

## **STRUCTURE OF THE TURKEY'S PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM AND NEW GOVERNMENT MODEL**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the change of the government system that has been discussed for many years in Turkey and the proposals of transition to the presidential system.

A Referendum held in 2017 has confirmed the Republic of Turkey's transition to a new system of government. With the presidential election held on 24 June, 2018, the transition to the new system has been made. A system called as "System of the Republic of Turkey". In this structure, President of Turkey is the head of government and the head of state who holds executive powers to issue executive decrees, appoint judges and heads of state institutions. Turkey's political system is based on a separation of powers. Executive power is exercised by the Council of Ministers. Legislative power is vested in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. In addition, the Presidency has a executive assistant, presidency of administrative affairs, 4 office 9 committees. The number of ministries has been reduced from 25 to 16.

The presidential government system puts an end to the use of executive authority by a collective body (parliament) and allows the exercise of executive power by a person who is elected directly by the people to serve for five consecutive years.

The paper addresses crucial questions of how the relationship between the executive and the legislature will play out in the implementation of this new system, including how the legislative branch will take up the role created for it in this new period. In considering how democracy and the rule of law can be ensured under the new system.

*Keywords:* Turkey, Presidential System, Structure of Presidential System, Parliamentary system

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### **1. Introduction**

The transition from the parliamentary system to the presidential system, aimed at eliminataing the double-headedness of the executive branch, and to ensure stability in government and a rapid and effective executive performance. The presidential government system puts an end to the use of executive authority by a collective body (parliament) and allows the exercise of executive power by a person who is elected directly by the people to serve for five consecutive years.

In the new system, for five years the president will directly or indirectly, determine and execute all public policies that are of concern to society, from security to foreign policy, education and health, and will follow their implementations.

The adoption of the presidential system has created the need to abandon the dual executive structure, to abolish the prime ministry institution, and to redefine structures, duties and functions of ministries and the Council of Ministers; in ther words, to restructure the government system. The reason is that the strong and healthy organization of the executive body in a presidential government system constitutes one of the essentials of rapid and effective execution.

## **2. Decree of Turkey's Presidential System**

The first step to the Turkish Presidential System is taken by Statutory Decree No. 698 of 74 article, which was published in the Official Gazette on July 4, 2018. The statutory decree moves to abolish the post of Prime Minister, known to be the "executive branch's second powerful seat", and transfer powers of the Council of Ministers to the President by amending the legislation. This was followed by a second statutory decree (No. 699) amending certain provisions of the Presidential Election Law (Sahin and Gediz, 2019)..

As the Turkish Government continues to adapt to the new administrative system, the first three Presidential Decrees were published in the Official Gazette on July 10, 2018. The first Presidential Decree sets forth the principles and organization of the Presidential post. The other two are of a particular significance since they move to change the structure of regulatory institutions and organizations. Terms of duty for members and presidents of these organizations have changed. Most importantly, these members and presidents, who were formerly recommended by different posts such as ministries, will now be appointed directly by the President (Sahin and Gediz, 2019). With the abovementioned decrees, comes a series of structural changes as it moves to dramatically decrease the number of ministries which was 37, a number considered excessive by Mr. Erdoğan himself. The number of Ministries was earlier reduced to 26 and is now reduced to 16 (Serkan, 2019).

## **3. Offices in Turkey's Presidential System**

Offices are the most critical bodies of presidential organizations, in the countries governed by a presidential system. In many states with presidential system offices usually collect data and information to formulate public policies in their policy areas, generate information, develop appropriate policy alternatives accordingly, prepare policy and decision drafts and report them to the president. In some countries, offices are assigned with the tasks of coordinating and assessing. Therefore, offices are among the most important bodies that play a crucial role in the development of the president's capacity for public policy-making and implementation. Following the June 24 elections, offices that will be directly linked to the president according to the new presidential government model of Turkey – as in other countries run by a presidential system – are:

- The Office of Finance;
- The Office of Human Resources;
- The Office of Digital Transformation;
- The Office of Investment.

President Erdoğan considers these offices as his closest staff under the new government model, terming them as “backyard” with reference to the development of policies and projects. It is pointed out that these units will work on projects in accordance with the president's priorities and without tackling bureaucracy. The offices will work individually with the president and have an executive nature. (Sahin and Gediz, 2019).

## **4. Councils in Turkey's Presidential System**

Councils are another category of the bodies that are formed to improve the president's capacity for public policy-making in countries with presidential systems. They are primary units that function as consultative and advisory structures. We see councils under different names or in different formats in presidential system countries (Mehmet, Nebi and Özer, 2018).

Advisory boards (councils) function to give advice and provide independent information about the policy areas they have expertise in. These types of boards are planned for different sectors or different policy matters. They ensure participation of stakeholders in the process of public

policy-making, and also allow cooperation and coordination among institutions and sectors for the solution of multidimensional problems. In the newly designed government, the councils are as follows:

- Science, Technology and Innovation Policies Board;
- Education and Teaching Policies Board;
- Economy Policies Board;
- Security and Foreign Policies Board;
- Judicial Policies Board;
- Culture and Art Policies Board;
- Health and Food Policies Board;
- Social Policies Board;
- Local Administration Policies Board.

These councils are expected to develop policy suggestions, send their feedback to ministries, prepare reports about the progress and performance in various areas, and increase the participation of stakeholders in the policy-making process (NGOs, sector representatives and academics) They are expected to put their shared wisdom into operation. Furthermore, through these entities in the new management model, it is desired to reduce the number - reaching 60 - of such entities in the existing administrative structure which look in disarray and to reorganize them within the new framework.

## **5. Departments in Turkey's Presidential System**

In the new government model, certain structures called "Presidencies/Heads/Departments" will work under the president, such as:

- The Department of General (Chiefs of) Staff;
- The Department of National Intelligence;
- The Department of Defense Industries (in the now defunct government structure, it was an undersecretariat, but in the new system it has been promoted to a department);
- The Department of National Security;
- The Department of Religious Affairs;
- The Department of State Supervision;
- The Department of Communication; and the Department of Strategy and Budget.

Some of them, such as the Undersecretariat of Defense Industries and the State Supervisory Council, were already under the Presidency of the Republic in the parliamentary system. The General Staff, the National Intelligence Organization and the Religious Affairs were under the prime ministry and were accountable to it. Since the prime ministry is abolished in the new government model, these institutions will be placed under the president's office in the organization chart. The Department of Communication will coordinate all matters regarding the press, and the publication and communication of and by the state and the president. With the formation of departments in the new government model, some institutions which were under the presidency or the prime ministry in the old system will now be directly responsible to the president and set in a new framework (Mehmet, Nebi and Özer, 2018).

## **6. Ministries in Turkey's Presidential System**

Some changes in ministries, as well, are proposed in the new presidential government model. The first move in this direction is to reduce the number of ministries. In addition, the roles and the functions of ministries in the presidential government system have inevitably changed. The main reason for this is that in the new system, the president and his close team will be the primary policy-makers, while ministries will be considered as the lower level in policy-making and they will concentrate their strategies on implementation and supervision of policies. (Mehmet, Özer and Nebi, 2018).

In fact, the coalition government in the 1990s gradually created a number of ministries during coalition formation processes. The AK Party governments taking the issue in hand, throughout the years, reduced the number of ministries from 37 to 26. In the new government model, the number of ministries will be reduced, their functions will be increased, and some ministries will be merged to improve productivity and efficiency. Thus, the number of ministries in the new government model will be reduced to 16 (Serkan, 2019) such as: the Ministry of Justice; the Ministry of Internal Affairs; the Ministry of National Defense; the Ministry of National Education; the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources; the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization; the Ministry of Culture and Tourism; the Ministry of Youth and Sports; the Ministry of Treasury and Finance; the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure; the Ministry of Foreign Relations; the Ministry of Labor, Social Services and Family; the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry; and the Ministry of Industry and Technology (Nebi and Burhanetin 2018).

In this regard, the most radical changes at the ministerial level have been made in the area of economy (Nebi and Burhanetin 2018). This move intends to simplify the economy administration and aggregate it under one roof, in order to overcome the problems of coordination. In the area of economy under the new model there will be the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Treasury and Finance, and the Ministry of Industry and Technology. In this context, the upgrade of the secretariat of Treasury in the existing government structure to the ministry status and the merger of this ministry with the Ministry of Finance, and the merger of the Ministry of Development with the Ministry of Industry and Technology are envisaged in the new model. At the same time, the economy administration will be supported by the Offices of Finance and Investment under the President.

## **7. Conclusion**

The primary goal of the new government is the change of the system into a new model followed by the increase in the capabilities of the presidential organization in public policy formation, implementation, and assessment, where the president becomes the central executive figure in politics and in the administration. For this reason, it is envisaged to establish offices and councils in direct connection with the president. This move is similar to the practices of the countries governed by the presidential system.

However, the system of the Republic of Turkey is created in determining the formation of offices and councils, the structure and problems of the Turkish public administration system, and the new trends in the field of public administration (cooperation, consultation and negotiation processes, etc.).

The major changes in ministerial level have been made in the area of economy and administration. It can be claimed that the new model has a single target regarding the reconstruction of the economic arena. The new governing model is subject to a variety of institutional and functional changes both in terms of the structure and in terms of central administration which is linked directly with the president and the personnel system.

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