



Report from People to People (P2P) Conference:
“Independent Civil Monitoring of Elections and Equal
Access of Disadvantaged Groups to Electoral Rights”

21 April 2015 - Point Hotel Taksim, İstanbul



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Introduction

The Conference “Independent Civil Monitoring of Elections and Equal Access of Disadvantaged Groups to Electoral Rights” was organized by TACSO-Turkey in cooperation with Association for Monitoring Equal Rights (AMER).

The conference was organized within the framework of the People to People (P2P) component of the TACSO project, which aims to support civil society in the EU enlargement region. P2P is one of the three strands of the Civil Society Facility and provides an opportunity for CSOs in the countries of Western Balkans and Turkey to expand their knowledge about the activities of EU counterparts, through meetings with European CSOs and the opportunity to network internationally and regionally.

The Conference had the following objectives: Guaranteeing the effective access of disadvantaged groups to electoral rights as inspired by international and EU level standards and examples; building awareness to prevent discriminatory practices in this regard; and dissemination and strengthening of CSOs’ advocacy and independent monitoring activities to ensure the effective exercise of electoral rights by all.

The Conference brought together CSOs that are specialized in independent election monitoring and others that work for the rights of different disadvantaged groups, relevant government agencies, representatives from the academy and the media, and thus provided an opportunity of sharing information and experience with representatives of European institutions and EU member and accession countries.

Opening Speech



Marcin Brauhoff, Civil Society Sector Manager, delivered the opening speech of the Conference on behalf of the European Union Delegation to Turkey,. Stating that being in political life is one of the pillars of democracy, Brauhoff stressed that political participation is a fundamental right of persons with disabilities and this right is enshrined in international legislation, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, European Council instruments and the EU legislation. Brauhoff noted that there are 18 basic criteria set jointly by experts from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, European Commission and

Academic Network of European Disability Experts, which should be taken as basis in realizing the rights of disabled persons to political participation.

Another point made by Brauhoff in his opening speech was violations of rights that stem from gaps between legislation and its actual implementation. To move towards a solution in this problem, Brauhoff stressed the need to remove legal and administrative barriers, build awareness in rights and to strengthen access to electoral rights. Realization of fundamental rights is one of the leading conditions for joining the European Union and enhanced participation of persons with disabilities in political life should be considered not solely in the context of elections but political participation in its wider sense.

As stated by the network of experts, Turkey has made significant progress in guaranteeing the rights of persons with disabilities, but there is still some way to go. Brauhoff finished his speech by reminding that there are some legislative arrangements and standards that Turkey must adopt and it requires more attention than what is given at present.

Panel Discussion: Access to Electoral Rights for All and Democratic Elections



Speakers in the first panel of the session moderated by Assistant Professor Yunus Sözen from Özyeğin University were as follows: Election Monitoring expert Daniela Diaconu; Assistant Professor Çiğdem Sever from Atılım University; Minority Rights Expert Dmitry Nurumov and journalist Gökçer Tahincioğlu from the daily paper *Milliyet*. Information and experience shared during the activity included such issues as international legislation on independent monitoring, access of national minorities to electoral rights, the influence of the media on elections and election monitoring practices in Turkey.

Daniela Diaconu, Election Monitoring Expert, Romania

The first speaker in the panel was Daniela Diaconu, an expert in the fields of election monitoring, democracy and governance. Diaconu's presentation focused on international standards and agreements related to election monitoring to offer a framework to discussions to be held at the conference. Diaconu went over arrangements and articles in international legislation to explain how these documents can be used as guide by independent monitors. She said such international documents as the Universal Declaration of





Human Rights and the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that Turkey is a party to provide the ground for electoral rights, adding that conventions and agreements of the United Nations, European Council and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) offer a significant frame of reference in this respect.

Diaconu said Article 21 in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as a binding instrument for Turkey is the first reference point since it mentions not only fair and free elections but also fair election processes. She stressed that Article 25 in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights¹ and its general interpretation arranges for the right to participate and this is directly related to electoral rights.

Diaconu also referred to European Council² agreements as well as decisions and commitments made by its organs as sources that Turkey should consider in the context of access to electoral rights. Diaconu emphasized the relationship between electoral and other rights and added that conventions in the field of discrimination should also serve as reference documents for ensuring access to electoral rights.

Assistant Professor Çiğdem Sever, Atılım University, Turkey

Çiğdem Sever, the second speaker of the session conveyed major problems in Turkey related to participation to elections. Sever's presentation included such headings as problems in legislation related to elections, scope and limits of electoral rights and gaps in the process of elections.

According to Sever, as a process, elections must be addressed in conjunction with some other categories of rights including freedom of association and expression: though elections may seem, at smaller scale, as a reflection of voting preferences, it is actually a matter related to rights at larger scale.



While remarking that the international system does not impose a specific system of elections and accepts the existence of different electoral systems, Sever said electoral threshold can be seen as a problem in some systems, but it is actually a problem of representation and should be evaluated from this perspective. Turkey does not have a good report card in this respect, Sever said: 2002 elections in Turkey is the second most unfair election in the world in which 45% of population could not find any representation in the parliament.

The only criterion imposed by the Constitution is the principle of "secret ballot and open counting" and the electoral threshold is the first problem in the system. Decisions taken by the YSK (Higher Electoral Council) must be open, transparent and accountable. Sever mentioned the absence of the means of judicial appeal against the decisions of the YSK and impossibility of having access to these decisions as other problems in the system.

The homeless, women staying in sheltering facilities and seasonal migrant workers cannot vote due to the address-based voting system and thus are fully excluded from the representative system.

Sever said conducting observations in these areas is difficult since the legislation envisages no independent monitoring and attempts to this end are blocked. Further, the legislation includes no provision related to disadvantaged groups and special arrangements are necessary to guarantee access to rights. Giving information about the existing situation, Sever maintained that 1/3 of persons with physical disabilities cannot even get into building where they are supposed to vote, ballots and voting spaces are not arranged with due consideration of the

¹ www.tbmm.gov.tr/komisyon/insanhaklari/pdf01/53-73.pdf

² http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/documents/categories/eu-conventions/index_en.htm



needs of persons with visual disabilities and there is no convenience for citizens who are illiterate or cannot speak Turkish.

Sever also gave examples to some cases that are not related to any official ban but still create inequalities in practice. For example, while it is not forbidden to conduct campaigns in different languages, the YSK allows only for campaigns in Turkish on the television and radio; time in state broadcasting channels allocated for election campaign is unequally distributed among parties and there is also great inequalities in Treasury assistance to political parties.

Sever lastly drew attention to the difficulty of accessing information as the leading problem in all election related processes. Sever noted that this situation bars any reliable data collection and monitoring election-related bodies.

Dmitry Nurumov, Minority Rights Expert, Netherlands

The second speaker of the session was Dmitry Nurumov to evaluate electoral processes in the context of minorities. Focusing on the state of national minorities in access to rights by disadvantaged groups, Nurumov pointed to the role of the OSCE in this area.

Nurumov first described the role of the OSCE and remarked that the institution acts on the basis of a wider perspective encompassing not only national minorities but all disadvantaged groups. Nurumov added that while measuring the political participation of disadvantaged groups in monitoring reports, a variety of disadvantaged groups are defined and different methodologies are employed for measurement. In OSCE reports, the participation of the disabled to elections is closely monitored since it is a frequently confronted, but neglected and thus abused issue that is vulnerable to manipulation.

Nurumov analysed access to electoral rights in the context of national minorities and pointed out that denial of the status of national minority is the major problem in Turkey. He pointed out that this problem may be addressed in the context of the prohibition of discrimination if not as a problem of national minority. Continuing, Nurumov said the public participation of national minorities is important in making their voices heard beyond the issue of representative participation and elections constitute the platform that this comes to the fore. Stating that they should be realistic and transforming if special measures are to be taken, Nurumov stressed that these measures should avoid being formal and "business as usual" type since such measures would have no effect in changing outcomes. There are specific measures like quotas, list of representatives from national minorities and allocation of seats in parliaments in OSCE countries, which Nurumov does not consider as "ideal." Thus, all have their positive and negative aspects that require careful analyses.

Nurumov finally referred to the "Guidelines for Encouraging and Monitoring National Minorities' to Participate in Electoral Processes" to which he personally contributed and said the book is available in Turkish to guide participants³.

Gökçer Tahincioğlu, Milliyet Daily, Turkey

The last speaker, journalist Gökçer Tahincioğlu analysed the election process and access to electoral rights over the media. Tahincioğlu started his presentation by referring to principles that the media should have adopted and drawing attention to the gap between what must be and what actually is.

³ www.esithaklar.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/az%C4%B1nl%C4%B1klar-sec%CC%A7im-el-kitab%C4%B1.pdf

Tahincioğlu said the media and journalist are supposed to be impartial and objective according to liberal theories, but the case is not so at present and liberal theories are not explanative when it comes to the media. Tahincioğlu said analysis through the concepts of manipulation and hegemony would be of use in understanding the media. In the media as a means of producing consent, impartiality as though in higher education institutions is not something desirable and there is taking sides this or that way in each and every situation.



Referring to the concept “consent”, Tahincioğlu said presently there is a consensus on the acceptance of authoritarianism and the members of the media have their share in building this consensus. Tahincioğlu mentioned news about migrants as examples where the media can reflect related events either as “migrants trying to enter illicitly lost their lives” or “nothing was done for migrants”. According to Tahincioğlu, when it comes to making a choice, the media makes that choice which would be the most pleasing one for the most powerful party.

Tahincioğlu went on saying that manipulation assumes too apparent and naked forms to require any analysis during election times: “During elections, there emerges a type of journalism that is almost fully divorced of objectivity”. Responding to the question “So what must be done?” Tahincioğlu said there should be no giving up in spite of all odds and the access of disadvantaged groups to their rights may follow a struggle to gain some ground within the existing hegemony.

Forum: Access to Electoral Rights by Disadvantaged Groups: Civil Experiences

During the forum moderated by Necla Zarakol, participants Aril Nalçı from IMC TV, Ezgi Koçak from Women’s Coalition, Oya Özarslan from Transparency International, Volkan Yılmaz from SPOD and Selahattin Güvenç from Göç-Der conveyed their experiences related to the access of disadvantaged groups to electoral rights.

Aris Nalçı, İMC TV-T24, Turkey



The first speaker, journalist Aris Nalçı, talked about the electoral behaviour of Armenian citizens in Turkey, parameters determining this behaviour and historical background of Armenian representation in Turkey.

Nalçı firstly said that pressures on Armenians, as a national minority is one of the leading factors determining their electoral preferences. Nalçı said together with Serdar Kurucu they went over Turkish and Armenian publications before 1965 to depict the electoral behaviour of Armenians and concluded that the period after 1965 is quite different than before it. Nalçı reminded that 1965 corresponded to a period

when the concept of “being a Turk” was debated and that after this period national minorities felt they were being “instrumentalized” and their representatives preferred not to run in elections.

Nalcı also drew attention to the point that for the last 10 years or so there is a “minority quota concept” in local elections though there is yet no elected candidate, and in the media. Assessing the last elections in this respect, there are more candidates from minorities, but still, this does not extend to the east of Ankara which creates big difficulties in terms of absolute number of votes required to be elected.

Another point stressed by Nalcı was pressures over minorities at national and local levels. Nalcı added that discourse adopted by top-level authorities from time to time affects large sections of society in terms of their political preferences.

Ezgi Koçak, Women’s Coalition, Turkey

Assessing elections from the angle of women, Ezgi Koçak addressed the issue of representation at local and national levels in the context of a participatory approach. Ezgi Koçak first spoke about concepts related to the participation of women. Reminding that conceptualization has its specific importance Ezgi Koçak said the concept “woman” should be used in a way to touch each and every manifestation of the state of being a woman so as not to miss individual differences.

Koçak emphasized participation as a way of transcending beyond the boundaries of representation and making the existence of women “concrete”: participation is the means for women to bring their issues to the agenda of politics by going beyond mere representation. Koçak added that participation goes beyond the perception of “homogeneity” in relation to women, provides a space for expressing the uniqueness of each woman, makes heterogeneity visible and enables women to have a space for taking part in decision making, supervising and intervening.

Koçak went on saying that Turkey is at point zero in the context of participation and thus, as Women’s Coalition, they keep an eye on processes that lead to their exclusion. This watch is by the Coalition that comprises over 80 women’s and LGBTI organizations and focuses on the public, elections and related mechanisms. In the present electoral campaign too they closely follow parties and examine their internal regulations, electoral declarations and programmes.

Oya Özarıslan, Transparency International Turkey, Turkey

In her presentation Oya Özarıslan assessed elections in the context of transparency and accountability giving examples from other parts of the world, shortcoming in Turkey and what must be done. Özarıslan said transparency, first of all, is one of the fundamental elements of democracy by which any democratic government must be transparent, open, auditable and accountable.

Özarıslan said the question of transparency includes such specific headings as corruption, environmental sensitivity and accountability to the public and stressed that beyond constituting an “economic problem” corruption is also a problem related to human rights and justice. She drew attention to the connection between unfair distribution of public resources and global hunger and poverty.





Özarslan said, according to studies, politics constitute the most notorious institution in Turkey, which is followed by the media. She said at present Turkey has no adequate legislation and regulations in major headings of “clean politics” including political immunity, political gifts, election monitoring and evaluation, openness in politics and campaign financing. According to Özarslan, immunity is the most problematic one of all and there is no country other than Turkey where even cases of corruption are covered by immunity. She added that parliamentary immunity is kept too wide. Another point that Özarslan drew attention is that the practice of periodic declaration of property for political figures is not held compulsory in Turkey unlike many other countries. She said such declaration is the main assurance against the unfair accumulation of wealth by elected representatives.

Volkan Yılmaz, Social Policy, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Studies Association (SPOD), Turkey



The fourth speaker of the forum was Volkan Yılmaz to share the experience of LGBTI, as another group facing discrimination, related to representation and participation to elections. Yılmaz conveyed the experience of SPOD (Association for Social Policies, Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation) as an organization active in the field of social rights in the field of political representation. Stressing that the process of soliciting opinions for the new Constitution created an area to work for active organizations in defining rights at constitutional level and touched upon developments taking place in this context.

Yılmaz first drew attention to the contradictory situation that representative democracy created for LGBTI individuals: While representative democracy gives the final word to ballot box, the representation of groups such as LGBTI and atheists, against whom there is hatred and violence, cannot be left to the ballot box of preference of majority, which requires guarantee for the rights of these groups regardless of what the majority considers as good. For this reason, Yılmaz said, the struggle for the rights of LGBTI is a political one. Under this struggle, there are three types of work: School of politics, LGBTI-friendly municipality protocol and LGBTI activities in the parliament. Yılmaz said these activities yielded results beyond their initial expectations and this success is critical in terms of visibility and transforming political processes in the longer term.

Selahattin Güvenç, Mediterranean Association for Immigrants' Solidarity (Akdeniz Göç-Der), Turkey

The last speaker of the forum was Selahattin Güvenç. Güvenç gave information about the problems that internally displaced persons face in elections and representation.

Güvenç first addressed the problem of forced migration. He stated that there are millions of internally displaced people who try to subsist in urban peripheries and the origin of this problem dates as far back as 1925. As a result of these policies, seasonal workers who cannot vote although they have the right to, illiterates and particularly women are excluded from the system.

Another point emphasized by Güvenç was related to those who cannot vote. Güvenç mentioned that there is high number of citizens who have been living in tents for over 20 years and cannot vote due to the permanent address-based system of listing voters.

The last point underlined by Güvenç was that many people regard not being able to vote a problem of secondary importance given such needs as safe water, shelter, electricity, etc. that derives from forced migration.

Panel: Independent Civil Monitoring of Elections in EU and Candidate Countries

The topic of the panel discussion facilitated by Feray Salman was independent civil monitoring experiences in the European Union and countries in the process of accession. Speakers were Stefanie Schiffer, Osman Süzen, Dario Jovanovic and Nejat Taştan.

Stefanie Schiffer, EPDE, Germany



The first speaker in the session was Stephane Schiffer from the European Platform for Democratic Elections (EPDE). Schiffer gave information about the structure of the EPDE, its experiences and particularly the work on minorities in the context of independent observations and access to electoral rights.

The EPDE is a Berlin-based platform comprising 14 civil society organizations engaged in activities for free and democratic elections. The platform has its members from both EU and non-EU countries all acting in line with the perspective of learning from each other. The activities of the platform focus on the following: Building awareness on the importance of free elections and independent monitoring; combating “caviar diplomacy”⁴ and defending EPDE members who are under various pressures.

Schiffer said that in line with its objectives the EPDE is engaged in training, lobbying, advocacy and solidarity activities now preparing to follow rather difficult electoral processes in Russia and Azerbaijan in the period 2015-2016.

Osman Süzen, Human Rights Association (İHD), Turkey

The second speaker Osman Süzen conveyed İHD experiences and findings related to election monitoring. Süzen firstly explained that the Human Rights Association (İHD) followed and reported about local and general elections independently of the State and political authorities since 1986 and now has an experience of 30 years in this field. Süzen said they monitored pressures on voters Sin the period before 2011 and they are, since 2011, they are monitoring the problems faced by disadvantaged groups in electoral participation as well as issues related to ballot box security.



The points considered in monitoring are as follows:

⁴ The term “Caviar Diplomacy” is used in political science literature. For its use in the monitoring report on Azerbaijan prepared by the European Stability Initiative, see: http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi_document_id_131.pdf

- Are elections held transparently and in line with relevant legislation?
- Can workers in tourism sector, seasonal workers and students in dormitories vote?

They try to conduct their monitoring activities around ballot boxes; however, there are problems in this process since the YSK rules out any independent monitoring and its decisions are closed to court appeal. There are also problems such as election observers taken under custody by security forces.

On the basis of IHD work in this area, Süzen said there are four fundamental requests that must be met: Ensuring access to electoral rights for persons with disabilities; removal of barriers to independent monitoring; bringing down electoral threshold for political parties to a reasonable level and amendments in the legislation on elections.

Nejat Taştan, Association for Monitoring Equal Rights (AMER), Turkey



The third speaker, Nejat Taştan evaluated election results in Turkey in relation to disadvantaged groups. Taştan said the focus is on winners and losers right after election, but elections are lost much in advance of voting for many groups. Taştan added that the saying “Turkey has made its choice” does not reflect the reality for many groups who cannot make their choice.

Taştan touched upon the problem of women’s representation saying that while 51% of 53 million voters are women their best chance is to be represented at the rate 16-18%. There are many who will not be able to vote for being homeless and these elections may take Roma and Ezidi candidates to the parliament for the first time in 95 years.

Taştan said that for many groups the obstructions start much earlier than the day of the election; while electoral records and materials are prepared, officials are trained and legal arrangements are made and elections are “lost” early at this stage for many groups.

Stating that the electoral system in Turkey is at odds with any relevant international standard, Taştan said: “There no criterion other than the period of elections and there is no participation mechanism; so we have to monitor elections very closely...”

Dario Jovanovic, CCI, Bosnia and Herzegovina

The last speaker of the session was Dario Jovanovic to tell about the experience of Bosnia and Herzegovina through the internet. Jovanovic gave information about the organization, findings from electoral watch and future plans.

Jovanovic started by saying that elections in Bosnia are relatively transparent and the existing institution is open to monitoring. They can conduct monitoring and observations covering 14 regions in the country and in municipal elections as well. As a result of a campaign, they were able to amend the federal constitution after which their electoral monitoring found its legal basis.

Saying that Bosnia has a rather complex political system, Jovanović stated that this complex system requires close monitoring. So they are engaged in periodic reporting and share it with the public.

While giving information about their new election monitoring experience, which they carried out through a coalition, Jovanovic said for the first time they started their monitoring work long before elections were held and developed a special statistical method for monitoring. Under this system, 1,350 out of 5,400 ballot boxes were

monitored by using SMS messages. They used 3,000 electoral observers in this endeavor, while many others also applied to take on duty as election observers.



Forum: Access to Electoral Rights by Disadvantaged Groups: Civil Experiences

Facilitated by Binnur Aloğlu, the last forum had its speakers as Gönül Karahanoğlu from Ka.Der, Arzu Şenyurt from Eng-Kad, Kemal Polat from Disability Foundation and Cansu Korkmaz from Rusihak. In this session, electoral participation was analysed from the perspective of women and persons with disabilities.

Gönül Karahanoğlu, Association for Support of Women Candidates (Ka.Der), Turkey

Gönül Karahanoğlu, the first speaker in the session analysed the election process from the point of female candidates and gave





gender equality report cards of political parties. Karahanoğlu underlined that there can be no sufficient representation unless there is 33% representation as a critical threshold.

While analysing the election performance of political parties, Karahanoğlu said parties failed in the course of gender equality, adding that women's representation in the new parliament will still remain under 20%.

Karahanoğlu pointed out to the masculine structure of political parties and reminded that in some provinces there are no female candidates at all.

Arzu Şenyurt, Association of Women with Disabilities, Turkey

Arzu Şenyurt from the Association of Women with Disabilities talked about discrimination and problems that women with disabilities face in accessing their electoral rights. First of all, women with disabilities are missed out in electoral rolls including; in the first place, those staying at care centres and homeless ones. Şenyurt added that they could not reach data related to registered ones since the YSK refused to share this data while data from the TÜİK is not reliable.

Şenyurt said the state of having disability is turned into a problem of a kind of blacklisting accompanied by incorrect practices. Another point stressed by Şenyurt was the problem of difficult access to voting places that creates outcomes like harassment for women with disabilities.

Kemal Polat, Foundation for People with Disabilities, Turkey

Kemal Polat focused on the access of persons with disabilities to electoral rights. Polat said persons with disabilities cannot even go out of their homes during elections and they constitute the first group whose electoral rights are denied. Polat also pointed out to the fact that there are cases where persons with disabilities are directed to voting points where they cannot due this because of their disabilities.

The last point underlined by Polat was the necessity of bringing all disadvantaged groups on a common denominator.

Cansu Korkmaz, Human Rights in Mental Health Initiative, Turkey



The last speaker of the day was Cansu Korkmaz from the Human Rights in Mental Health Initiative (Rusihak). Korkmaz informed participants about the state in Turkey related to access to electoral rights by persons with mental and psychosocial disabilities and activities conducted in Turkey under the project "Person"⁵ which is financed by the EU and implemented at regional level⁶.

One of the points made by Korkmaz during her speech was related to different perceptions deriving from the translation of the relevant legislation. Korkmaz spoke about international standards and the state of law in Turkey related to the electoral rights of persons with mental and psychosocial disabilities. The point that Kormaz underlined in this context was that there are gaps between the

⁵ www.eu-person.com

⁶ www.madde12.org



national legislation and international standards and rights and obligations deriving from international legislation and conventions are missed when national legislation is used as the sole reference. Another point made by Korkmaz is that arrangements related to electoral rights as made by the YSK (High Electoral Council) and constitution are inconsistent and open to arbitrary interpretations.

Stating that “guardianship” practices and the definition of “restricted person” constitute one of the major obstacles in access to electoral rights, Korkmaz pointed out to the right of persons with mental and psychosocial disabilities to “do their own mistakes”. Korkmaz also invited attending audience to participate to the campaign “I Will Act” launched under the PERSON project ensure equitable access to rights.

Conclusions

With the participation of specialists and CSO representatives from the Western Balkans and Turkey, the Conference “Independent Civil Monitoring of Elections and Equal Access of Disadvantaged Groups to Electoral Rights” organized under the People to People Programme (P2P) was useful in sharing good practices, experiences and lessons learned in the context of Access to electoral rights and civil monitoring.

At the conference held as general elections are drawing near in Turkey, participants focused on problems and obstacles that disadvantaged groups encounter in access to electoral rights and the need to build awareness in legislative and policy-level changes required to ensure electoral rights for all. Participants shared information and experience in ways of strengthening civil initiatives. It was stressed at the conference while changes are given effect at legislative level to catch up with relevant international standards, there is need to continuously monitor and share with the public the defects of the existing electoral system.





Annexes



Agenda

21 April 2015

- 09:00 – 09:30 Registration
- 09:30 – 09:45 Opening Remarks, European Delegation to Turkey, Marcin Brauhoff
- 09:45 – 11:30 **Panel- Electoral Rights for Everyone and Democratic Elections**
Moderator: Assistant Prof. Yunus Sözen, Özyeğin University, Turkey
- Daniela Diaconu, Legal Expert, Romania
 - Assistant Prof. D. Çiğdem Sever, Atılım University, Turkey
 - Dmitry Nurumov, Minority Rights Expert, The Netherlands
 - Gökçer Tahincioğlu, Milliyet Newspaper , Turkey
- 11:30 – 12:00 Coffee Break
- 12:00 – 13:30 **Forum: Accessibility of Electoral Rights for Disadvantaged Groups: Civil Experiences**
Moderator: Necla Zarakol
- Aris Nalçı, IMC TV/T24, Turkey
 - Ezgi Koçak, Women's Coalition, Turkey
 - Oya Özarıslan, Transparency International, Turkey
 - Volkan Yılmaz, SPOD, Turkey
 - Selahattin Güvenç, Akdeniz IDP Association, Turkey
- 13:30 – 14:30 Lunch
- 14:30 – 16:00 **Panel: Civil Independent Monitoring of Accessibility in EU and IPA Countries**
Moderator: Feray Salman
- Stefanie Schiffer, EPDE, Germany
 - Osman Süzen, Human Rights Association, Turkey
 - Dario Jovanovic, CCI, BIH
 - Nejat Taştan, AMER, Turkey
- 16:00 – 16:20 Coffee Break



16:20 – 13:30

Forum: Accessibility of Electoral Rights for Disadvantaged Groups: Civil Experiences

Moderator: Binnur Alođlu

- Gönül Karahanođlu, Association for Supporting Women Candidates, Turkey
- Arzu Őenyurt, Disabled Women's Association, Turkey
- Kemal Polat, Disability Foundation, Turkey
- Cansu Korkmaz, Human Rights in Mental Health Initiative, Turkey

18:00 – 18:30

Closing Remarks



Participants list

#	Name and surname	Organisation	Contact
1	Ahmet Üzümcü	Association for Active People with Disabilities	https://tr-tr.facebook.com/pages/AKT%C4%B0F-Engelliler-GSK/553103891377963
2	Ali Can Kalan	Pink Life LGBTI	www.pembehayat.org
3	Alper Tolga Akkuş	Association for Disability Rights and Barrier Free Future	
4	Burcu Döleneken	Human Rights in Mental Health Initiative	www.rusihak.org
5	Bahar Yavuz	Association for the Visually Impaired in Education	www.eged.org
6	Nurdan Anlı	Association for Spina Bifida	www.spinabifida.org.tr
7	Özlem Kara	Adana Women's Solidarity and First Step Centre	www.siginaksizbirdunya.org/siginak-ve-dayanisma-merkezleri/60-adana-kadin-dayanisma-ve-ilk-adim-merkezi-akdam
8	Cevdet Bilgin	Turkey Association for Disabled- Antalya Branch	www.tsd.org.tr
9	Nurcihan Temur Şimşekcan	Adana Women's Solidarity and First Step Centre	www.siginaksizbirdunya.org/siginak-ve-dayanisma-merkezleri/60-adana-kadin-dayanisma-ve-ilk-adim-merkezi-akdam
10	Tuna Şahin	Mersin 7 Colours LGBTI Association	https://tr-tr.facebook.com/MersinLgbt7Renk
11	Turhan İçli	Confederation of People with Disabilities	http://engellilerkonfederasyonu.org.tr/
12	Ezgi Emre	Association for Support of Women Candidates	www.ka-der.org.tr
13	Yüce Yöney	Bianet	http://bianet.org/
14	Tülin Semayiş	Association for Support of Women Candidates	www.ka-der.org.tr
15	Seda Alp	Association for Monitoring Equal Rights (AMER)	www.esithaklar.org



#	Name and surname	Organisation	Contact
16	Seher Sinem Mısırlıoğlu	Association for Monitoring Equal Rights (AMER)	www.esithaklar.org
17	Sema Turhan	Blacksea Association for Women's Solidarity	
18	Güldane Zekiye Şenol	Buca Association for Disabled People	
19	Hatice Kapusuz Kütküt	Civil Society Development Centre	www.stgm.org.tr/tr
20	Hüseyin Fırat Mavigök	Human Rights Association-Mersin Branch	
21	Janset Bay	Confederation of People with Disabilities	http://engellilerkonfederasyonu.org.tr/
22	Mahir Işık	Buca Association for Disabled People	
23	Mehmet Karavural	Turkey Association for Disabled-Antalya Branch	www.tsd.org.tr/
24	Mehmet Kütküt	Civil Society Development Centre	www.stgm.org.tr/tr
25	Mustafa Karabulut	Dom Tribe Association for Social Solidarity	
26	Sinem Hun	Trans Counseling Center	www.t-der.org
27	Nilgün Karacaoğlu İlgün	Association for Women with Disabilities	www.engellikadin.org
28	Nur Tüysüz	Immigrants' Welfare Cultural Association	www.gocder.com

Speakers and Moderators

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