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DEMOCRACY RESEARCH

The Grand National Assembly of Turkey and Municipal Councils in February 2021

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The Grand National Assembly of Turkey opened in January, the speeches made by Hulusi Akar and Süleyman Soylu in the parliament were among the most debated events of the last days, while bills and proposals were mainly composing the agenda of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in the past month.

Legislative proposal no.229, was proposed in the last days of January;

- Adding the definition of the electronic seal to the Electronic Signature Law, implying that the electronic seal has the same legal qualifications as any physical seal including the official seal,
- Making the petitions of the complaints and appeal complaints about public tenders available in the electronic environment,
- Changes in the operations and regulations of the Teknopark's were accepted and became a law after the discussions on the article.

Another legislative proposal that was on the agenda of the parliament was legislative proposal no. 250, concerning the Turkish Armed Forces Personnel Law. The content of the proposal includes,

- The transfer of the duties, powers, and responsibilities of the Commander of the Turkish Armed Forces to the Ministry of National Defense,
- Bringing the number of foreign currency payments of those who apply for military service by payment from abroad, to the same amount as those who apply within Turkey,
- Providing the opportunity for the specialist sergeants employed in the commando branch to be appointed to another suitable staff starting from the age of 40,
- Determining the retirement age limits of specialist sergeants as 55 and ensuring that specialized sergeants can be recruited into the army starting from the oldest ones, until the age of 60, when the military campaign deems necessary, with the discretion that their health conditions are favorable
- The articles, providing the opportunity for law class officers to work in mediation commissions,

were discussed and accepted.

Apart from legislative proposals, another issue that occupied the agenda of the GNAT was the motions. Some of the motions discussed over the past month were as follows;

- Assembly Research Proposal submitted by Meral Daniş Beştaş and Hakkı Saruhan Oluç in order to remove the obstacles to academic freedom in universities,
- Parliamentary Research Proposal issued by Necdet İpekyüz in order to determine the negative effects of the increases in tax rates and the effects of increasing prices on social and economic life,
- Parliamentary Research Proposal issued by Erkan Aydın in order to determine the reasons for the excessive increase in food prices,
- Parliamentary Research Proposal submitted by Serpil Kemalbay Pekgözü to determine the measures to be taken for the protection of trade union rights,
- Parliamentary Research Proposal submitted by Süleyman Bülbül to improve policies allegedly causing violations of rights

The proposed discussions of all the motion proposals mentioned above were rejected by the majority of votes.

In addition to the proposals made, the speeches made by Süleyman Soylu and Hulusi Akar in the parliament on February 16 were among the events that remained on the agenda.

Soylu, who took the stand after Akar summarized the military operations, and accused Pervin Buldan by pointing the HDP as a target. In his speech, “There are massacres here, we all know how these massacres happened, in what form, at what point they conducted” and added that the end of the PKK is near.

There were different reactions from the opposition wing against these statements, and the opposition parties’ group deputies spoke one by one and criticized the government.

Pervin Buldan from HDP, on the allegations about her as “they will host a little bit, then they will leave” argued that “There was information that the detained soldier was in good health and Çalık was in good health. Hopefully he will be left as soon as possible. We are doing our best,” and she denied the allegations. With the speeches of Meral Daniş Beştaş and Hakkı Saruhan Oluç, HDP group vice-chairmen had criticized the government’s failure to sit at the table to take the soldiers and police officers from the hands of the PKK. Hakkı Saruhan Oluç responded to the target of the minister of the interior by saying “You are responsible for this incident and we are not”.

Yaşar Tuzun from the CHP said, “ God damn the PKK terrorist organization. God damn FETO terrorist organization. It’s not enough, let’s damn all terrorist organizations. Again, not enough, I say we should damn the mentality that welcomes PKK terrorist organization members at the Habur Border Gate with a ceremony and establishes mobile courts. I say, we should damn the mentality that has opened the cosmic chamber of the state to the members of the FETÖ terrorist organization and gave their secrets and appointed the members of the FETÖ terrorist organization to the highest levels of the state, friends.” and he criticized the hypocrisy of the government,

Lütfü Türkkan from the İYİP, as an answer to Soylu’s speech, “Did you start “the Kurdish solution” process in 2009 because you knew them very well, did you spread the red carpet because you knew them very well and greeted them with drums, zurnas and lahmacun? Did your so-called “tent courts” release the terrorists from Kandil and Mahmur because you know them very well?” asked this question.

The Agenda of Municipal Assemblies in the Previous Month

In **Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Council** meetings;

- Naming an unnamed street in Şişli as “Red Apple Street” (The Red Apple, one of the important symbols of Turkish nationalism and Turkish expansionism, symbolizes a target and goal for the Turkish states such as a place to be reached, a town to be conquered, the ideal of establishing a state, the ideal of world domination, and the ideal of Turkish unity.),
- The proposals for the signing of the Cooperation Protocol regarding the “Eurovelo-European Bicycle Routes Network” Project between Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and Muğla Sıtkı Kocaman University in order to ensure the participation of Istanbul in EuroVelo European Bicycle Routes were discussed and accepted.

In the sessions of the **Ankara Metropolitan Municipality Council**;

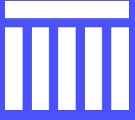
- Ankara Metropolitan Municipality to receive 6 months of rent from the workplaces whose activities are not interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic,
- The Dough, Lavash and Pastry Dough Machine to be provided by the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality will be allocated to the Women Social Support Association with the protocol to be made,
- Giving BELTAŞ Inc. the right to operate the indoor and outdoor parking areas in various parts of the city whose ownership and disposal belongs to the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality,
- The proposals for the confiscation of stray dogs in the Gölbaşı District were negotiated and accepted.

In the sessions of the **Izmir Metropolitan Municipality Council**;

- The mayor signing the protocol prepared for the purpose of contributing to the education processes (exam preparation books and stationery expenses) of young people between the ages of 17–20 who have socioeconomic difficulties and preparing for the university entrance exam,
- The protocol that will ensure the improvement of all projects in the field of landscape architecture within the scope of gender equality, signed by the Mayor,
- Organizing a wheelchair basketball tournament in Izmir in order to support the Izmir Wheelchair Team and to increase its recognition throughout the country,

Free of charge training for raising awareness of fire, natural disasters, and rescue given by Izmir Fire Brigade Training Branch,

The proposals for the establishment of a commission that can provide support to young people living in Izmir and their families on the combat with addiction were discussed and accepted.



CENTER FOR DEMOCRACY RESEARCH

Center for Democracy Research (CDR) strives to bolster political expression in Turkey and enhance its effects on political power structure through forming inclusive and democratic public spheres.

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