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**The Turkish Right to Information Act comes into force.**

**Press Release by BilgilenmeHakki.Org (<http://www.bilgilenmehakki.org>)**

From Monday, the 26th of April, 2004 Turkish citizens will be able to test the Right to Information Act. However, the implementation process has not been completed, and in some instances not even started. The following issues should be noted:

- Article 30 of the Right to Information Act required a regulatory document to be prepared by the Ministry of Justice concerning the essentials for the application of this law and put into force by the Council of Ministers. However, this important document has not been finalised yet and remains in draft format as of today.
- Although the law came into force, it is not clear how long the implementation process will take place. There is no indication on when the public institutions will establish the required Right to Information offices within their institutions and when the officers working in such offices will be trained.
- The Board of Review of the Access to Information which will review the administrative decisions rendered under the Act and which will make decisions on the exercise of the right to information regarding public authorities has not yet been established. There is no information whatsoever as to when this Review Body which will handle the appeals will be formally constituted.
- The draft State Secrecy and Trade Secrets Bills have not been discussed in Parliament yet. Therefore, the limitations and the exemptions of the Right to Information Act have not been clarified yet.



Dr. Yaman Akdeniz stated that:

“It remains to be seen when the Turkish citizens will be able to use this important law effectively. The enactment of a right to information law is a significant step towards openness, transparency, and democratisation in Turkey. However, if the implementation is slow, the Act may never be fully functional. The government should avoid the three year delay witnessed in setting up the Turkish

Competition Authority following the enactment of the Competition Law.”

BilgilenmeHakki.Org will be asking a number of Ministries about how and when they will be complying with the requirements of the Right to Information Act with a formal request under the Right to Information Act later this week.

For further information please contact Dr. Yaman Akdeniz at [lawya@cyber-rights.org](mailto:lawya@cyber-rights.org)

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