.

At the summit, economic growth, innovation, education and the role of women in the labour market were the main topics discussed by key political figures and representatives of the business community from Turkey and abroad. Giving a speech at the panel "Africa: Window of Opportunity", Chairman Vardan informed the participants about the business opportunities presented to Turkish private sector in Africa.

Chairman Vardan underlined the importance of Africa not only for Turkey but also for a significant

number of countries in the world. Chairman Vardan pointed out that while the opportunities presented by Africa were emphasized nowadays, Africa was considered as a "hopeless continent" 13 years ago. Chairman Vardan mentioned that a similar attitude towards Africa was also adopted by the Turkish bureaucracy and foreign delegations of Turkey in the 1990s; yet, the perception of Africa is completely reversed at the present time.

Chairman Vardan also underlined that Turkish companies have seized major business opportunities in



Africa through their investments, goods produced and services offered. Underlining the importance of developing trade and investment partnerships, Chairman Vardan emphasized that Turkey's prestige and its private sector will increase in Africa. Chairman Vardan further mentioned that Africa became the centre of attraction in the 2000s especially for countries such as

China, India and Brazil wishing to become more active players in the region. Furthermore, it has been also observed that countries such as the United Kingdom and France increased their political and military engagements in Africa due to security concerns while emerging actors in the region act by taking more into account their economic interests.

THE SECOND MEETING OF REG WAS HELD IN ANKARA

The political reform process, the level of alignment with Chapter 23 and Chapter 24, the mechanisms to fight gender based violence, the Internal Security Reform Package were the main topics addressed in the second REG meeting.



The Second Meeting of the Reform Action Group (REG) was held in Ankara on 20 February 2015 with the participation of Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Volkan Bozkır, the then Minister of Interior Efkân Âlâ, Minister of Justice Bekir Bozdağ and Minister for Family and Social Policy Assoc. Prof. Ayşenur İslam. Co-Chair of the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee Afif Demirkan, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

of the Turkish Grand National Assembly Ahmet Berat Çonkar and Undersecretary of the Prime Ministry Kemal Madenoğlu also participated to the meeting.

During the meeting, Turkey's commitment to pursue the political reform process has been underlined. It has been pointed out that regional and global challenges have revealed the importance of protecting fundamental rights and freedoms and of strengthening cooperation between Turkey and the EU in the fight against terrorism.

It has been ensured that the implementation of the Action Plan on Prevention of Violation of the European Convention on Human Rights is being carefully monitored. Moreover, the Draft Law Amending Law on National Human Rights Institution and the draft Law on Protection of Personal Data have also been addressed in the meeting.

Regarding the Internal Security Reform Package in Turkey, it has been stated that the package aiming to guarantee the security, the right to life, the

right to property for citizens and to eliminate administrative bureaucracy has been prepared in line with EU and international standards.

REG aims to closely monitor the dialogue with citizens belonging to different cultures and faiths and the fulfillment of the criteria of the Visa Liberalisation Roadmap. During the meeting, the balanced approach in the first draft of the European Parliament's Report on Turkey and especially the call for opening of Chapter 23 on Judiciary and Fundamental Rights and Chapter 24 on Justice, Freedom and Security were welcomed.

Lastly, in the meeting, a special emphasis was put on the fight against gender based violence. In this respect, participants highlighted the importance of ensuring a more effective use of preventive and protective national mechanisms to fight against violence against women. Ongoing work on "National Action Plan on Fighting Violence against Women" aiming a "zero tolerance principle" foreseen for the period 2016-2019 has also been assessed.

TURKEY'S AGENDA: SECURITY PACKAGE



The Draft Law on Internal Security constitutes an important item on Turkey's agenda. The main discussions about the package focus on the changes that this law would lead and on whether the package complies with the EU standards or not. While the discussions were taking place within TGNA General Assembly, an important development occurred on 12 March 2015.

The TGNA General Assembly decided to withdraw the part covering 63 articles, from Article 68 to Article 130 from the package that comprises in total 5 sections with 132 articles. As a result, the enactment of the first three sections of the package which also contains the 10 most controversial articles present in the first session is foreseen. Some of the controversial measures that expected to be implemented within the package contain amendments on provisions regarding equality of arms, the power of the civilian authorities, power of the police officers during the investigation and prosecution procedures as well as regarding the interventions during demonstrations.

On the other hand, the fourth and fifth sections of the package that will strengthen Turkey's position in its visa-free dialogue with the EU and in the Progress Reports will be reconsidered by the Commission. These parts in question foresee that the passport procedures will be run by General Directorate of Civil Registration and Nationality, all personal data collected during the passport application process will only be served by civil units that are specialized in this particular area and also personal data will be saved electronically. (More on security package: www.ikv.org.tr).

FOREIGN MINISTER ÇAVUŞOĞLU AT THE GYMNICH MEETING



Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu attended the informal meeting of the EU Foreign Ministers on 6-7 March 2015 upon the invitation of his Latvian counterpart, Edgars Rinkēvičs and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini. The informal meetings of EU Foreign Ministers widely referred to as "Gymnich meetings" provide an opportunity for Ministers to

discuss key foreign policy issues in an informal atmosphere. The Gymnich meeting in Riga was also attended by the Foreign Ministers of other candidate states. The agenda of the meeting was dominated by discussions on the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and the implementation of the Minsk agreements, the strategic review of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the situation in Libya and preparations for the upcoming Eastern Partnership Summit.

IKV considers that Minister of Foreign Affairs Çavuşoğlu's participation to the Gymnich is an important indication of the EU's will to include Turkey in foreign policy mechanisms. In the current context in which foreign policy cooperation is becoming even more important between Turkey and the EU, Minister Çavuşoğlu's participation can be perceived as the strong will on the part of the EU to deepen the existing dialogue with Turkey on foreign policy issues. Furthermore, the participation of the Foreign Ministers of candidate states in the Gymnich meeting can be considered as an attempt to address the widening gap between EU common positions and those of candidate countries vis-à-vis Russia which became more visible during the Ukraine crisis. As is known, the European Commission in the 2014-2015 Enlargement Strategy announced in October 2014, highlighted the need to increase dialogue with candidate and potential candidate countries on key foreign policy issues and called for prioritizing Chapter 31 on Foreign, Security and Defence Policy in the accession negotiations.

TURKEY-EU HIGH LEVEL ENERGY DIALOGUE WAS LAUNCHED



Minister of Energy and Natural Resources of Turkey Taner Yıldız and Vice President of the European Commission in charge of the Energy Union Maroš Šefčovič launched Turkey-EU High Level Energy Dialogue with a joint draft declaration. As it is known, upgrading cooperation among parties was discussed during the first meeting of the Advisory Council of the Southern Gas Corridor in Baku on 12 February 2015. In the

draft joint declaration a strong emphasis was placed on Turkey's role as an energy hub between energy resources in the Middle Eastern and Caspian Regions and EU energy markets. In addition, the benefit of Turkey's development as an energy hub for both Turkey and EU was highlighted. This declaration was important to underline the level of Turkish compliance with the *acquis communautaire*. In this regard, Šefčovič stated that

"both as a candidate country currently engaging in accession negotiations with the EU and a contributor to the EU's energy security, Turkey has made an important progress in aligning its legislation with the *acquis*". During his visit to Turkey, Vice President of the European Commission Šefčovič attended to the ground-breaking ceremony of the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP), which sets up the

Vice President of the European Commission Šefčovič completed his official visit to Turkey on 16-17 March 2015 with two concrete achievements: launch of High-Level Energy Dialogue and ground-breaking ceremony of TANAP.

Southern Gas Corridor with South Caucasian Pipeline (SCP) and Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP). As it is known, the Southern Gas Corridor envisages the delivery of gas from Azerbaijan's Shah Deniz II field to Europe via Turkey, Greece and Italy. TANAP with its 1850 km route will be transporting 16 billion cubic meters of gas to Turkey and Europe by the end of 2019. During the ceremony, Vice President of the European Commission Šefčovič underlined the importance attributed to TANAP and the role of Turkey as a reliable energy partner of the EU.

TURKEY'S NEW INFORMATION SOCIETY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN WAS ANNOUNCED



Turkey's 2015-2018 Information Society Strategy and Action Plan prepared under the coordination of the Ministry of Development has been approved by High Planning Council and published in Turkish Official Journal on 6 March 2015. This Strategy which was developed in accordance with Turkey's 2023 goals presents 72 actions covering different areas such as broadband infrastructure and data protection.

One of the main goals of this Strategy is to reduce the digital gap within the Turkish society mainly by providing better access to internet for families with low income and disabled persons. Also with more advanced ICTs, it is foreseen to improve the living standards especially with the development of smart cities and e-health services.

Turkish government aims to reinforce the competitiveness of the ICT sector and to encourage the widespread use of ICTs within other sectors and among SMEs. The use of cloud computing services will also be encouraged. The Strategy also contains a series of measures to improve broadband infrastructures such as making the equipment of buildings with internet infrastructure mandatory. The government is also going to initiate the necessary legal, administrative and technical works to introduce the 4G mobile broadband in Turkey.

This Strategy also aims to strengthen data protection by preparing the legal framework for personal data protection, reinforcing the fight against cybercrime and raising awareness on security practices on internet. The Strategy also foresees to build a developed internet eco-system, to encourage internet entrepreneurship and to turn Turkey into an important well-renowned centre of e-trade. Measures to improve e-government services and to help citizens acquire the skills to effectively use ICTs are also among the main priorities set by the Turkish government.

PRIME MINISTER'S VISITS TO HUNGARY AND PORTUGAL

Prime Minister Prof. Ahmet Davutoğlu visited Hungary on 24 February and Portugal on 3 March 2015.

Prime Minister Prof. Davutoğlu visited Hungary on 24 February 2015 accompanied by a delegation consisting of Deputy Minister Numan Kurtulmuş, Minister of Economy Nihat Zeybekci, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Taner Yıldız, Minister of Customs and Trade Nurettin Canikli and Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Volkan Bozkır.

During his visit, Prime Minister Davutoğlu attended the Turkey-Hungary Strategic Cooperation Council Meeting. In a joint press conference held with his Hungarian counterpart Viktor Orbán, Prime Minister Davutoğlu explained that cooperation between the two countries had been reinforced at cultural, economic and international levels within the framework of the strategic cooperation in NATO and Turkey's EU accession process. Prime Minister Davutoğlu pointed out that energy constituted an important

area of cooperation between both parties. In this respect, Hungarian Prime Minister Orbán shared his concerns about natural gas supply and explained that they were in favour of a natural gas pipeline which would bring them Russian gas through Turkey and Serbia. It has been also decided to increase trade volume between two countries, loans to be provided to SMEs and investment funds.

Prime Minister Davutoğlu made an official visit to Portugal on 3 March 2015 accompanied by a delegation consisting of Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Volkan Bozkır, Minister of National Education Nabi Avcı, Minister of Finance Mehmet Şimşek and Minister of National Defence İsmet Yılmaz.

During his visit Prime Minister Davutoğlu met with his



Portuguese counterpart Pedro Passos Coelho. Prime Minister Davutoğlu attended the first Portugal-Turkey Intergovernmental Summit during which various agreements were signed in areas of trade, education, security (mutual protection of classified information) and food safety.

After the summit, the two leaders held a joint press conference where Prime Minister Davutoğlu pointed out to the continuous support of Portugal to Turkey's EU membership and asked for further support in economic matters and Turkey's position in regard to TTIP negotiations.

EU MINISTER'S VISIT TO FINLAND

Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Volkan Bozkır visited Finland on 25-26 February 2015 upon the invitation of Finland's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Erkki Tuomioja.



In the first day of his visit, Minister Bozkır met with the Chairman of Finnish Parliament, Eero Heinäluoma and afterwards with Minister of Foreign Affairs Tuomioja. Turkey's EU accession process, Turkey-EU relations and Turkey-Finland relations were the main topics discussed by the two Ministers. During a joint press conference, Minister Bozkır stressed that Finland was one of the most supportive countries of Turkey's EU membership and accession process. Finnish Minister Tuomioja drew attention to the importance of opening new chapters with Turkey, especially chapters 15, 17, 23 and

24. The same day, Minister Bozkır also met with Finland's Minister for EU Affairs and Foreign Trade Lenita Toivakka.

In the second day of his visit, Minister Bozkır participated in sessions of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Committee on the EU in the Finnish Parliament. He also attended a meeting which was organized by the think tank Paasikivi Society during which he gave a speech on the opportunities and challenges of Turkey in Europe. During his visit, Minister Bozkır also met with the members of the Union of European Turkish Democrats in Finland.

TURKEY PARTICIPATES IN EaSI PROGRAMME

Turkey signed an agreement with the European Commission in February 2015 to participate to two of the three pillars of the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI): Progress and Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship.

With a total budget of 920 million Euros, the EaSI covering the period 2014-2020 aims to modernize labor market and social security systems, to provide financial support for social entrepreneurship and to contribute to the increase of employment rate, especially among young people. This Programme contributes to the improvement of working conditions, to the enhancement of social protection and to the fight against social exclusion and poverty.

EU'S SUPPORT TO THE SETTLEMENT PROCESS

Spokesperson for EU Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ray made a joint statement at a press conference held on 28 February 2015 with Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey Yalçın Akdoğan and the delegation of Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP). The call made by Abdullah Öcalan to organize an extraordinary congress in spring to decide to lay down arms was considered as a positive step within the framework of the settlement process. At the press conference, all parties asserted that they will seize this opportunity to make decisive progress towards reconciliation and democratisation. The EU has also given its strong political support to the process and ensured its readiness to provide assistance through pre-accession funding.