

TACSO TURKEY SUPPORT TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS

One of the post-election priorities in Turkey has become the creation of a new constitution. The government has made this a priority, and has established the Constitutional Commission within the parliament, inclusive of the different political parties in parliament, and responsible for drafting the new constitution. It is essential at this time, that civil society also become part of this process, and that mechanisms for participation are defined in advance in order to ensure that all groups have the possibility to express their views for a new constitution.

In the past two years, TACSO Turkey has played a key role in facilitating cooperation and communication between civil society organisations and government bodies. TACSO Turkey also sees itself as playing a supportive and facilitative role to enable civil society to become more active in the constitution-building process.

To this end, TACSO Turkey has supported the organisation of a meeting for CSOs and platforms working on their views on the new constitution to achieve the following:

- to provide an opportunity for different groups, CSOs and platforms currently working on the new constitution to share their work with one another and become aware of the variety of efforts being made
- to discuss and come to an agreement on possible mechanisms for participation that would enable citizens to participate fully in the new constitution-building process
- to draft a letter to the government requesting that such mechanisms be put in place during the constitution-building process.

TkMM (Small Turkey Peoples Parliaments) is an initiative that has worked with a number of constitutional platforms and groups and is experienced in facilitating "search" meetings that foster dialogue and communication among differing groups. TkMM was in charge of organising and managing the meeting with TACSO support.

14 representatives from different groups were present at the meeting, including the Women's Constitutional Platform, the Democratic Constitutional Movement, the Ecological Constitutional Initiative, Young Civilians, Civil Collaboration Platform, New Constitution Platform, Freedom oriented Constitution Platform, National Democratic Institute, TESEV, TEPAV, SETA, Government Employee Syndicate etc.



Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları için
Teknik Destek Projesi



Bu proje Avrupa Birliği
tarafından finanse edilmektedir.

The meeting started off with each participant talking about the work that they are currently doing with regard to the constitutional process. The diversity of approaches and different areas of focus was interesting to hear. The approaches ranged from bringing in best practices with regards to ecological constitutions, drafting policy papers with regard to inclusion of certain issues in the constitution to organising public meetings open to all where citizens are free to express their views, after which the views are compiled in a report presented to parliament.

The rest of the meeting was facilitated in Search Conference format which allowed participants to talk about particular questions in smaller groups and come to conclusions in a very short time. The objective was to find out the common denominators of diverse CSOs/platforms working on the new Constitution on the principles and methods of civil participation on Constitution making process, creating a summary to submit to the "Parliamentary Compromise Commission on the Constitution"

Participants worked as three groups, on certain questions step by step and merged the results afterwards. The work lasted for four hours and a set of common denominators appeared. These common denominators were found in terms of Principles of Participation, Methods of Participation and Further Action Points. Participants contributed to the Principles and Methods by adding points they felt the government and Constitutional Commission should take into consideration during the constitution-building process.

As a most important action point, 5 representatives were selected –on voluntary basis- to meet the "Parliamentary Compromise Commission for the Constitution" and explain the common denominators as requests from the different civil society groups.

TkMM submitted the final report to the Commission on October 26, 2011 and asked a hearing. The group of platforms and TkMM are awaiting an answer. TACSO will also support this process of the meeting of parliamentarians with CSO/platform representatives.

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