



## TURKISH ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN

### Submission to the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review

1. Despite the provisions of article 10 of the Turkish Constitution,  
*Article 10 Equality before the Law:*
  - (i) *All individuals are equal without any discrimination before the law, irrespective of language, race, colour, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion and sect, or any such considerations.*
  - (ii) *Men and women have equal rights. The State shall have the obligation to ensure that this equality exists in practice.*
  - (iii) *No privilege shall be granted to any individual, family, group or class.*
  - (iv) *State organs and administrative authorities shall act in compliance with the principle of equality before the law in all their proceedings)*
    - Women continue to be grossly under- represented in Political Institutions.
    - Turkey is the 89th country among 142 countries and last among European Union countries with its 9.1% women representation in the Parliament.
    - There are no women Governors among 81 Governors.
    - There are only 2 women Ministers in the Cabinet.
    - Among 3225 Mayors only 18 are women.
    - Among 34,477 Municipal Assembly Members only 799 are women.

We are asking the government to implement Article10/2 of the constitution and provide participation of women at all levels of political governance by introducing at least 30% quota to start with.

2. World Economic Forum's The Global Gender Gap Report 2009 says: Iran (128), Turkey (129), Pakistan (132) and Yemen (134), already at the bottom of the rankings, displayed an absolute decline relative to their performance in 2008. This is very sad for Turkish women who have gained their political rights in 1930 and 1934. and are proud of being the citizens of the only secular country with a large Muslim population..As co-author Saadia [Zahidi](#), Head of the Forum's Women Leaders and Gender Parity Programme, says "The countries that do not fully capitalize on one-half of their human resources run the risk of undermining their competitive potential. We hope to highlight the economic incentive behind empowering women, in addition to promoting equality as a basic human right,"

Our Association shares the views of Ms. Zahidi and hopes that our government gives the deserved attention to the results of the the Global Gender Gap Report 2009.

3. Although 8 years of primary education is compulsory in Turkey, schooling has not reached a satisfactory level, especially for girls mainly due to the conservative way of life, so called traditions and last but not least, for economic reasons. The ones who are lucky to be able to attend any school are also deprived of desirable education due to

crowded classes, lack of facilities, most of all shortage of teachers. Among 12 million young people aged 15-24, only 30 % go to school. Another 30% are working and 40 % neither go to school nor work. Among them are 2.5 million young women starting life only hoping to get married to a man on whom they become dependent, and idle young men who, having lost hope of a good future, are open to all kinds of crime beginning with domestic violence.

- A country like Turkey, which claims to be one of the top twenty economies in the world, should allocate more funds for education.
  - The curricula should be adjusted to improve the role of women in the society.
  - The teachers should be trained and encouraged to promote education on the lines of gender equality and prevention of violence.
4. We are constantly confronted with broadcasts of honour killings, polygamy, forced marriages and involuntary arranged marriages which in many cases result in suicides, domestic violence etc.. But the authorities are reluctant to resolve this tragedy for many reasons such as lack of determination to implement the present legislation.
- We expect that such cases should be made public and there should be rapid intervention by the public prosecutor.
  - The trials of such cases should be expeditiously carried out and finalised to satisfy the public conscience and provide a deterrent.
  - The number of women's shelters should be increased and spread all over the country, and should enjoy official support and provide full security to unlucky women.
  - In this respect in urban areas the police and in rural areas the gendarmery should be trained for the purpose.

*Submitted by: Ms Nezihe Bilhan, CIR, Turkish Association of University Women  
November 2009*