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19 November 2021

TUR200823.E

Turkey: Requirements and procedures to become a member of the Peoples' Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi, HDP); membership cards, attestation letters and donation receipts, including content, appearance, and authorized issuing authority; instances of membership attestation letters or membership cards that are not issued; sample (2019–November 2021)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

1. Requirements and Procedures to Become a Member of the HDP

According to the HDP Constitution, 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

- a. 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.
- b. 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 5 [Turkish lira] TRY [C\$0.62] and 250 TRY [C\$31], 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 ... 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 databases of the parties [are sent] to the political parties department of the Supreme Court of Appeals prosecutor's office.

Membership procedures start by filling [out] the application forms in the provincial chairships 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 [or] current membership to another political party, the citizen's membership is registered with the prosecutor's office in the Supreme Court of Appeals.

[In p]rincip[le] members of the party should pay a monthly contribution. But our party has no sanctions for 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 regulations 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. (HDP 16 Dec. 2017)

In October 2021 follow-up correspondence with the Research Directorate, the representative of the HDP Foreign Affairs Commission indicated that the information provided in December 2017 regarding HDP membership remains valid (HDP 26 Oct. 2021).

A sample of the HDP membership application form, provided by the representative of the HDP Foreign Affairs Commission, is attached to this Response (Attachment 1).

2. 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 politically and administratively 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 [out] a form to get 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 [out] in the section they are from).

... 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 karti* 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 [to] 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 chairships 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 kinds 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, their party ID card is taken without delay. (HDP 19 Dec. 2017)

In November 2020 follow-up correspondence with the Research Directorate, the representative of the HDP Foreign Affairs Commission 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 headquarters (HDP 20 Nov. 2020).

In October 2021 follow-up correspondence with the Research Directorate, the representative of the HDP Foreign Affairs Commission indicated that the information provided in December 2017 and November 2020 regarding HDP

membership cards remains valid (HDP 26 Oct. 2021). The same source added that the HDP does not "issue HDP membership cards except [to] party assembly members and the official representatives in Washington, DC, Brussels, Strasbourg, Berlin and Erbil," and the cards "should be approved by the executive board" (HDP 26 Oct. 2021).

English and French translations of the front of a sample of the HDP Party Assembly identification card, provided by the representative of the HDP Foreign Affairs Commission, as well as the back of the sample card, are attached to this Response (Attachments 2 and 3).

3. Attestation Letters

According to October 2021 follow-up correspondence with the representative of the HDP Foreign Affairs Commission, "[o]nly HDP [c]o-chairs and the co-speakers of the HDP Foreign Affairs Commission are authorized to issue the membership confirmation letters for the party members" (HDP 26 Oct. 2021). The same source stated that membership attestation letters appear on the "HDP Headquarters' letterhead" and include a "stamp on the signature" (HDP 26 Oct. 2021). The same source added that, at times, party members need to "cancel the[ir] membership due to oppressions or legal reasons," but that executive members remain registered in the party database, though "members who have not [been] in an executive position" do not (HDP 26 Oct. 2021). According to the same source, "active" party members can access "membership documents" through the "official citizenship portal, E-Devlet" [1] (HDP 26 Oct. 2021).

The information in the following paragraph was provided by an HDP representative in Strasbourg, France, in a series of correspondence with the Research Directorate:

The HDP Strasbourg office provides letters to people "who have worked at any time for the HDP or former parties which are affiliated with the HDP" (HDP 18 Oct. 2021). It also issues letters to people who have "become a member of the party ... even if they have not worked for the party" (HDP 20 Oct 2021). These letters indicate that someone is "linked with" the HDP (HDP 15 Oct. 2021). In cases where the person is no longer an HDP member, the attestation letter will "mention the period the person worked for [the] party as a member or activist" (HDP 4 Nov. 2021). The office produces the letters after contacting the HDP's "international department" and receiving a "positive answer" regarding

whether or not the individual in question has "any link" with the party (HDP 15 Oct. 2021). It provides letters for "asylum seekers in Europe" (HDP 15 Oct. 2021). "Someone in Canada can ask [for] a reference from the centre of the party or our representation in the USA" (HDP 18 Oct. 2021).

English and French translations of a sample of an attestation letter issued by the HDP representative in Strasbourg, and provided by them to the Research Directorate, are attached to this Response (Attachment 4).

4. Donation Receipts

Donation receipts can be issued by treasurers, who are also vice-chairs of provincial and regional districts (HDP 1 Oct. 2018). A sample of a blank donation receipt, provided by the HDP's European representative, is attached to this Response (Attachment 5). According to the sample, the following information is found on the donation receipt:

- Date of the receipt
- Address of the HDP headquarters
- City and township
- Amount of the donation (indicated in both numbers and words)
- Information about the donor (Republic of Turkey ID number, name, surname and address)
- Signature and/or stamp of the [translation] "accountant/authorized official" (HDP n.d.).

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.

Note

[1] According to information available on the official website of the e-Government Gateway [e-Devlet; e-Government Portal], the "e-Government Gateway is a web site that provides access to public services from a single point" and provides services for users including "[i]nquiry [s]ervices," "[d]ocument [g]enerating [s]ervices," and "[i]nformation services" (Turkey n.d.). The same source notes that a password to access the e-Government Gateway is available to Turkish citizens who are "at least" 15 years old, "[b]lue card holders (foreign nationals specified in Article 28 of the Turkish Citizenship Law No. 5901)," and "[f]oreigners with [a] foreign identification number given by the competent authorities of the Republic of

Turkey" (Turkey n.d.). The e-Government Gateway website further states that "Turkish citizens over 15 years old can obtain an e-Government Gateway password by submitting one of the following identity documents with their ID number": identity card, Republic of Turkey identity card "(new)," "[v]alid" temporary identity document from the Registry Office, passport, "[q]ualifying certificate" (Turkey n.d.).

References

Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP). 4 November 2021. Correspondence from a representative of the HDP in Strasbourg, France to the Research Directorate.

Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP). 26 October 2021. Correspondence from a representative of the HDP's Foreign Affairs Commission to the Research Directorate.

Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP). 20 October 2021. Correspondence from a representative of the HDP in Strasbourg, France to the Research Directorate.

Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP). 18 October 2021. Correspondence from a representative of the HDP in Strasbourg, France to the Research Directorate.

Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP). 15 October 2021. Correspondence from a representative of the HDP in Strasbourg, France to the Research Directorate.

Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP). 20 November 2020. Correspondence from a representative of the HDP's Foreign Affairs Commission to the Research Directorate.

Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP). 1 October 2018. Correspondence from a European representative to the Research Directorate.

Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP). 19 December 2017. Correspondence from a representative of the HDP's Foreign Affairs Commission to the Research Directorate.

Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP). 16 December 2017. Correspondence from a representative of the HDP's Foreign Affairs Commission to the Research Directorate.

Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP). 28 November 2017. Correspondence from the HDP Representative in Europe to the Research Directorate.

Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP). 22 June 2014. "Halkların Demokratik Partisi Tüzüğü" (The Constitution of the Peoples' Democratic Party). Translated by the Translation Bureau, Public Services and Procurement Canada. [Accessed 12 Nov. 2021]

Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP). N.d. "Gelir Makbuzu" (Donation Receipt). Sent to the Research Directorate by a European representative, 1 October 2018. Translated by the Translation Bureau, Public Services and Procurement Canada.

Turkey. N.d. e-Government Gateway. "Frequently Asked Questions." [Accessed 10 Nov. 2021]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP) – representation in Europe, representation in Germany, representation in the US; professor of Turkish politics at a university in Florida.

Internet sites, including: Amitiés kurdes de Bretagne; Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP) – HDP Europe, HDP USA.

Attachments

1. Halkların Demokratik Partisi (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. Halkların Demokratik Partisi (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. Halkların Demokratik Partisi (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.
4. Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP). N.d. Attestation letter. Sent to the Research Directorate by a representative of the HDP in Strasbourg, France, 18 October 2021. Translated by the Translation Bureau, Public Services and Procurement Canada.
5. Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP). N.d. "Gelir Makbuzu" (Donation Receipt). Sent to the Research Directorate by a European representative, 1 October 2018. Translated by the Translation Bureau, Public Services and Procurement Canada.

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