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IRB – Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

Turkey: Update to TUR106032 on requirements and procedures to become a member of the Peoples' Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi, HDP); membership cards, including description and authorized issuing authority; whether the HDP head office and/or regional offices are issuing letters verifying party membership; if letters are not currently being issued, have they been issued in the past and when did the practice stop; whether regional offices have discretion in issuing letters, or must they be approved by the head office (2016–December 2020) [TUR200423.E]

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Response to Information Request TUR106032 of December 2017 was updated to include follow-up correspondence from the representative of the HDP's Foreign Affairs Commission sent to the Research Directorate in November 2020.

1. Requirements and Procedures to Become a Member of the People's Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi, HDP)

According to the Constitution of the People's Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi, HDP), approved on 22 June 2014, requirements for membership in the HDP are as follows:

[translation]

Article 4

Anyone who is over the age of 18 and is able to exercise civil and political rights and adheres to the constitution, program and principles of the party may become a member of the party.

Article 5

1. Individuals who are deemed to provide special contributions to the party may be registered by the party organization as honorary members. Honorary members effectively enjoy all the rights and privileges of full members and are expected to fulfill the same responsibilities as full members. Principles and procedures regarding registration records of honorary members, the rights and responsibilities of honorary members along with their participation in the party's elected or non-elected committees are set out in the regulation drawn up by the party council. All procedures in relation to honorary members will be carried out by party organizations in accordance with the provisions of the regulation in question.
2. Honorary members may not be appointed as consultant to party organs formed through a single direct election or to the Disciplinary Committee.

Article 6

The lower and upper limit of the monthly membership fee to be paid by party members are TL 5 [C\$ 2] and TL 250 [C\$ 84], respectively. (HDP 22 June 2014)

The HDP Constitution also provides the following information on becoming a member of the party:

[translation]

Article 7

Individuals wanting to become a member will submit their membership application to the party organization located in the district where they reside. Applications will be processed and finalized by the district party organization within one month. Applications will be deemed accepted if no decision is made within the one-month period. Any

individual whose direct membership registration to the party or whose candidacy in general and mayoral elections is deemed beneficial to the party may be registered directly as a party member by the Party Council or the Central Executive Committee upon submitting an application. The names of any accepted applicants in this regard will be sent to the district party organization located in the city or district where they reside. After receiving the applications for membership, Provincial Executive Committees may accept them directly and forward any related documents to the district party organization located in the city or district where individual members reside.

Denied applicants may appeal the decision to a higher organ within 15 days, and the decision of the higher organ in this regard will be final. Provincial and district party organizations will finalize membership applications and forward them to the higher organ as soon as possible. Applicants residing abroad will submit their application to the party representative in their country of residence, if any. Applications will be reviewed and finalized by the representative within one month. Accepted applicants will be registered as party members in the city or district where they last resided in Turkey.

Other issues concerning membership will be governed by the Membership and Registration Regulation to be drawn up by the party council.

Members of the party may not register as a member to more than one organization within the party, otherwise their membership registration filed prior to the most recent registration date will be deemed null and void. (HDP 22 June 2014)

Information on the "Membership and Registration Regulation" could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a representative of the HDP Foreign Affairs Commission in Ankara stated the following with regards to the requirements and procedures for becoming a member of the party:

According to the Law on Political Parties in Turkey [which specifies] that every citizen in Turkey has the right to become a member of a political party. The judges, prosecutors, soldiers, officials and specialists from some of the specific working fields [do not have the] right to become a member of a political party. A citizen cannot be [a member of] more than one political party. If a citizen wants to change his/her membership for another political party, he/she needs to complete a resignation process. All the membership database of the parties are sent to the political parties department of the supreme court of appeals prosecutor's office.

Membership procedures start by filling the application forms in the provincial chairmanships of the party. The filled forms are sent to the party headquarters and the forms registered in the online membership database of the party. If the citizen has no legal obligation and any current membership to another political party, the citizen's membership is registered with the prosecutor's office in the Supreme Court of Appeals.

Principally members of the party should pay a monthly contribution. But our party cannot sanction its members if the members do not make a contribution. The payment issue is not a reason for revoking the membership. HDP defines the conditions in the party regulation for revoking the membership, [such as]: infamous crimes and opposition to the party's main principles (promoting democracy, open stand on violence against women, etc.). (HDP 16 Dec. 2017)

The representative added the following information with regards to membership in the HDP outside Turkey:

According to the law, every citizen of Turkey has a right to [membership in] a political party. However, there is a legal gap regarding the membership procedure for Turkish citizens who live in other countries. So, HDP registered some of the citizens according to their hometown details and registered address in Turkey. The Grand National Assembly will work on amendment for the Political Parties Law. We hope that the legal gap on the registration for the citizens in other countries will be clarified. Probably a kind of "overseas membership" statute will be given to the party members who live abroad. (HDP 16 Dec. 2017)

2. Information on Membership Cards

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a Brussels-based HDP representative in Europe stated that

[t]he HDP's membership card systematically includes a picture and is only given to political and administrative responsible [persons] of the party, at a local and regional level, and to all the members who carry responsibilities inside the party.

This means that we do not give a membership card to regular members of the party such [as] ordinary affiliated members.

Those ordinary members who want to become a member of our party have to fill a form to get a membership [status], following this procedure they receive a receipt of their request from our party. Besides, these members can only get registered in the place they live (the membership forms are filled in the section they are from).

Concerning the responsibility of our party in Europe and overseas ... our representation office in Brussels appoints, during elections time, observers on behalf of our party to oversee the good running of the elections procedures outside Turkey. Those observers receive a card from our party to this end (*müşahit kartı* in Turkish). (HDP 28 Nov. 2017)

The HDP Foreign Affairs Commission representative stated the following with regards to the issuance of membership cards:

HDP Headquarters does not issue party ID cards except [for] members of the party assembly (about 200 people). Party assembly members use cards during their membership process as the member of the party assembly. However, some of provincial chairmanships have issued temporary ID cards on behalf of the provincial party administration in order to authorize some party members to organize local meetings and events in districts or towns and villages. (HDP 16 Dec. 2017)

In subsequent correspondence, the same source provided the following clarification regarding the issuance of temporary ID cards:

Some ID cards in local [administrations] can be printed in order to identify the official delegates for the provincial congress of the HDP or similar events... These cards are valid for only the specified events. Generally the events and the dates are written on these ID cards. These kind of cards are not used as general ID cards. As I mentioned before, only the HDP executives have the right to use HDP ID cards for general use. If a member of the party executive resigns or ends their term, the party's ID card is taken without delay. (HDP 19 Dec. 2017)

In a November 2020 follow-up correspondence with the Research Directorate, the representative of the HDP Foreign Affairs Commission indicated that the information provided in December 2017 remains valid and stated that "membership documents have been provided by the provincial chairships of [the] HDP and the headquarters of the party" (HDP 20 Nov. 2020). The same source indicated that membership documents issued by provincial "chairships" must be approved by the headquarters (HDP 20 Nov. 2020).

A sample of the membership application form, and a member of the Party Assembly identification card (both obverse and reverse), as provided by the representatives to the Research Directorate, are attached to this Response (Attachments 1, 2 and 3).

For further information on documents issued by the HDP, see Response to Information Request TUR106177 of October 2018. For information on the procedure by which the HDP verifies that a person is a member of the party and who is authorized to issue a letter attesting a person is a member, see Response to Information TUR200156 of March 2020.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

People's Democratic Party (HDP). 20 November 2020. Correspondence from a representative of the HDP's Foreign Affairs Commission to the Research Directorate.

People's Democratic Party (HDP). 19 December 2017. Correspondence from a representative of the HDP's Foreign Affairs Commission to the Research Directorate.

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People's Democratic Party (HDP). 28 November 2017. Correspondence from the HDP Representative in Europe to the Research Directorate.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: People's Democratic Party – Washington D.C. Office.

Internet sites, including: ecoi.net; UN – Refworld.

Attachments

1. People's Democratic Party (HDP). N.d. "Membership Application Form." Sent to the Research Directorate by a representative at HDP Europe, 28 November 2017. Translated by the Translation Bureau, Public Services and Procurement Canada.

2. People's Democratic Party (HDP). N.d. "Party Assembly Member Identification Card." Sent to the Research Directorate by a representative at HDP Europe, 28 November 2017. Translated by the Translation Bureau, Public Services and Procurement Canada.
3. People's Democratic Party (HDP). N.d. "Reverse of Identification Card." Sent to the Research Directorate by a representative of the HDP's Foreign Affairs branch, 16 December 2017. Translated by the Translation Bureau, Public Services and Procurement Canada.

ecoi.net summary:

Query response on Turkey:

Requirements and procedure to become a member of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HPD - Halkların Demokratik Partisi) (2016 - December 2020)

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