



Delta-Eko

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Environment still needs a lot of care

Turkey marks the 37th World Environment Day faced with many environmental concerns. Environmental experts say the country is fast headed in the direction of becoming a 'water-poor' land. They say urgent action is required in many places to save the environment.

Power plants are poisoning the environment, lakes are drying up, polluting factories are determined not to build purification plants, and hydroelectric dams are stopping the flow of running water Ğ all these factors contribute to Turkey getting a failing grade when it comes to environmental protection.

The Turkey branch of the World Wildlife Foundation, the Turkish Environmental and Woodlands Protection Society, or TÜRÇEK, and the Nature Society came together to lay out Turkey's environmental problems in 2009. The picture they have painted is not a pretty one.

The environmentalists' joint opinion is that Turkey's primary problem is wrongheaded policies on water and other resources. According to Filiz Demirayak, the general director of WWF Turkey, the rate of greenhouse gases being released into the atmosphere from Turkey between 1990 and 2004 increased 74.4 percent, is breaking a record.

"Many types of habitats in Turkey have been irreversibly destroyed, especially in the last 30 to 40 years," Demirayak added. "In the western Black Sea region of northern Anatolia, 79 percent of coastal sand dunes have been destroyed, along with 85 percent of the brushwood; approximately 1.3 million hectares of wetlands are gone. The rate of water available per person has dropped from 4,000 cubic meters to 1,430 cubic meters. Turkey is rapidly turning into a water-poor country."

Added Güven Eken, general director for the Nature Society: "Dams and irrigation projects are threatening important natural areas. Especially near big cities, on the shores of the Aegean and the Mediterranean, unplanned urbanization causes irreversible destruction in many areas."

Kerem Ateş, the general secretary for TÜRÇEK, pointed to the pollution and development at Lake Acarlar near Karasu, the industrial pollution in İzmit Bay and the urban-planning problems of Istanbul.

Turkey's key issues

The groups defined the most urgent problems on Turkey's environmental agenda as follows:

- The biggest salt lake in Europe has diminished by almost half in 18 years.
- One of the terminals of the power plant at Afşin Elbistan has been operating without a filter for years, polluting surrounding areas.



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- The almost 400 hydroelectric plants planned for many provinces, Artvin and Rize foremost among them, means death for the streams they are going to be built on.
- The Great Menderes Basin, the primary water source of İzmir, has been poisoned.
- Bafa Lake in Muğla, Kulu Lake in Konya and Eber Lake in Akşehir are threatened by pollution from waste.
- Amik, Suğla and Avlan lakes, alongside the reed beds of Kestel, Gavur, Yarma, Aynaz, Hotamış and Eşmekaya, have lost their ecological and economic functions.
- The water level of Lake Burdur has dropped 10 meters in the last 27 years, and 90 percent of the Sultansazlığı reed bed has dried up.

Turkey to join Kyoto in late August

Turkey will officially become a party to the Kyoto Protocol on August 26 after completing the necessary procedures, the Foreign Ministry said in a written statement released Friday.

Parliament ratified the agreement to sign the Kyoto Protocol in February after intense pressure from both the European Union and international environmental organizations. Three voted against as 243 lawmakers voted in favor of the protocol.

Turkey was not a party to the convention adopted in 1992 when the Kyoto Protocol was negotiated, and it is not currently included in the agreement's Annex-B, which includes 39 countries that are obliged to reduce their greenhouse emissions to 1990 levels between 2008 and 2012.

The Kyoto Protocol was open for signatures in 1998, and entered into force in 2005 with the accession of Russia. More than 170 countries have signed the protocol. The United States, long the world's biggest source of emissions but which is being surpassed by China, slammed the pact in 2001.

River faces pollution catastrophe

Heavy pollution in one of the rivers that helps meet Istanbul's water needs has caused alarm as it could lead to a health and environmental catastrophe.

The Melen River in Düzce province is littered with animal carcasses and garbage. Pollution also comes from sewage pipes that drain into the river. The water from the river reaches some of the approximately 12 million residents of Istanbul. A 189-kilometer pipeline transports water to Istanbul from the Melen River, which begins in Düzce and is fed by smaller streams from 12 valleys.

The draining of sewage and factory waste into the river has caused fishermen from the Gökaya area to express concern. "We read that Istanbul residents drink this water. This is very sad. Look, carcasses of animals float by all the time," said fisherman Ahmet Kasapoğlu.



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"Nobody comes here and shows any interest. This stream is always polluted," said Gökaya resident Cihan Yazgan, 44. "It is not so much natural pollution, but human-created waste that pollutes the stream. People dump all their waste into the stream, even their blankets.

Düzce Mayor İsmail Bayram said work will commence to address the problem. "We will definitely prepare projects along with the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality," he said.

Gov't ready to pay more for energy companies

Turkey may offer guaranteed prices for power generated from renewable resources and pay more if the producers use locally-made equipment, according to draft legislation before parliament in Ankara.

The bill would also allow wind, solar or other renewable energy farms to be set up in national parks, according to a copy of the legislation obtained by Bloomberg.

The bill will be discussed in an energy committee in the parliament Thursday and "it's our aim to bring it to the main assembly in the coming 10 days," according to Soner Aksoy, the lawmaker who heads the committee.

Turkey is seeking to diversify its energy resources to reduce dependence on imported gas from Russia and Iran and help meet increasing demand.

Under the draft legislation the state-run power company will guarantee a price of 7 euro cents per kilowatt-hour for hydroelectric power. For land-based wind power the price is 8 euro cents and 12 euro cents for wind farms at sea. The grid will pay 16 euro cents for tidal power and up to 25 euro cents for some types of solar energy, the draft says.

The lengths of the price guarantees range from 10 years for wind, geothermal, tidal, hydroelectric and biomass generation to up to 25 years for solar power, it says.

Producers who use locally-made turbines or other equipment can claim an additional fee of up to 3 euro cents per kilowatt-hour, the bill shows. There will also be assistance in laying lines to link the generators to the national distribution system.

Constructors talk energy, new stimulus

The development of energy efficient construction materials will be one of the future trends of the local construction industry, Arzuhan Doğan Yalçındağ, chairwoman of the Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association, or TÜSİAD, said on Tuesday.

Yalçındağ noted the European Union's focus on energy efficiency and tackling climate change would affect construction in Turkey as well. "This is the industry that will attract notable new investments,"



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she said at the International Quality Summit in Construction, organized by the Association of Turkish Building Material Producers, or İMSAD.

Orhan Turan, chairman of İMSAD, said at present some 40 percent of all energy consumed in Turkey is used by buildings. "We hope Turkey will follow EU goals in energy efficiency and that public and private sectors will cooperate in working for new legislation," he said.

The Turkish construction materials industry, which is the second most important in terms of Turkey's exports after automobiles, should be included in government incentive packages, Turan said. The two-day summit continues today with sessions focusing on unjust competition, certification and energy efficiency. The summit includes Hürriyet Daily News & Economic Review among its media sponsors.

Reservoir goes dry after gate breakdown

The Dim Reservoir in Alanya, which had been leaking water since March after its sluice gate broke down, has gone completely dry, according to a top local official. Alanya Local

Governor Hulusi Doğan told the Anatolia news agency that all 215 million cubic meters of water in the reservoir have been lost, adding that a committee from the State Hydraulic Works, or DSİ, would visit the dam next week to determine the reason for the breakdown. Once the cause is found, repairs will be made in September and the reservoir will resume operations in November, Doğan said.

Construction on the Dim Reservoir started in 1997. It began to be filled with water in May 2008 and was opened by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan with a ceremony last January. The dam's capacity is 265 million cubic meters and it has a height of 134.5 meters.

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