



## THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE CENTRAL ORGANIZATION OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

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### Abstract:

The aim of this study is to examine the process involving the central organizational structure of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), which is responsible for education and training in the Republic of Turkey. In this study, the literature review method was used, and the Law No. 3797, Law No. 652, Law No. 6764, and the Presidential Decree No. 1 on Presidential Organization regulating the organizational structure of the MoNE were comparatively examined. Law No. 3797, the Decree Law No. 652, and Law No. 6764 regulate only the organization and duties of the MoNE. With the Presidential and Parliamentary General Elections held on June 24, 2018, a new system of government was adopted in Turkey both legally and de facto which is named as the Presidential System of Government. With the Presidential Decree No. 1 on Presidential Organization (2018), the Republic of Turkey has adopted a new organizational model. With the Presidential Decree No. 1 issued in the Official Gazette No. 30474 dated July 10, 2018, the organizational structure of the MoNE has been changed again. In this context, these laws are discussed in this paper.

**Keywords:** organization of MoNE, central administration, restructure, new government system

### 1. Introduction

Education and training activities remained outside the scope of the state duties until the middle of the nineteenth century in the Ottoman Empire. Education and training were considered to be a charity work and a religious duty, and they were provided only

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through the foundations established by some benefactors. Among the traditional educational institutions, military training and training of managers were carried out by the state. In the 18th century, the Ottoman Empire entered into a period of renewal in education within the framework of the efforts to keep up with the developing industrial developments in Europe. Thus, education and training activities became a state duty, i.e. a state policy (Akkutay, 1984).

The idea of conducting education and training activities by the state was first brought to the agenda during the period of Mahmut II. The education and training activities carried out by the foundations until that period were started to be conducted by the Maarif-i Umumiye Nezareti (the Ministry of Education) on 17 March 1857. Thus, a nazır (minister) in charge of education and training activities was a part of the Meclis-i Vukela (Assembly of Deputies) (A brief history of the Ministry of National Education, 2015). The first legal regulation on the Turkish education system was the Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi (General Education Regulation) issued in 1869. With this regulation, issues such as the right to education, education management, development of an education system, education appropriations, teacher training and employment, provincial organization, and examination systems were focused on. In 1911, with the Maarif-i Umumiye ve Teşkilatı Nizamnamesi (Educational Organization Regulation), a holistic structure was created in the education system (A brief history of the Ministry of National Education, 2015).

With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Republic of Turkey was founded under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk on 29 October 1923. Before the proclamation of the Republic and after the opening of Turkish Grand National Assembly in April 23, 1920, a Council of Ministers (the Cabinet) consisting of eleven ministries was established on 2 May 1920 by Law No. 3. Ministry of Education was one of these ministries. As can be seen, restructuring education and training was of great significance for the newly established Republic. It should not be forgotten that a significant number of the cadres who established the Republic were valuable statesmen who were trained in Ottoman bureaucracy. The Ministry of Education in the Republic of Turkey was established on 2 March 1926 with the Law No. 789 on the Educational Organization. With this law, the education system was regulated; education was built on secular and scientific philosophy; and primary, secondary and higher education was organized according to certain principles. Furthermore, permission from the state was required to open schools, and the courses to be taught in schools and the way they will be taught were determined. The first legislative arrangements for the organization of the Ministry are the Law No. 2287 dated 10 June 1933 on the Board of Education Central Organization and its Duties, and the Decree No. 179 dated 14 December 1983 on the Organization and Duties of the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sport.

Since the proclamation of the Republic, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) has been managing and directing education on behalf of the state as an official institution. Throughout the country, the MoNE is the decision making body for all the implementations from the provincial and district national education directorates to the

schools in villages. The duties and responsibilities of the Ministry are defined by the laws (Cankar & Taş, 2017). After the establishment of the Republic, significant structural and administrative changes have been made in the MoNE. The latest regulations that entered into force are the Law No. 3797 on the Organization and the Duties of the Ministry of National Education, the Decree Law No. 652, the Decree Law No 6764 on the Organization and Duties of the Ministry of National Education, and the Law on Amending Certain Laws and Decree Laws.

With the referendum held on 16 April 2017 in Turkey, first a constitutional amendment was introduced, and then, the Presidential and Parliamentary General Elections were held on June 24, 2018. As a result of these elections, the new system of government named the Presidential Government System was introduced in Turkey both legally and de facto. In this context, based on the Presidential Organization Decree No. 1 on the Presidential Government System issued on 10 June 2018, the structure of the Ministry of National Education and the affiliated institutions and organizations of the Ministry has been significantly changed, and the Ministry of National Education has been reshaped. The MoNE has a central, provincial and overseas organization structure. The changes in the organizational structure of the MoNE, which have some reflections on the recent period, are examined within the scope of laws.

## **2. Law No. 3797 on the organization and duties of the Ministry of National Education**

Law No. 3797 on the Organization and Duties of the Ministry of National Education published in the Official Gazette dated 12.05.1992 and numbered 21226 was enforced to determine the organization and duties of the MoNE. The law includes the aim and the duties of the MoNE; the central, provincial and overseas organizational structure of the MoNE; the Office of the Ministry; the Board of Education; the main and associate service units of the Ministry; the information and monitoring units; the standing boards; the responsibilities and authorities; and the regulations on appointment, relocation, and cadres.

The organization of the Ministry of National Education, which was regulated by the Law No. 3797, had problems in reaching the aims of the organization due to its extreme centralist structure. The MoNE 2010-2014 Strategic Plan (2009) pointed to the malfunctionality of the structure and the necessity of restructuring. The MoNE (2009) attributes these problems to the inability to establish an organizational structure that will enable the ministry to carry out its basic functions effectively and efficiently. Among the targets under the title of “Developing the Education System” in the Ninth Development Plan for 2007-2013 is the statement that “*A structure based on service will be adopted in the central organization of the Ministry of National Education; the institutional capacity will be strengthened; and authority and responsibility can be transferred to the provincial organizations and educational institutions*” (p.87).

The central organization of the Ministry of National Education was composed of 36 separate units and also other boards. The MoNE (2009) stated that these units had

similar duties, and thus, it emphasized that restructuring of the Ministry was a necessity. In the 61st Government Program (2011) designed by the Justice and Development Party (AKP), which has come to power for the third time, there are statements indicating that reforms will continue in the MoNE.

Bursalioglu (2012) maintains that the duties of the main and auxiliary units were the same or overlapped resulting from the excessive fragmented structure of the Ministry, which led to the proliferation of the same units performing the same duties. Similarly, the restructuring of the MoNE was expressed in the National Education Councils (1962, 1974, 1988, 1996, 2010). Below is the decision taken during the 9th National Education Council held in 1974:

*“The central and provincial organization of the Ministry was arranged in parallel with the vertical institutions in our secondary education system. Since the new system brings horizontal institutions instead of vertical organizations, the central and provincial organization of the Ministry should be rearranged to respond to the integrity of the new system and to start the implementation of the system. For this purpose, the preparations for the draft law will be completed in 1974-1975.”* (National Education Council, 1974, Decision-130)

In addition, within the context of the restructuring of the Ministry of National Education, the Project for Strengthening the Capacity of the Ministry of National Education was carried out between 2008-2010. The aim of the project was to improve the enforcement system of the MoNE and to strengthen its mechanisms for the efficiency of the sector's corporate governance. Approximately 1.5 years after the completion of this project, the Decree Law No. 652 on the Organization and Duties of the Ministry of Education was enacted (Öztürk & Balci, 2014).

### **3. Decree law No. 652 on the organization and duties of the Ministry of National Education**

The organizational structure of the MoNE was changed with the Decree Law No. 652 on the Organization and Duties of the Ministry of National Education, published in the Official Gazette No. 28054 of 14 September 2011. The purpose of Decree Law No. 652 was to regulate the establishment, duties, powers, and responsibilities of the Ministry of National Education in order to carry out the national education services in accordance with the Constitution, Law No. 430 on the Unification of Education (Tevhid-i Tedrisat), the National Education Law No. 1739, and development plans and programs. In Decree Law No. 652 Section I, the following duties were assigned to the MoNE.

Designing, implementing, and updating education and training programs that prepare pre-school, primary and secondary school students for the future by equipping them with the knowledge and skills which develop them in terms of physical, mental, moral, spiritual, social and cultural qualities and which are required by the social

structure based on human rights and the economic system with the power to compete on a global scale; and carrying out and monitoring education and training of teachers and students within this framework (Article 2a).

Designing and improving the education system in the light of the current techniques and models in line with the requirements of economic and social developments that are innovative and dynamic (Article 2c).

Following these changes, the central organization of the Ministry, which consisted of 34 units, was reduced to 19 service units. For example, in the Law No. 3797, the Main Service Units and Auxiliary Service Units were merged under Decree Law No. 652 and called Service Units. With the Decree Law No. 652, within the central organization of the Ministry, some units with the same duties were merged; some were removed; some were renamed; and the duties of some of these units were redefined. Therefore, it can be said that the Ministry had a simpler organizational structure. It can be concluded that the central organization of the Ministry of National Education transformed from a vertical structure to a horizontal structure with Decree Law No. 652 (Tabak & Güçlü, 2017).

Alpaydın (2018) argues that with a horizontal structure, coordination can be achieved more effectively, and thus, decision making and communication may be faster compared to the previous organizational structure. In addition, the author criticizes the Decree Law by stating that conflicts among service units were possible; some units had more workload; and there was no mechanism to ensure coordination when the units had overlapping and intersecting issues in the preparation of legislation in the new regulation.

Law No. 652 and Law No. 3797 regulated the organization and duties of the MoNE. Basically, both laws included regulations on the aim and duties of the MoNE, the central, provincial and overseas organization of the Ministry, the service units, the Board of Education, the National Education Council, working groups/boards, responsibilities and authorities, appointments, and staffing. However, there are some differences between Decree Law No. 652 and Law No. 3797. With the regulations that were included in the Law No. 3797, but not in the Decree Law No. 652, or with the totally opposite regulations, a new organizational structure was aimed in the Ministry. The establishment of the assistant specialist position, the establishment of a single general directorate by merging some general directorates, the change in the procedure of being assigned as the member of the Board of Education and in the term of office of the members of the Presidency, and taking the performance and competencies of the administrators and provincial education inspectors working in the provincial organization as basis in compulsory displacement were not included in Law No. 652, but they were among the main issues in Decree Law No. 652.

#### **4. Decree law No. 6764 on the organization and duties of the Ministry of National Education**

With the Law No. 6764 on “The Amendment to the Decree Law on the Organization and Duties of the Ministry of National Education and the Amendment to Certain Laws and Decree Laws” issued in the Official Gazette No. 29913 dated December 9, 2016, the organizational structure of the MoNE was changed again after five years. With this law, no structural change was made except for increasing the number of undersecretaries in the MoNE central organization. The following amendments were made to the Ministry of National Education with this law:

- With the Decree Law No. 652, the number of deputy undersecretaries was increased to seven from five.
- The Directorate of Guidance and Supervision was restructured under the name of the Board of Inspection, and the Legal Office was restructured with the name the General Directorate of Legal Services.
- The Presidency of the Board of Inspectors was structured as a central audit unit. The term “Education Inspector” (Maarif Müfettişi) was changed into “Ministry Education Inspector” (Bakanlık Maarif Müfettişi), and the term “Assistant Education Inspector” (Maarif Müfettiş Yardımcısı) was changed into “Ministry Assistant Education Inspector” (Bakanlık Maarif Müfettiş Yardımcısı). With this regulation, the organization and working style of the Board of Inspectors were changed.

With this law, structural arrangements were made within the education system. Some of these were strengthening the basis of apprenticeship training and encouraging vocational high school and university students to do internships. In addition, some arrangements were made for higher education disciplinary procedures and to solve the problems of those who were sent abroad under Law No. 1416.

#### **5. The presidential decree No. 1 on the organization of the presidency regarding the organization and duties of the Ministry of National Education**

The president of the MoNE must be a minister in the Republic of Turkey. The minister takes office when the political party he or she is the member of takes on responsibility of forming the government and with the appointment of the Prime Minister and the approval of the President. Ministers are the top executives with the political liability to carry out their activities on behalf of the Prime Minister as the state leader or on behalf of the government. This regulation is included in the Law No. 3797, Law No. 652, and Law No. 6764.

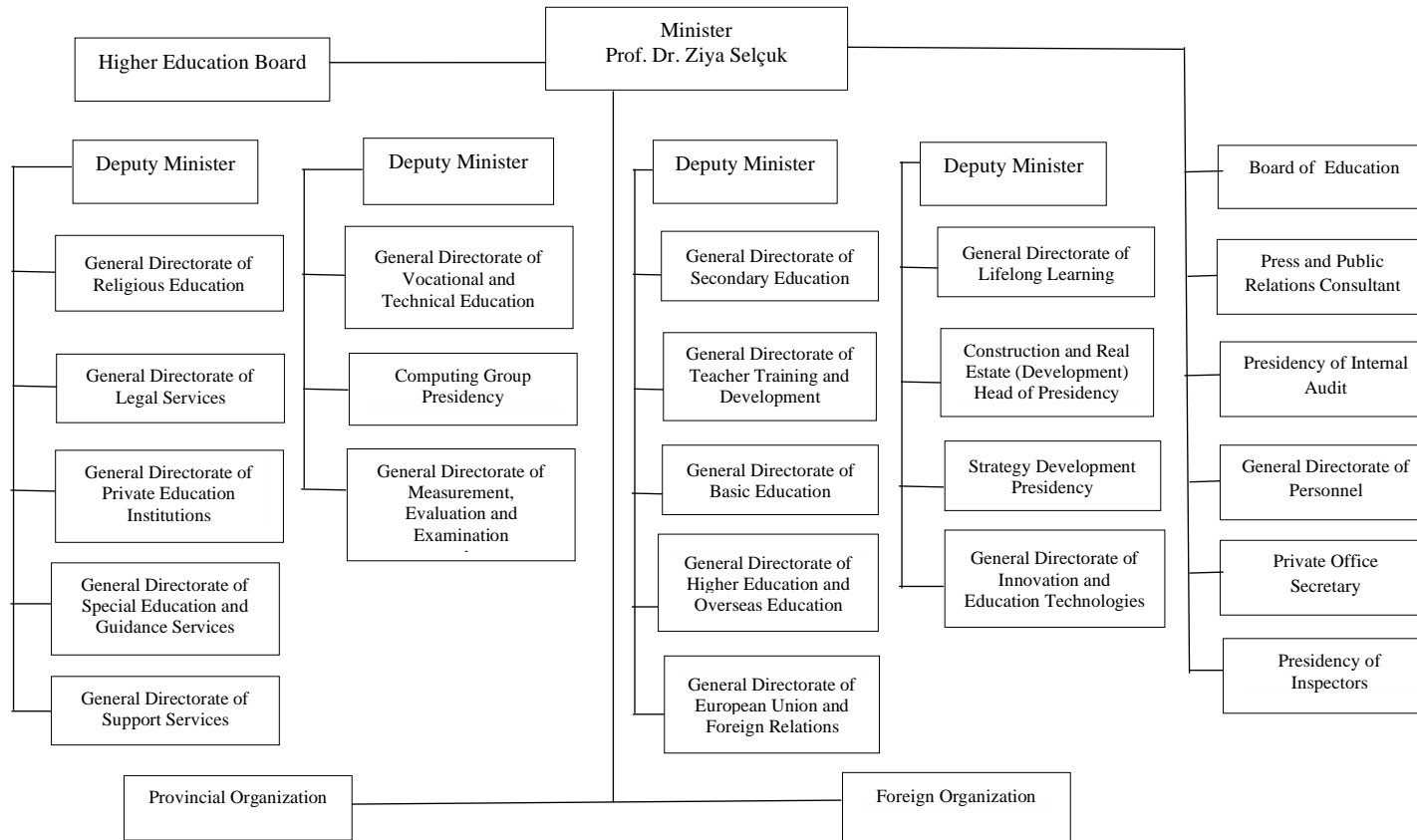
However, after the constitutional amendment made with the referendum held on April 16, 2017 and as a result of the Presidential and Parliamentary General Elections held on 24 June 2018, a new system of government named Presidential Government System was introduced in Turkey both legally and de facto (Turan, 2018). Prior to the

constitutional amendment introduced on 16 April 2017, the President was the head of the executive in the classical parliamentary system, but political responsibility was assumed by the government which was led by a prime minister. In the new government system, the government which is the executive power and the prime minister as the leader of this power are abolished and the powers are conferred to the President. The President is characterized as the head of the state, and the duties and powers of the President are reconstructed (Turan, 2018).

With the Presidential Decree No. 1 on the Organization of the Presidency (2018), the Republic of Turkey has adopted a new organizational model. With the new system, the President has the authority to appoint his assistants and ministers and remove them from office. Therefore, the President has the authority to appoint a person other than the MPs as the minister. In this context, in the new government system, Prof. Dr. Ziya Selcuk was appointed as the first Minister of National Education.

With the Presidential Decree No. 1 issued in the Official Gazette No. 30474 dated July 10, 2018, the organizational structure of the MoNE was reorganized. Thus, it can be said that the organizational structure of the MoNE was changed four times between 1992 and 2018. The organizational chart of the MoNE in the new government system is shown in Figure 1.

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**Figure 1:** The reorganized MoNE central organization structure based on the Presidential Decree No. 1 on Presidential Organization



The main change in the MoNE is the removal of undersecretariat, deputy undersecretary and the Vice Directorate of National Education cadres. In the new structure, there are four deputy ministers. Within the new structure of the MoNE, the Higher Education Council, the Board of Education, the Press and Public Relations Department, the Internal Audit Presidency, the General Directorate of Personnel, the Office of the Private Secretary, and the Presidency of Inspectors are directly affiliated to the Minister, while the other service units are affiliated to the deputy ministers. In the previous system, the minister was politically in a prominent position, and the undersecretary was more effective in the management and performance of the organization. In the new system, it is intended to emphasize the technocrat side of the minister and to ensure that the minister is more effective in the management of the system via the deputy ministers (Alpaydın, 2018).

The changes made in the central organizational structure of the MoNE are comparatively shown in Table 1. As seen in Table 1, as far as the central organization of the Ministry is concerned, some units were restructured, some units were renamed, some were closed, and some were merged and restructured between 1992 and 2018. For example, in 1992, the number of Deputy Undersecretaries was seven. This number was decreased to 5 in 2011, and it was increased to 7 again in 2016.

According to Table 1, Information Technologies Directorate was established with the Decree Law No. 652 within the MoNE central organization. Moreover, the General Directorate of Measurement, Evaluation and Examination Services and the General Directorate of Higher Education and Overseas Education were established for the first time with the Law No. 6764. It is understood that structural and administrative arrangements were made in other units with other legal regulations.

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**Table 1:** Comparison of The Changes In The Republic of Turkey, Ministry of National Education Central Organizational Structure

	<b>Law No. 3797 (1992)</b>	<b>Decree Law No. 652 (2011)</b>	<b>Decree Law No. 6764 (2016)</b>	<b>Presidential Decree Law No. 1 (2018)</b>
<b>Changed</b>	Department of Inspection Board	Department of Guidance and Inspection	Department of Inspection Board	Department of Inspection Board
	General Directorate of Special Education, Guidance and Counselling Services	General Directorate of Special Education and Guidance Services	General Directorate of Special Education and Guidance Services	General Directorate of Special Education and Guidance Services
	General Directorate of Apprenticeship and Nonformal Education	General Directorate of Lifelong Learning	General Directorate of Lifelong Learning	General Directorate of Lifelong Learning
	Department of Investments and Facilities	Directorate of Construction and Real Estate	Directorate of Construction and Real Estate	Directorate of Construction and Real Estate
	General Directorate of Personnel	General Directorate of Human Resources	General Directorate of Human Resources	General Directorate of Personnel
	General Directorate of Teacher Training and Education	General Directorate of Teacher Training and Development	General Directorate of Teacher Training and Development	General Directorate of Teacher Training and Development
	Office of Legal Affairs	Office of Legal Affairs	General Directorate of Legal Services	General Directorate of Legal Services
	7 Deputy Undersecretaries	5 Deputy Undersecretaries	7 Deputy Undersecretaries	-
	-	-	1 Deputy Minister	4 Deputy Ministers
	29 Directorates	16 Directorates	17 Directorates	17 Directorates
34 Service Units	19 Service Units	21 Service Units	22 Service Units	
<b>Merged and Restructured</b>	General Directorate of Preschool Education / General Directorate of Primary Education	General Directorate of Basic Education	General Directorate of Basic Education	General Directorate of Basic Education
	General Directorate of Overseas Education and Training / General Directorate of Foreign Relations	General Directorate of European Union and Foreign Relations	General Directorate of European Union and Foreign Relations	General Directorate of European Union and Foreign Relations
	General Directorate of Technical Education for Boys / General Directorate of Technical Education	General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education	General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education	General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education

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	for Girls / General Directorate of Commerce and Tourism Education			
	General Directorate of Educational Technologies / Department of Educational Research and Development	General Directorate of Innovation and Educational Technologies	General Directorate of Innovation and Educational Technologies	General Directorate of Innovation and Educational Technologies
	Department of Publications / Department of Administrative and Financial Affairs / Department of Works / Department of Educational Materials and Equipment / Department of Intramural Physical Education and Scouting / Department of Teacher Services and Social Affairs	General Directorate of Support Services	General Directorate of Support Services	General Directorate of Support Services
Established	-	Department of Information Technologies	General Directorate of Measurement, Evaluation and Examination Services / General Directorate of Higher Education and Overseas Education	General Directorate of Measurement, Evaluation and Examination Services / General Directorate of Higher Education and Overseas Education
Removed	-	Board of Directors, Board of Apprenticeship and Technical Education, Student Discipline Boards, Specialization Commissions, 11 Departments in Auxiliary Units, and Secretariat of Defence	-	-

**Source:** Compiled by the researcher in accordance with the data obtained from the Law No. 3797, Decree Law No. 652 and No. 6764, and the Presidential Decree Law No. 1.

## 6. Discussions and Conclusions

In this study, the process involving the organizational structure of the central administration of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) of the Republic of Turkey which is responsible for the education and training services is discussed. The literature review method was employed in the study, and the Law No. 3797, the Law No. 652, the Law No. 6764, and the Presidential Decree No. 1 on the Presidential Organization, which regulate the organizational structure of the MoNE, were comparatively examined.

The MoNE is a ministry which is the backbone of national education services. It is a governmental institution involving 16.298.425 students having their education in 65.564 state and private schools, and their families. Also, it is the institution with the highest number of public personnel. The MoNE employs a total of 1.030.136 public personnel (National Education Statistics Formal Education 2017/2018). It constitutes 35.57% of the total personnel in public institutions (Distribution of public personnel by service units, 2018).

It can be said that the legal arrangements concerning the organization and duties of the Ministry of Education, whose establishment dates back to the Ottoman Empire period, were made at short intervals without detailed examination and research.

With the Law No. 3046 of 27 September 1984 regulating public services, the ministries were structured to be uniform. With this law and the Law No. 3797 on the Organization and Duties of the Ministry of National Education, it was ensured that the MoNE complied with the Framework Law. Law No. 3797 was repealed completely by Decree Law No. 652. With Decree Law No. 652, the MoNE was restructured. Although Decree Law No. 652 is not a law, it does not differ from a law in terms of implementation and impact. A decree law is a method that allows the government to take direct and effective measures without being addressed or discussed in the Turkish Grand National Assembly, the principal organ of the Republic of Turkey, and without the need to inform the public (Zengin & Altın, 1999).

Although the government wanted to take a quick path by applying this method, it is understood that the process did not take place as expected. The Decree Law No. 652, which came into force with the claim of making radical changes in the Ministry of Education, was changed 17 times, including the decisions of the Supreme Court, in five years. Thus, two-thirds of the Decree Law No. 652, consisting of 45 articles, was amended (Esen, 2016). It can be said that Decree Law No. 652 was not accepted by the community stakeholders.

As a result, Decree Law No. 652 could not solve the problem of the Ministry of National Education organization. Thus, it was replaced by Law No. 3764, which came into force five years later. Due to the change in the government system in the Republic of Turkey, this law was also repealed at the end of two years. Finally, the Ministry of National Education has been re-structured with the Presidential Decree No. 1.

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