



## Turkey's Parliament OKs Student 'Amnesty'

Posted GMT 2-24-2005 16:34:27

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) -- Turkey's parliament approved legislation Wednesday allowing thousands of students thrown out of universities to return, including women who violated the staunchly secular country's ban on Islamic-style head scarves.

The amnesty allows former university students who were dismissed on academic or disciplinary grounds after June 29, 2000, to return to school.

Secular critics have said the measure is an attempt by the governing party to appease conservative constituents in the largely Muslim country. They say it will primarily benefit female students dismissed from schools for breaching the headscarf ban.

The governing Justice and Development Party, founded by former members of a pro-Islamic party closed by the courts, denies any Islamic agenda and has made Turkey's bid to join the European Union its top priority since sweeping to power in 2002.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government noted that nine similar amnesties were passed by previous governments and a range of former students now stand to benefit.

Officials also noted that women who continue to wear head scarves will be banned from returning to universities.

Eyup Fatsa, a top government lawmaker, added Wednesday that the legislation would also allow students who left during a severe 2001 economic crisis to return. But many are not convinced.

"The amnesty also has a political dimension: Amnesty for those with head scarves," Cuneyt Ulsever wrote in a column Wednesday in daily Hurriyet. "I don't think that the amnesty is just for these students, but I know that the most discussed dimension of the amnesty will be this."

© 2011, Assyrian International News Agency. All Rights Reserved. [Terms of Use.](#)