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### **Turkey expects investments in energy**

Turkey plans to launch \$120 billion-worth of investment projects in energy by 2020 with the considerable part of these will be constituted to the geothermal energy projects, according to the minister of energy.

Speaking in Istanbul at Monday's opening session of "World Bank GeoFund Geothermal Workshop," which will wrap up tomorrow, Energy Minister Hilmi Güler said, "With the introduction of new regulations, we are looking forward to submitting this environmentally friendly energy in Turkey." The summit aims to promote Turkey's geothermal energy potential for foreign investors, he said.

"The ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and implementation of the renewable energy act provided the necessary tools for investors looking into Turkey's renewable energy area, including geothermal energy," said Güler. "The new regulations in electricity prices would also increase competitiveness in the market."

Speaking at the same meeting, Helmut Schreiber of the World Bank GeoFund said Turkey is expected to become the largest GeoFund country, provided the right market conditions exist. "We believe that Turkey would be the model geothermal country in its region," Schreiber said.

The workshop, organized with the cooperation of the World Bank and Partnership International, a U.S.-based consulting firm, focuses on attracting the attention of investors as well as centralizing Turkey as a geothermal energy hub in the region of Europe and Central Asia.

### **Turkey's Garanti eyes energy**

Turkey's rapidly growing energy demand attracts the attention of global players. Despite the crisis, Proparco, a subsidiary of French Development Agency, provides a 50 million euro-loan for renewable energy projects in Turkey

Aiming to contribute to renewable energy projects in Turkey, Garanti Bank signed a 50 million euro-worth credit agreement with Proparco, a subsidiary of French Development Agency, or AFD, which provides funds for private investments in developing countries.

The credit will mature in 12 months, but Garanti, partly owned by General Electric Co., has the option to pay it back by the end of the seventh year. Allocating the amount for funding renewable energy investments, the bank aims to foster projects that would enhance energy efficiency and lower industrial pollution.

### *Supporting clean energy*

Speaking at a press meeting in Istanbul yesterday, Garanti Bank Managing Director Ergun Özen said the recent ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by Parliament would enhance energy projects that lower carbon emissions. The credit agreement between Garanti and Proparco is "fully oriented to support clean energy projects."



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"As Garanti, we will keep supporting such projects just like we have been supporting environmentally-conscious projects for the past 15 years. The agreement with Proparco will considerably boost our determination on this issue," Özen said.

"Due to rising energy demand, supporting energy investments is a necessity. So far we provided \$1.5 billion-worth funds for energy investments and the credit we are taking from Proparco will be allocated for similar investments," he told journalists. "Following Turkey's participation in the Kyoto Protocol, Garanti Bank will be supporting clean development in the new era."

Bernard Emi, France's ambassador to Turkey, said that while the global finance sector is facing a bottleneck, the credit agreement between Garanti and Proparco is proof of France's confidence in the Turkish economy. "Developing renewable energy projects and energy efficiency has always been at the core of the operations of AFD Group in Turkey," said Emi. "The agreement between Garanti and Proparco is signed at the best time in terms of fostering renewable energy projects." Pointing to the fact that France is Turkey's fifth-biggest trade partner, with 11 billion euros-worth of annual trade as of 2008, Emi said: "We aim to increase this figure to 15 billion euros in three years."

"Today, France ranks second in Turkey in terms of the size of foreign investments," he continued. "There is a \$13 billion-worth investment stock of French companies in Turkey and we are looking forward to enhancing this bright cooperation."

Emi announced that aiming to increase bilateral economic, cultural and scientific ties, France is to promote a campaign, named "Turkey Season" between July 2009 and July 2010.

"Considering the spending items in 2008's balance sheet, we decided to take measures that would lower expenditure by \$200-\$250 million in our 2009 budget," said Özen.

"But this does not mean that we will not be active in the sector. We will keep doing what we are supposed to do, providing loans for the private sector. We plan to open new branches in 2009, no less than 35."

#### **'Accessing clean water is every human's right'**

Klaus Töpfer, former Federal Minister for the Environment of Germany, is commissioned as the ambassador of the Fifth World Water Forum. According to Töpfer the mega city of Istanbul should learn to handle water problems

The 1st Istanbul Water Forum hosted many ministers and visitors last weekend in the newly built Sötlüce Cultural and Congress Center located in Golden Horn. One of the important names that participated in the preparatory forum was former Federal Minister for the Environment of Germany, Professor Dr. Klaus Töpfer.

After all the urges of the secretary general of the 5th World Water Forum, Dr. Oktay Tabasaran to cooperate with the forum team, he accepted to become the ambassador of the forum.



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Discussing the concentration topics of the forum Ğ principles of water, the importance of water and solutions to water issues Ğ with Tabasaran, Töpfer agreed to be a helping hand in the forum. Although he was asked to work with them for the preparation process he did not want to overdo his workload because of his many responsibilities.

"It's a pleasure for me to be working with the 5th World Water Forum secretariat," Töpfer said. He thinks hosting the forum is a unique opportunity. The responsibility of the secretariat is tough and it is a huge challenge to organize a forum of this magnitude.

"The country has centuries-old techniques of handling water and infrastructures of water but on the other side it suffers from the management of water, handling water and the construction of dams."

#### *Troubled water management*

Töpfer qualifies Istanbul as a mega city and one of the biggest populations of the world. Although the city still stands throughout the centuries, its water management is troubled. According to Töpfer it will be useful to have the event in Istanbul.

"Istanbul is like the base because it's the best living examples to all the topics that will be discussed during the 5th World Water Forum, which will take place from March 16 to 22. The world will discuss how to handle water in an urban venue," Töpfer said.

Drawing attention to the Minister of Environment and Forestry Veysel Erođlu's speech at the 1st Istanbul Water Forum, where he said there were still people who did not have access to water, Töpfer said Istanbul would host world leaders to find outstanding ideas of how to overcome water problems.

"The region is dynamic and the Asian and Eastern regions are willing to find the solution from Turkey. People from all round the world are looking forward to attending the forum," Töpfer said, who gets excited when talking about the international event. According to him how well the secretariat prepared for the forum will show the importance they place on solving water issues.

One of the best characteristics of the forum is bringing together businesses, nongovernmental organizations, or NGO's. A World Water Forum without the NGO's would be a disaster, Töpfer said and added: "The world doesn't consist of just governments."

Admitting that he was against NGO's while he was a state minister, Töpfer said, once you look from outside, you have to give credit to them. "I am against the privatization of water," Töpfer said. The environment friendly Töpfer always supports the expression of criticism. According to him, having all those establishments creates a balance; the industry creates job opportunities, which also counts for other establishments. "If we hadn't had all those establishments the world would be a disaster," Töpfer said.

#### *NGO's to advocate*



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NGO's, who are self-understanding, are not capable of companies, as Töpfer said, the additional responsibility of NGO's is to advocate. "They need to question the interests of the projects," Töpfer said. According to the former environment minister, sustainable development is not just environmental. States do not only rely on sustainable development, economical differences and social justice. At the end of the day those who are critical enables you to see different aspects of one situation, he said.

Töpfer expects a lively discussion, a controversy of ideas, a lively criticism at the forum, where people can discuss the negative and positive aspects. "People need to learn that the solution they offer is not a hundred percent the right solution in every case," he said.

He has attended each of the previous four World Water Forums, except the one in Mexico City in 2006.

Töpfer who introduced ground breaking environmental regulations and laws also initiated several laws to ban the use of environmentally harmful products. Known for his personal commitment to promote the environment and sustainable development, Töpfer said each person on this earth had the right to access water, just like air and sunlight. According to him the Turkish government has improved its management of water and if they had not, they would not have been able to host the 5th World Water Forum. Töpfer, who has worked in different fields at the United Nations, believes environmental policy is the peace policy of the future. He is now retired and has a summerhouse in Turkey.

### **Dam the rivers, damn the critics**

With environmentalists increasing pressure on courts to suspend dam construction in ecologically sensitive areas, the environment minister has stepped forward to dismiss reports advising against dams while rousing support for hydroelectricity and the benefits dams provide to local residents

Hoisting the flag for dam building, Turkey's environment minister has called for support of hydroelectric power plants after investors expressed concern about suspension of hydro projects.

Environment Minister Veysel Eroğlu said dams are a necessity for generating energy, irrigating farmland and supporting local industry.

"First of all, they improve the climate. Additionally, we don't have rivers that run year-round like in Europe. We have to build dams," he said, speaking in the Black Sea town of Gümüşhane on Sunday, reported the Doğan news agency.

Eroğlu said when the ruling Justice and Development Party, or AKP, came to power, Turkey utilized only one-fifth of its hydroelectric potential. "Since then, we have increased that to one-third. Hydroelectricity production has increased from 26 billion kilowatt hours a year to nearly 50 billion kilowatt hours. Turkey needs 130 billion kilowatt hours of energy a year," he said.

He said Turkey was paying less for natural gas by creating more hydroelectric power. "It is very important because it is clean and generates employment," said Eroğlu.



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Erođlu said all projects that proposed building a dam on protected lands or in national parks were examined very carefully.

"When there is a plan to build a hydroelectric plant in a national park, all the necessary precautions are made to prevent it causing environmental harm. Environmental effect reports are prepared and all relevant organizations are involved. Only after around 18 to 20 associations present their reports saying the dam will not harm the environment and suggest measures that need to be taken, does construction begin," he said.

He said after all this work, some were objecting to the project and argued that it was illegal.

"It is wrong to describe dam plans as illegal and harmful based on false reports. I see some ulterior motives behind it. We think it may be a plan by natural gas sellers. What will we do if we are wholly dependent on natural gas?"

False reports prepared by people who do or do not know what they are talking about are hindering their efforts, he said.

The Environment Ministry did not permit the building of dams in important protected areas, Erođlu said. "We are doing everything according to legal procedures. The Natural Parks Directorate doesn't allow plans to proceed if there are problems," he said.

Erođlu also said the construction of the Sadak Dam in the Kelki region of Gümüşhane province would start as soon as possible. "It is part of the 2009 investment plan of the State Waterworks. We allocated 5 billion Turkish Liras for the project," said Erođlu.

#### *Investors at minister's door*

Erođlu's comments came the same day as daily Radikal reported that investors were seeking help from the minister because they are worried about courts possibly suspending construction of dams in protected zones near the Black Sea.

Radikal reported that after a court in the Black Sea coastal town of Rize suspended the building of hydroelectric plants in some protected zones, investors in a 6 million kilowatt power plant in the same region had approached Erođlu.

According to the daily, the investors said environmentalists had infiltrated the Nature and Cultural Assets Protection Board. They said only the lands where these projects were proposed were being transformed into first-degree protected lands. In response, the ministry decided to propose a new law that would allow the building of renewable energy investments in protected areas. Radikal said among the investors were Karadeniz Electric Production and Sanko Holding, known to have close links with the government.

The Environment Ministry, fearing the Rize court's decision could have serious effects on plans to increase electricity production, is trying to address the matter.



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The head of the Hydroelectric Industry Businessmen Association, or HESİAD, Fatrettin Arman, accused environmentalist organizations of inciting the locals.

"These environmentalist organizations totally ignore the project and try to ensure the project's land is declared a protected zone. The Nature and Cultural Assets Protection Board is being influenced," he said.

The board decisions were made to please the locals, he said. "When one looks at where the protected zone is, one realizes it only includes where the plant was going to be built. One sees whole neighborhoods nearby that have been excluded. If a region is declared protected, the whole region must be included," said Arman.

HESİAD submitted a report to the ministry, arguing that if certain measures were not taken, the whole region's hydroelectric potential would not be tapped.

Münir Yazıcı, the lawyer for the Senoz River Association, which was formed to protect the Senoz River where one of the plants was to be built, said if any legal measures were taken to restart the project, they would go to the United Nations. Yazıcı said they would argue that Turkey was violating the Kyoto Protocol, which the Turkish Parliament approved just two weeks ago. Yazıcı said if these projects were allowed to start, the whole region would become a desert. "Plants cannot be built on protected land. There are still some areas that have not been declared protected. We have submitted the necessary applications," he said.

### **Testing the waters for real test at water forum**

Istanbul is poised to host the Fifth World Water Forum at the city's newly opened Sütluçe Conference Center. In the run up to the major event organizers gave the new facilities a whirl with the Istanbul Water Forum, which brought together government officials and NGOs

Istanbul's Sütluçe Conference Center has opened its doors for visitors for the first time. The center hosted a meeting at the weekend in preparation for the fifth World Water Forum in mid-March.

The mini-forum, also called the first Istanbul Water Forum, brought together ministers, companies, non-governmental organizations, or NGOs, and participants from around the world.

Contrary to expectations the conference center was completed within a few months prior to the big event, and even though there are small deficiencies it seems they will be completed by the time the guests for the main forum arrive in Istanbul.

The fifth World Water Forum expects approximately 20,000 visitors, yet the small forum hosted around 2,000 visitors during the weekend.



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Aiming to raise political awareness and contribute to knowledge of water issues, the first Istanbul Water Forum kicked off with the Secretary General of the fifth World Water Forum Dr. Oktay Tabasaran.

Noting that this is the first rendezvous before the World Water Forum, Tabasaran said Istanbul, a city surrounded by water, is an important place to hold the meetings. "Water issues are now beyond individual nations, the cooperation of nations can overcome the population growth, poverty and illiteracy," he said.

#### *City faces water troubles*

After Tabasaran, the ambassador of the forum Dr. Klaus Töpfer took the stage and agreed that Istanbul is the right place to hold the forum because the metropolitan city has concerns about water. "The quantity of water will not be sufficient in the near future. The city was home to 2.7 million people 70 years ago. As nature is destroyed, the availability of water decreases day by day," Töpfer said. According to him it is a crisis of administration. It needs management and investment, and therefore this is a chance to create awareness for people.

Most of the speakers at the opening of the forum touched on water problems the world is facing today while a glass of water was standing on the dais, like a symbol, but none of them touched the glass. The Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Mayor Kadir Topbaş couldn't make it to the first Istanbul Water Forum yet Vice Chairman Ahmet Selamet made a speech touching on issues of wastewater and the capability of local management for solving the water issues.

Dr. Abdul Latif J Rashid, minister of water resources in Iraq, was also present at the forum. Rashid called upon countries to cooperate. "There is water inefficiency in Middle East. Water abuse and inefficient use of water resources has caused a decrease in available water per capita," Rashid said, admitting that Iraq has suffered a lot.

Mahir Yağcılar, minister of environmental and area planning in Kosovo, said they use a majority of their water for drinking and the rest for agriculture. Yağcılar said the public should be a part of the decision-making process for protecting water resources.

Nexhati Jakubi, minister of environmental and physical planning in Macedonia; Aleksander Garuli, deputy minister of environmental, forestry, and water administration in Albania; Abdelkbir Zahoud, secretary of state in charge of water and environment in Morocco; and Anvar M. Zairov, representative from the ministry of water economy and land improvement in Tajikistan, were among the invited guests at the first Istanbul Water Forum. They all talked about their governments and water policies and hoped that the studies unveiled at the fifth World Water Forum would be successful.

#### *'I am a minister of an unlucky nation'*

Mustafa Gökmen, minister of environmental and natural resources of northern Cyprus, described himself as a minister of an unlucky nation. "Cyprus has always been dry and rainless. For years the public has suffered a lot from water shortages," he said.



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Talking about Turkey's plan, led by Turkey's Minister of Environment and Forestry Veysel Erođlu, on transferring water from the Taurus Mountains to northern Cyprus, Gökmen said once the project was launched they could consider transferring water to their neighbors. According to him, the project will be finished in 2012.

Erođlu said with the forum, which will host more than 20 nation's state ministers, they want the water issue to be a peace envoy for the whole world. Mentioning the successes he has achieved as a minister, he said, "We have delivered water to areas that had water scarcity."

Loic Fauchon, president of the World Water Council who follows each step taken for the fifth World Water Forum, said the council and Turkey had been working for the big meeting for three years now. "The reason why the forum is organized is that the world is facing problems and we want to bring together people. Istanbul is facing most of the problems we emphasize. From all the perspectives we don't want to trigger any more problems."

According to Fauchon, the first step should be creating access to water for people and while doing that nature should be protected.

#### **Bays around resort to be cleaned**

The Gümbet Biological Waste Water Treatment Plant in the Bodrum Gümbet İnceburun district has now been completed, which will mean major improvements to the city's environment.

Constructed and owned by the Bodrum Municipality, the plant is located on 88,564 square meters in the Aegean region and cost 3.5 million Turkish Liras. With a daily capacity of 10,000 cubic meters, the plant will service to almost 50,000 residents in Bodrum's Gümbet, Bardakçı and Haremtan areas, which include some 3,000 tourism facilities and 6,000 houses.

The refinement plant, which was constructed to the latest European standards, will solve Bodrum's major environment and sea pollution problem, said Mazlum Ađan, the mayor.

"We struggled for 14 years to finish this project. After many years, the construction started again with the two-year legal permit obtained from the Council of Monuments. Supported by a bank, the project is expected to save the bays and sea in Bodrum," he said.

Ađan said they will still go on with negotiations with national and international private sector representatives in order to solve the problem.

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