FROM A MEN'S DEMOCRACY TOWARDS A REAL DEMOCRACY

The underrepresentation of women in political decision-making has been a major problem for Turkey since the 1960s. Ranking 167th among 189 countries with 4.36 percent women in the Turkish national parliament, it is obvious that Turkey has to ensure women's "fast-track" access by legislating affirmative action (quotas). Although still perceived as controversial by some, quotas have proved to be the only successful way to ensure women's rapid access to political power and are quite common. A legislative quota is necessary for women to overcome the social and economical obstacles that prevent them from entering politics in Turkey, and for the country's politics to profit from the rich and unused experience and skills of women.

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On 22 July 2007, Turkey will hold general elections. This election, being very critical for various reasons, is also very important for women's political representation. KA-DER (The Association for Support and Training of Women Candidates) has been running a wide public campaign, supported by more than hundred other NGOs, to raise awareness on this issue and to create pressure over the party leaders to put more women in their electorate lists. The quota demands of the women's movement have not been taken seriously by the past and current governments and many people still think that quota practices lead unqualified people to unfairly be privilidged and thus that it is not only unjust but will also pull the standards down. Infact, most Turkish politicians, including the Prime Minister think the same way. However, quotas for women are actually tools to put an end to the exclusion of women from decision-making by helping them overcome the obstacles that prevent them from entering politics in the same way as their male colleagues. Moreover, in Turkey and in the world in general, more women joining politics has real effects on policymaking that cannot wait.

Thus, it is important to highlight the logic of quotas and their worldwide practices, as Turkey nears the elections on July 22.

The title of this article "From a Men's Democracy towards a Real Democracy" was first used by KA-DER in 2004 during a campaign they organized. This article intends to clarify and elaborate on why this is a meaningful call for women activists in Turkey.

There are various definitions, explanations and perceptions of Democracy. But, in brief, "we can define democracy as both an ideal and a set of institutions and practices. Democracy as an ideal requires that the members of any group or association should have the determining influence and control over the rules and policies of that group, through their participation and decisions about the common interest; and in doing so they should treat each other, and be treated, as equals. These principles are applicable from the smallest group up to the largest state; how effectively they are realized in practice shows us how democratic they really are."[1]

When modern states are concerned, to talk about democracy, there needs to be a guaranteed framework of citizen rights; institutions of a representative and accountable government; an active citizen body or civil society; and a number of mediating institutions between government and citizens (among which political parties are the most important). In this system, parliaments have a key role to play in relation to the others. This is what makes them the central institution of a democracy. Parliaments represent the people, who elect them in dealings with the other branches of government, and with various international and sub-national bodies. How well they fulfill this mediating role, and how representative of the people they are in all their diversity, has always been and increasingly is an important consideration for a democratic parliament.

[1] David Beetham, Parliament and Democracy in the Twenty First Century, A Guide to Good Practice (Switzerland, Inter Parliamentary Union, 2006), p. 3

The key characteristics of a democratic parliament are that it is representative, transparent, accessible, accountable, and effective. A democratic parliament should also reflect the *social diversity* of the population in terms of gender, language, religion, ethnicity, or other politically significant characteristics. A parliament which is unrepresentative in this sense will leave some social groups and communities feeling disadvantaged in the political process or even excluded altogether, with consequences for the quality of public life or the stability of the political system and society in general.[2] In this context, the underrepresentation of women has always been a universal problem and cause of concern.

In almost all societies, at all times, politics has been a traditional male preserve. Although there are various explanations for this, the basic and most important reason has been the traditional gender roles attributed to men and women almost universally. Gender roles, by limiting women's space almost entirely to "home", have laid the basis for substantial barriers to women's political involvement. In western democracies, equality with men in terms of the vote did not bring with it the same equality in terms of opportunity for access to public office. Today women represent only 17.15 percent of all legislators in the world's parliaments. They are not represented at all in nine countries, and under 5 percent in 16 among 189 countries.[3]

Although there has been a 6 percent increase in women's representation in national parliaments from 1995 to 2007, the world average of 17,15 percent is still very low compared to women's increasing population and their participation in social life.

Why is this a matter of concern for many, from a democratic point of view?

First and foremost, this underrepresentation is against one of the basic principles of democracy, presented above: Its representativeness and diverseness. Women constitute half of society, and thus should be represented in all their diversity within any democratic association. A male dominated democracy is an incomplete democracy; lack of women in legislative and executive bodies means a democratic deficit. Gender parity and partnership in politics are central to the functioning and strengthening of democracy. Indeed, only joint and equitable political action by women and men can guarantee that politics truly interprets and responds to the needs and aspirations of society as a whole. In this respect, women's representation in decisionmaking is also a question of justice and making use of the resources.

Last but not least, men and women bring to politics a different flair and different political priorities. Society as a whole stands to benefit when women are

[2] Beetham, (2006), p. 13

[3] Inter Parliamentary Union, www.ipu.org 30 May 2007.

involved in the political process in more equitable numbers.[4] The achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society in which they work in equality and complementarity, drawing mutual enrichment from their differences.

In the year 2000 the IPU conducted a survey of women parliamentarians across the world to elicit their views and experiences of their work in parliament. In its publication "Politics: Women's Insight" women provided their answers to the question of why women's participation in politics is important in their own terms:[6]

It's a matter of equality and justice. 'A democracy in which women are represented only marginally is not a real democracy….women's participation in policy making is a question of justice and equality. Anything less than equality for women in this area is a deficit of democracy.'

The presence of women changes the political process and culture. 'Women are all in all less adversarial and more consensus-driven, seeking solutions to problems rather than scoring political points. Women are humanizing the political world…their presence is transformative. Thanks to women the public is beginning to trust in politics again.'

Women change the male bias in policy priorities.'Women are much more sensitive to social problems, especially those related to poverty and raising children. Women are the first to become aware of economic, educational and health problems. Their priorities are more human-centered for both men and women.'[7]

Women have a conception of society and politics differing from that of men, thus not only from the perspective of a representative democracy, but also in terms of offering more effective responses to the needs of society, it is important that politics is not shaped, led, or dominated by men.

Women can clearly identify changes generated by the mere fact of their presence on the political scene or resulting from their individual and collective political action, all of which slowly builds a democracy based on gender equity. They can point to tangible achievements signifying an improvement for society as a whole and for women and the weakest segments of the population in particular.

The 1999 IPU survey report of "Women's Political Experience and their Contribution to the Democratic Process" states:

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[4] Marilyn Waring, Gaye Greenwood and Christine Pintat, "Politics: Women's Insight" (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2000), p. 2.

[5] Universal Declaration on Democracy, adopted by the Council of Interparliamentary Union, Cairo, 16 September 1997

[6] Beetham (2006), p.19

[7] Beetham (2006), p.20

"In fact, the collection of individual "testimonies" from women of all cultures and political backgrounds that served to prepare this survey confirms a degree of communality of experience and perception among women, irrespective of where they live. It shows women to be convinced that they bring to politics different perspectives and values than those of men and that they thus heighten and extend the process, making it more democratic. It also points to the existence of a strong underlying current in politics which, sooner or later, will lead to radical changes in how politics is conducted and possibly to a partial shift in its outcomes."[8]

A total of 187 women from 65 countries replied to the 1999 IPU survey of Women's Political Experience and their Contribution to the Democratic Process. An analysis of the survey comments highlighted a wide range of policy and legislative issues where women's specific contribution had altered the traditionally male approach. These are: social welfare, health, legal protection, human rights, work conditions and reduction of discrimination in the workplace, peace talks mediation and negotiation, incarceration conditions, gun control, modification of the criminal code, victim compensation legislation, legislation regarding drugs, mandatory reporting of sexual abuse, redressing gender imbalance and monitoring of sexual harassment in the defence forces, modification of rules governing the appointment of officers, domestic violence policy and legislation, provision of refuges and shelters for victims of domestic violence, development of family advocacy and support systems, heightened awareness of family law in general, protection and education programmes for the girl child, legislation on civil weddings.[9]

According to a public opinion survey, realized in 2006 in Turkey, by UNDP and KA-DER, Turkish public also believes that women's participation will qualify the current situation especially in realms of education, health and human rights. While 82 percent of the survey respondents stated that they want to see more women in politics, 77 percent of them believed that with more women in politics, there will be progress in education. Similarly, 74 percent thought this progress will also be in health services and 73 percent in human rights issues.[10]

Quota: An Effective Tool for Equal Representation

According to the 1999 IPU survey, there was agreement among those responding that for women's presence to make a noticeable difference in these respects depended on their number in parliament. In this they echoed the findings of a 1995 report by the UN Development Programme, which concluded that for women as a group to exert a meaningful influence in legislative bodies required a 30 percent level of representation.[11]

[8] Waring, Greenwood and Pintat (2000), p.5
[9] Waring, Greenwood and Pintat (2000), p.39
[10] Article.1 of the Ministerial Decree of 10 September 2005.
[11] Waring, Greenwood and Pintat (2000), p.67

This 30 percent representation constitutes the base for quota demands. Quotas for women entail that women must constitute a certain number or percentage of the members of a body, whether it is a candidate list, a parliamentary assembly, a committee, or a government. The quota system places the burden of recruitment on those who control the recruitment process. The core idea behind this system is to recruit women into political positions and to ensure that women are not isolated in political life. Previous notions of having reserved seats for only one or for very few women are no longer considered sufficient. Today, quota systems aim at ensuring that women constitute at least a "critical minority" of 20, 30 or 40 percent, or even to ensure true gender balance of 50-50 percent. In some countries quotas are applied as a temporary measure, that is to say, until the barriers for women's entry into politics are removed, but most countries with quotas have not limited their use of quotas in time.[12]

Given the slow speed by which the number of women in politics is growing, there are increased calls for more efficient methods reach a gender balance in political institutions. Quotas present one such mechanism. The introduction of quota systems for women represents a qualitative jump into a policy of exact goals and means. Because of its relative efficiency, the hope for a dramatic increase in women's representation by using this system is strong. The Gender quota is a universal support policy, which is used not only in Western countries but in more than 126 countries in the world.

There are different quota practices in the world. *Legal gender quotas* are mandated either by the constitution (like in France, Nepal, Argentina, Serbia and Uganda), or by the election law (as in many parts of Latin America, as well as, for example, in Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq, Armenia and Sudan). But quotas may also be decided for voluntarily by political parties themselves.

Today, according to the information provided by the Global Database of Quotas for Women, 15 countries in the world execute Constitutional Gender Quotas, 42 countries have gender quotas in their election laws, and in 69 countries various political parties implement gender quotas.

In France, first the Constitution was reformed in 1999 to state that "the law favors the equal access of women and men to electoral mandates and elective functions" and that political parties were responsible for facilitating equal access. This amendment is also called 'the parity reform'. Then in 2000 a new election law mandated that the parity reform (50-50 percent) would apply to all elections with a proportional ballot. It also applies to the overall balance among male and female candidates for each party in national legislative elections, which are determined by a two round majoritarian vote. Further more, the 2000 election law created a financial penalty for parties or political groupings that did not respect a balance between the number of women and men

[12] Drude Dahlerup, *About Quotas*, Global Database of Quotas for Women; available at www.quotaproject.org

among their candidates. The public funding that a party receives from the state will be reduced as soon as the deviation from parity reaches 2 percent among electoral candidates. Thus, a party that presents 49 percent women and 51 percent men will not be penalized, but with 55 percent men and 45 percent women it will be penalized. At the municipal level where proportional representation is used for elections, quotas are better implemented: Electoral authorities do not accept lists presented by the political parties that do not comply with the quota requirements."[13]

Rwanda, which today ranks as the first in the Inter Parlimentary Union ranking with 48,8 percent women representation in the Parliament, is another country executing legislative quotas. Article 9 (4) and article 82 of Rwandian constitution states respectively: "The State of Rwanda commits itself to ensuring that women are granted at least 30 percent of posts in decision making organs; the Senate shall be composed of 26 members of whom 30 percent are women."[14] Additionally, regarding their election laws and regulations, Rwanda's 80 members of the Chamber of Deputies are elected as follows: 53 members elected in closed List PR; 24 women with two from each province and from the city of Kigali (by an electoral college with a women only ballot); 2 members elected by the youth council; 1 disabled representative.[15]

Concerning election law quotas or regulations, the case of Belgium, with its 35.3 percent women's representation in the Parliament is a good example: "In 1994 Belgium passed a law specifying a gradual increase in the maximum of each sex on party lists. It was specified that the same sex may not constitute more than three-quarters among the parties' candidates in 1996, in 1999 no more than two thirds. If a party does not include at least one-third of the underrepresented sex on the lists, these places have to be left open. Another law passed in 2002 takes this principle further. It states that the lists must include an equal share of women and men. Furthermore, in the first election to which the law applies, the top three positions on the lists cannot be held by members of the same sex. In the subsequent election, the top two on the list should not be of the same sex."[16]

There are some countries, which do not mandate gender quotas through legislation, but still maintain high percentages (more than 30 percent) of women's representation in their national parliaments. Countries such as Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Australia, South Africa, Sweden and Mozambique are the eight countries among the 69, which have no legislative framework for affirmative measures, but in which various political parties have voluntary gender quotas.

[13] Global Database of Quotas for Women, (www.quotaproject.org), 2007
[14] IBID.
[15] IBID.
[16] IBID.

One of the countries for the successful implementation of political party quotas is Sweden. The Swedish Social Democratic Labor Party (SAP) has a 50 percent quota for women on party lists with a zipper system (alternating men and women) since 1993. The Left Party (VP) has a 50 percent minimum quota for women on party lists since 1987. The Green Party of Sweden has a 50 percent quota for women on party lists since 1987, and has internal quotas since 1981. In 1972 the Liberal Party introduced a policy of a minimum of 40 percent of either sex in internal boards and Committees. This recommendation was in 1984 extended to include alternated lists at general election (where one sex alternates the other on party ballots). In 1987 the Christian Democratic Party introduced a 40 percent gender neutral recommendation regarding electoral ballots. The Conservative Party and the Centre Party both decided on equal representation targets, in 1993 and 1996 respectively, but gave nomination committees the final word concerning the lists of candidates.[17]

Experience proves that if the leading party in a country uses a quota, such as the ANC in South Africa, this may have a significant impact on the overall rate of female representation.

In Turkey, the leading government party, Justice and Development Party (AKP), has no quota at all in its statute, and openly states that they have no intention to enforce the quota with legislation. The main opposition party, the Republican People's Party (CHP) has a 25 percent quota for all city, district coucils, as well as the highest Party Council, but no quota for electoral lists nor the Party board. Some relatively small political parties have voluntary party quotas for women. Small, left wing parties such as the Social Democratic People's Party (SHP), has a 33 percent quota for all party organs and electoral lists; The Freedom and Solidarity Party (ÖDP), has a 50 percent quota for all party organs and electoral lists and the pro-Kurdish left wing party, the Democratic Turkey Party (DTP), has a 50 percent quota in its statute and following the European Greens they have elected two chairpersons (a woman and a man). The center right, Motherland Party (ANAP) has a gender quota of 33 percent and True Path Party (DYP) 10 percent, which are not reflected in their electoral lists in actuality.

The example of countries which have the highest female participation rates or have shown the most progress over the past decade demonstrates that it is invariably the result of quota measures of one kind or another, which typically start after determined campaigning by women's organisations.

Countries with markedly low female participation rates have begun to make a significant difference by the adoption of such measures. For example, in 2004 the Republic of Korea introduced a combination of measures into its relevant laws. The Political Party Act now requires the assignment of 50 percent of the proportional representative seats to women, and the inclusion of women as one of every two candidates from the top of the candidate list. The Law on Political Funds provides state subsidies to parties nominating women to run in

[17] IBID.

30 percent or more electoral districts. As a consequence of these changes the percentage of women in the 17th National Assembly doubled from the previous assembly to 13 percent in 2004. Other countries have achieved a higher percentage where seats allocated to party lists form a larger proportion than in Korea.[18]

Concerning rules for nomination, the crucial issue is whether there are any rules concerning the *rank order* on the list of the political party. A requirement of say 40 percent on the candidate lists may not result in any women elected, if all women candidates are placed at the bottom of the list. The crucial question is, whether the nominated women are placed in a position with a real chance of election.[19] A clear example of how importance this ranking can be seen in the Macedonian case.

In the first post-transition general elections in Macedonia, in 1990, only five women (4 percent) were elected to the Parliament.In the first post-transition general elections in Macedonia, in 1990, only five women (4 percent) were elected to the Parliament. In the second democratic parliamentary elections, this percentage decreased to three percent. After a number of vigorous campaigns by the women's NGOs, a law was approved by the Parliament on 25 June 2002, requring from all political parties to have at least 30 percent women in their lists. As a result, only 18.3 percent women were elected to the Parliament in 2002 elections. Learning from experience, women NGOs started to demand a new revision of the law, which they successfully received. The amendment was as follows: 'Minimum of 30 percent of [the] underrepresented sex [is] to be on the first half of the list for the local elections and 30 percent of [the] underrepresented sex [is] to be on the second half of the list'. The result was fulfilling: 28.3 percent women have made it into the Parliament.[20]

Gender quotas may be introduced at any level of the political system be at federal, national, regional or local levels. Examples of strong quota regimes at the local level are the 50 percent quotas at the local level in France and the 20-33 percent gender quota for the local councils in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. In India, this gender quota system is combined with the older system of quotas for the scheduled castes.[21]

Such affirmative action measures can be justified on equality grounds by reference to article 4.1 of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women:

Adoption by States Parties of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered dis-

[18] Beetham (2006), p.23

[19] Dahlerup, *About Quotas,* Global Database of Quotas for Women, www.quotaproject.org

[20] Daniela Dimitrievska, *Quotas: The Case of Macedonia*, Global Database of Quotas for Women, http://www.quotaproject.org, 2004

[21] Dahlerup, About Quota", Global Database of Quotas for Women, www.quotaproject.org

crimination……these measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved.[22]

Two Concepts of Equality

In general, quotas for women represent a shift from one concept of equality to another. The classic liberal notion of equality was a notion of "equal opportunity" or "competitive equality". Removing the formal barriers, for example, giving women voting rights, was considered sufficient. The rest was up to the individual women, which is still the understanding of a major group in Turkey.

Following strong feminist pressure in the last few decades, as expressed for instance in the Beijing "Platform for Action" of 1995, a second concept of equality is gaining increasing relevance and support: the notion of "equality of result". The argument is that real equal opportunity does not exist just because formal barriers are removed. Direct discrimination and a complex pattern of hidden barriers prevent women from getting their share of political influence. Quotas and other forms of positive measures are thus a means towards equality of result. The argument is based on the experience that equality as a goal cannot be reached by formal equal treatment as a means. If barriers exist, it is argued, compensatory measures must be introduced as a means to reach equality of result. From this perspective, quotas are not discrimination (against men), but compensation for structural barriers that women meet in the electoral process.[23]

Obstacles for Women's Participation in Political Decision Making

Women in politics reported pressures they claimed to be similar to those that are experienced by many other women in paid work. They were conscious of having to try particularly hard to reconcile their personal roles as mothers, partners, daughters and professionals with political office.[24]

The main obstacles preventing faster progress on this issue, according to the women parliamentarians in the IPU 2000 survey are:

Negative self-selection. Many women not enthusiastic about taking part in politics because of its competitive and adversarial character, and the sacrifice it means for family life.
Male hostility. The hierarchies of political parties are typically male dominated, and can be quite hostile towards women.

Times of meetings. Most meetings are held in the evening and on weekends, and make it difficult for those with family responsibilities to take part.

The expense of standing for election, where expenses are partly borne by the candidate rather than wholly by the political parties.[25] In the light of the fact that according to UN statistics, only 10 percent of the world income is earned

by women (although they are doing 67 percent of all the work), and that they still do not receive equal pay for equal jobs, there is no doubt that this is an obvious obstacle for many women.

Thus, women, are not starting the race at the same point as men, they are a few feet back. That is why all international organizations and the women's movement are demanding affirmative action and measures; to balance the difference; to sustain equal chances. The quota measure is one of these.

The Situation in Turkey

Turkey, recognizing women's right to vote and be elected as early as 1934, was ahead of a number of European countries. In 1935, there were 18 women MPs in the Turkish Parliament and the percentage was 4.5. This percentage was symbolically important since, at that time, no other European country, except Finland, had a higher percentage. During the single party rule in Turkey, although not openly put, women benefited from the exercise of somewhat of a "quota". The percentage of women in the Parliament between 1935 and 1950 was maintained around 4.5.

With the transition to multiparty democracy, the "symbolic function" of women ended, and the percentage of women in the Turkish Parliament decreased to 0.62 percent in the 1950 elections. Between 1950 and 1977, the most "brilliant" result for women was 1.7 percent women in the National Aseembly in 1977.[26] The percentage rose to two percent between the years 1983-1995, and doubled after KA-DER (The Association for Support and Training of Women Candidates) was established, in the 1999 and 2002 elections.

Today, the percentage of women in Turkish Parliament is 4.36. Once (72 years ago) ranking second in the world with 4.5 percent women MPs, Turkey today is 167th among 189 countries.[27]The number of women in local governments is is an even more miserable picture. The percentage of women mayors is not even one percent, and in local municipal councils it is a little bit over one percent.

In terms of women's social participation we have witnessed considerable progress, during the last 20 years. According to a report titled "Women in Politics" prepared by the Social Democracy Association (SDA), women are increasingly involved in many professions:

- One third of all public servants are women
- 44 percent of teachers are women
- One fifth of professors, one third of associate professors, 45 percent

[25] Beetham (2006), p.22
[26] Şirin Tekeli, "Erkek Demokrasiden Gerçek Demokrasiye", (İstanbul, KA-DER 2005), p.9
[27] Inter Parliamentary Union Statistics, www.ipu.org

of all experts and research assistants and 60 percent of all instructors are women.
- 33.8 percent of all doctors are women
- One third of lawyers are women
- There is 27.2 percent women judges

Additionally,
- 31 percent of architects are women
- Women university graduates constitute 4.3 percent of Turkish popula tion and 70 percent of them are active in professional life.[28]

Some of these percentages exceed those in many Western countries. The problem is not with women's participation in social or professional realms but with their participation in decision making, crystalized in the Parliament.

Why?

Because in Turkey, the men dominated (patriarchial) society, seems to give the duty of representation to men, in an anthropological meaning.[29] Women are expected to comply and be content with the traditional gender roles within the family, from their childhood onwards. Even when they work, their sphere of dominance is limited only with the borders of their homes. Even in the home, they are auxiliary and men are the chiefs. This social expectation is undeniable and was even engrained in law until 2002 when the Civil Code was revised as a result of the demands of more than 125 women's organizations.

Of course, this mentality constitutes a detterent for women who want to become political candidates. Additionally, women's traditional gender roles of taking care of the children, the house, and their husbands, leave no time and energy for politics, especially when the miserable condition of the social services in Turkey are taken into consideration: the lack of childcare facilities, the shortness of the paid maternity leave and etc.

But a more important problem lies within the political parties. The mechanism is simple: the division of labor in society, based on gender, is extended to political parties. Men are elected; women make them elected. In other words, women members are expected to use their highly valuable skills (organisation, house visits, propaganda, funds development, etc), not for themselves but for men candidates. Still in most parties, women branches cannot elect their own boards and they do not have a budget allocated that they can use without the permission of the party administration. In some party buildings in Anatolian villages, there are no toilets for women. The design in set up for men.

Like the famous saying, "We do not need to discover America all over again"; the experience of most other countries and women provides us with the so-

[28] Şirin Tekeli,"Erkek Demokrasiden Gerçek Demokrasiye", (İstanbul, KA-DER 2005), p. 12
[29]Tekeli, (2005), p.8

lution: we need a gender quota. But what kind of quota would be the most suitable in the Turkish context? Various women lawyers, academicians and experts, after years of study, demand that we need legislative quotas instead of political party quotas.

In advanced democracies where there are long-standing political parties, gender quotas are usually (except Belgium and France where gender quotas are exercised through laws) in the form of political party quotas. However, in the vast majority of countries in Latin America, Africa, Asia, which lack advanced democracy and long-standing political parties, quotas have been enforced by laws. In Turkey's case, being closer to this second group of countries, political party quotas would not solve the problem. Thus, the women's movement demands the following:

> Quota enforcement through political party and election laws of a minimum of 30 percent within all political party decision making bodies. 30 percent of the delegates should be women; the boards should include at least 30 percent women. The candidate lists should be prepared according to what is called the "zipper system". According to this system, one of the first two candidates should be a woman and after that, one of the every three names should be a woman. The political parties which do not fulfill the 30 percent gender representation in their electoral lists should not be eligible to stand for elections.

Additional to the quota legislation, KA-DER, voicing the demands of the women's movement, also requests that, political parties should not receive any application fees from female candidates; 30 percent of the state aid paid to political parties should be spared for the women's branches; and the boards of the women's branches should be elected by themselves, not appointed by the party general boards.

Looking back at the history of women's representation in Turkey, it is quite obvious that if quotas are not implemented, it would take approximately five hundred years to reach parity, when we take into account the 3,71 percent increase within 42 years. Maybe the political parties have the patience to wait this long; but it is obvious that women do not! Like Hülya Gülbahar, chairwoman of KA-DER has correctly put it, "until we reach parity, the men sitting in the 225 seats (half of the Parliament) are occupiers.[30]

[30] Hülya Gülbahar, speech given on 24 May 2007, İstanbul.