

PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING INDIVIDUAL APPLICATION PROCEDURES TO THE GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF TURKEY

PROJECT NAME	Promoting and Supporting Individual Application Procedures to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey
ABOUT PROJECT	The Project was supported by Matra Programme. Matra is a bilateral assistance programme of the Netherlands that aims to support social transformation in countries neighbouring the European Union. Project's areas "Governance, public order and police" and "Human rights / minorities"
AIMS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF LEGISLATION (YASADER)	The Association of Legislation (YASADER) was founded in 2003. The YASADER aims to contribute to more participatory, democratic and efficient legislative process. The YASADER organizes training programs for the civil society organizations and universities to increase their capacity to participate in the legislative process.
FORMER PROJECTS WITH THE EMBASSY OF NETHERLANDS	-Legislative School Project For Local NGO's, Strengthening capacity of local NGO's for participating legislative and parliamentary audit processes, 01.07.2011-31.07.2012 -Promoting Parliamentary Law Studies in Universities, Increasing interest in parliamentary law in universities and strengthening university youth participation in parliamentary processes, 01.08.2013- 01.08.2014
PROJECT ACTIVITIES	<p>1. Meetings in the cities</p> <p>Within the project framework, in each three biggest cities of Turkey; İstanbul, Ankara, and İzmir a two day meetings were organized. 194 people representing 139 different NGOs participated these meetings. Representatives of NGOs who engage in a wide range of issues including women's rights, disability rights, children rights, workers' rights, environmental law, information technology law, and social policy were invited to the meetings as representation among different NGOs was taken due account. Participation of NGOs operating in the neighboring cities was ensured as well. Each meeting was hosted by one university so as to guarantee direct and effective communication and cooperation with the universities in the implementation of the project.</p> <p>In the first day of meeting, project coordinator Semra Gökçimen briefed the participants about the project and the activities of The Association of Legislation (YASADER). Then, academicians made presentations on the right of individual application and its function with reference to civil society, right to legal remedies, advocacy and participation. Habip Kocaman, president of YASADER made a presentation on duties and powers of GNAT and on the importance and means of parliamentary oversight.</p> <p>Legislative experts Beyhan Hamurcu and Korkut Türkyarar from the Petition Committee, Kenan Altaş and Zeynep Duran from the Human Rights Investigation Committee, Cemil Dinmezpınar and Gökalp İzmir from the Committee on Equal Opportunity for Women and Men informed the participants on how to make individual application to each committee and briefly explained how these individual applications are examined with practical examples. The last presentation was done by Muhammet Akif Süslü, expert from the Ombudsman Institution which is attached to GNAT, on how to lodge individual application to the Ombudsman and further explained how these applications are examined.</p> <p>In the second day of the meeting, a workshop was organized under the oversight of Associate Prof. Dr. Fahri Bakırcı, at the workshop, participants were divided into groups and each one identified a problem and prepared individual applications under the oversight of legislative experts from the Petition Committee, the Human Rights Investigation Committee, the Committee on Equal Opportunity for Women and Men and experts of the Ombudsman Institution. Afterwards, the prepared individual</p>

applications were read and scrutinized in detail on the merits of individual applications and institutional check.

At the end of the two-day long program, certificates were presented to the participants.

In the light of information on the meetings organized in three cities stated above, information regarding participants and cooperation with the universities and academicians are provided below.

Istanbul Programme: Within the scope of the project, the first meeting took place in Istanbul on October 23-24, 2015 at the Istanbul Bilgi University Santral Campus. In total 45 people representing 37 different NGOs participated the meeting. The breakdown is as follows: 33 people representing 28 different NGOs operating in Istanbul and 12 people representing 9 different NGOs operating in Bursa, Edirne, Kocaeli, and Sakarya.

In her presentation on “What are Non-governmental Organizations and their Functions, Prof. Nurhan Yentürk from İstanbul Bilgi University, elucidated the definition of nongovernmental organizations and stressed working areas of them. Prof. Dr. Zafer Üskül, the chairperson of 23rd term GNAT Human Rights Investigation Committee, stressed the importance of effectiveness of individual application and following up applications within the scope of his presentation on “Ways and Practice of Individual Application to GNAT”. The first day completed with the presentations of legislative experts from GNAT and experts from the Ombudsman Institution.. The second day was competed with workshop.

Ankara Programme: Within the scope of the project, the second meeting took place in Ankara on January 8-9, 2016 at TOBB ETÜ University. 55 people representing 42 different NGOs operating in Ankara and 15 people representing 15 different NGOs operating in Çorum, Eskişehir, and Kayseri attended the meeting. In total, there were 70 participants representing 57 different NGOs. With the presentations of legislative experts from GNAT and experts from the Ombudsman Institution the first day completed successfully. The second day was competed with workshop as well.

Project assistant coordinator and YASADER secretary general Bahadır Yeşilirmak briefed the participants about YASADER and the project. Then, Researcher M. Murat Öngel from TOBB ETU University made his presentation entitled “Parliament: more than Legislative Organ” which was followed by Assoc. Dr. Cengiz Erişen’s presentation on “Democracy, Civil Society and Direct Participation to Politics”.

İzmir Programme: Within the scope of the project, the third meeting took place in İzmir on March 26-27, 2016 at Yaşar University. 69 people representing 37 different NGOs operating in İzmir and 10 people representing 8 different NGOs operating in Balıkesir, Çanakkale, Denizli, and Manisa attended the meeting. In total, there were 79 participants representing 45 different NGOs.

Prof. Dr. Fevzi Demir, Director of Public Law of Law Faculty and member of Constitutional Law Department made presentation on the “Importance of Right to Petition and Individual Application in the State of Law” which was followed by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fehmi Kerem Bilgin, from Law Faculty International Public Law Department, on the “Means of Individual Application to GNAT”. With the presentations of legislative experts from GNAT and experts from the Ombudsman the first day completed successfully. The second day was competed with workshop.

2. The Final Meeting of the Project

Project final meeting took place in Ankara on April 28, 2016 at GNAT. In the final meeting, activities of the project and overall project implementation was evaluated. Final meeting took place at Public Relations New Building Conference Hall at GNAT. In the final meeting, Ahmet Aydın, Vice speaker of GNAT, Chairperson of the Petition Committee Mihrimah Belma Satır, Chief Ombudsman Mehmet Nihat Ömeroğlu,

Netherlands Embassy Political Department Undersecretary Govert Visser, Project Coordinator Semra Gökçimen, to the representatives of NGOs participated in the project, “Natural Balance Ecological Life Production Consumption and Education Association” President Sezer Gökten made speeches. The meeting was also attended by Ombudsman, Mehmet Elkatmış and Abdullah Cengiz Makas, administrators and staff of GNAT and Ombudsman Institution, as well as representatives of NGOs that actively participated in the project. In total, there was 45 participants.

In his speech, Ahmet Aydın, Vice Speaker of GNAT, stressed that the parliament is always open to public and NGO participation to the legislative and oversight processes in GNAT is important. Mr. Aydın added that he was so pleased with being NGO representatives contributed to the project in GNAT.

Petition Committee Chairperson Mihrimah Belma Satır expressed her satisfaction of participation of the meeting that gather up representatives of NGOs and the GNAT. As she has NGO background and has worked for a long time in NGOs stated that contributions of NGOs are so precious. Later on, she made a speech on the functions of the Petition Committee and applications to it.

Chief Ombudsman Nihat Ömeroğlu thanked to the Speaker and Vice of Speaker of GNAT, representatives of the Joint Committee consisting of the Petition and the Human Rights Investigation Committees for supporting the Ombudsman Institution. He addressed the establishment of the Ombudsman Institution and its works.

In his speech, Govert Visser, Netherlands Embassy Political Department Undersecretary, expressed his satisfaction with the results of the project.

The Project Coordinator Semra Gökçimen stated project’s goals and objectives and briefed the participants about activities and presentations done in the meetings that took place in Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir.

Sezer Gökten, President of Natural Balance Ecological Life Production Consumption and Education Association, elucidated the project activities and concluded that the project made a direct contribution to the activities of NGOs in that vein.

Plaques were presented to the Vice Speaker of GNAT Ahmet Aydın, Chairperson of the Petition Committee Mihrimah Belma Satır, Chief Ombudsman Nihat Ömeroğlu and the Netherlands Embassy Political Department Undersecretary Govert Visser at the end of the final meeting.

After the final meeting, participants went on a guided tour of GNAT.

3. “The Handbook on Individual Applications to GNAT”

Within the scope of the project, The Handbook on Individual Applications to GNAT was prepared and offered to the use of NGOs in particular and of society in general. Prepared as part of the project outcome; The Handbook explains the individual application to Parliamentary Petition, Human Rights Investigation and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Committees and Ombudsman Institution. The application processes, requirements to apply for, with practical examples are provided in The Handbook. All in all, The Handbook was prepared as kind of guidance for those who want to lodge individual application. The Handbook is available on www.yasader.org and hardcopy was distributed to NGOs, universities, deputies. Very positive feedbacks are received and in particular NGOs really demand The Handbook.

4. Questionnaire Studies

Participants filled in the introduction questionnaire in the first day and closure questionnaire at the end of second day’s workshop in each meeting that took place in three cities. The introduction questionnaire aims to measure participants' knowledge

	<p>and awareness on individual application as well as to unfold whether they ever apply to GNAT and to the Ombudsman Institution to that end. The closure questionnaire on the other hand, aims to measure participants' knowledge and awareness on the individual application in the light of project activities and workshop on the issue. Questionnaires are evaluated in detail and results are provided below.</p> <p>5. The Legislative Journal</p> <p>Two issues of The Legislative Journal that include articles on the related topics were printed.</p>
<p>OUTCOMES- OUTPUTS PROJECT</p>	<p>1- 194 people representing 139 NGO participated in the meetings that took place in İstanbul, Ankara, and İzmir. Representatives were chosen among NGOs working on issues such as women's rights, disability rights, children rights, workers' rights, environmental law, and social policy etc. and representation among NGOs working on a wide range of issues was taken due account. In the first day of the meeting, an introduction questionnaire was filled which aims to measure participants' knowledge and awareness on individual application as well as to unfold whether they ever apply to GNAT and to the Ombudsman Institution to that end.</p> <p>After presentations of legislative experts from GNAT and experts from the Ombudsman Institution on how to lodge individual applications, how applications are evaluated and upon the completion of the workshop, a closure questionnaire was conducted. The closure questionnaire aims to measure participants' knowledge and awareness on the individual application in the light of project activities and workshop on the issue. Applications that are made to GNAT and to the Ombudsman Institution are analyzed and graded separately.</p> <p>When introduction questionnaire as well as closure questionnaire are evaluated, it can be seen that, as targeted in the project, participants' level of knowledge and degree of awareness on individual application to GNAT and to the Ombudsman are raised considerably. They have the knowledge and aware of the means of application thanks to the project. In case of a need, participants would consider to lodge individual application and also would encourage those in need to apply for. Both the introduction and closure questionnaire results prove that the project's initial assumptions were quite correct as there is the need to promote individual application and if it done, right of individual application would be strengthened. In this context, it is possible to conclude that the project have realized its initial goals.</p> <p>3. Each meeting was organized in collaboration with a university in that city. On the one hand, universities provided meeting halls and infrastructural needs for presentations. On the other hand, academicians made presentations on theoretical issues such as historical evolution of the right to petition, means of individual application etc. Participants showed great interest in these presentations. Indeed, articles on related issues were published in The Legislative Journal. As such, cooperation between the GNAT and universities are strengthened, academicians awareness' on the individual application and their interest to the issue was raised. On the other hand, the articles will also contribute to the relevant literature that the GNAT could be use of in the long term.</p> <p>4. In the second day of meeting in each cities, working groups consisted of representatives of 7 or 8 NGO were formed. They encouraged to share their problems and chose one topic as the basis of their individual application form. Afterwards, the prepared individual applications were read and scrutinized in detail on the merits of individual applications and institutional check. As such, each commissions working areas and the applications directed to them is clarified and participants are encouraged to apply if it is needed.</p> <p>5. The Chairperson of Petition Committee hosted the final meeting which took place in Conference Hall at the GNAT and was attended by high level politicians. In the final meeting, Vice Speaker of GNAT Ahmet Aydın, the Petition Committee Chairperson Mihrimah Belma Satır, Chief Ombudsman Mehmet Nihat Ömeroğlu, Netherlands Embassy Political Department Undersecretary Govert Visser, Project Coordinator Semra Gökçimen, to the representatives of NGOs President of Natural</p>

Balance Ecological Life Production Consumption and Education Association Sezer Göktan made a speech. Ombudsman Mehmet Elkatmış and Abdullah Cengiz Makas, managers and employees of Parliament and Ombudsman Institution, and NGOs that participated Ankara, İstanbul, and İzmir meetings all attended the final meeting as well. As importance given to the individual application has been expressed and shared at the highest level both by GNAT and Ombudsman, participants experienced that the project and means of individual applications have really high level of support.

6. “Handbook on Individual Applications to GNAT” was prepared and distributed to relevant NGOs, universities, deputies and very positive feedbacks are received. Since The Handbook is the first resource on the issue that is ever printed, stakeholders stated that handbook should distribute to more deputies and NGOs. The Handbook is a guide book that clearly and simply explains in detail the requirements for an individual application to the Petition, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity for Women and Men Committees and how the process is evaluated etc. It is available on www.yasader.org.tr

7. Two issues of The Legislative Journal that include articles on the related topics were printed.

8. There is now a separate chapter on this issue at www.yasader.org.tr and project activities, project outcomes, presentations made in the meetings are published both in Turkish and English. NGOs can reach presentations made in the meetings as well as electronic version of The Handbook.