WHAT WE FACE IS A CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS AND CAN ONLY BE OVERCOME BY DEMOCRATIZATION!

PRESS RELEASE
8 January 2013

The crisis that has preoccupied every one of us for some time is a consequence of the fact that an effective mechanism of checks and balances has not been established in Turkey. It is essential that all legislation, including the Constitution, practices and state structures should rest on a strong mechanism of checks and balances.

Transparent and participatory government, an effective fight against corruption, an independent and impartial judiciary, and breaking up all types of pressure and tutelage on politics can be achieved directly with a strong system of checks and balances.

Incorporating more than 100 non-governmental organizations from different segments of society, the Checks and Balances Network has continued its work for a strong system of checks and balances for two years now, drawing attention to this need at every opportunity and stressing the urgency of taking concrete steps through consensus. When the boundaries of the distribution of duties and authorities among the powers are transgressed, it is inevitable that this will not just remain a political crisis but will also bring with it a social polarization.

To avoid this situation, radical and wide-ranging steps must be taken in democratization. The proposals from civil society, which raises public demands in an organized fashion and which is the driving force of democratization in our country, must be considered. We believe that all political parties and the legislative, executive and judicial powers must take account of Turkey’s public needs and behave in responsibility. Before party or group interests, it is our public interests that must be protected and it is the rights and freedoms of every one of us that must be developed.

Negotiatory and pluralistic democracy requires that civil society should be able to participate in political decision-making processes and, together with the media, to assume a supervisory function. If no arrangements to facilitate this are made, the emergence of illegal structures within the State cannot be prevented.

Being civil and democratic requires acting with common sense and adopting attitudes and approaches that can prevent the constitutional and political crisis from turning into a greater economic and social crisis. We want to share with the public our belief that there is no way out of this crisis other than operating democratic processes, ensuring separation of powers and respecting the independence and impartiality of the judiciary. Attitudes and initiatives to the contrary cause irreparable damage and deeply shake confidence not only in politics but also in the judiciary, the media and civil society.

As members of the Checks and Balances Network, we stress once more that we feel it necessary to recall our concern for democracy and our resulting worries and expectations and we insist that we have no way out other than creating an effective system of checks and balances.

As the Checks and Balances Network, we call on all political parties and civil actors:
- A new Constitution process must be started immediately.
- A strong system of checks and balances must be taken as a basis.
- The new Constitution process to be started must be operated in a transparent and participatory manner, taking international standards as a basis.
- Fundamental rights and freedoms must be guaranteed in the Constitution.

Further raising our voices for steps to be taken in this direction and being on the side of democracy alone, we state to the public that we shall make our utmost efforts for these days our country is passing through to turn into a public opportunity in the name of pluralism.