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Focus on water for a whole week

The future of global water resource management is set to storm Istanbul as the 5th World Water Forum starts Monday, while across the Golden Horn the Alternative Water Forum will meet later in the week to protest big business and the privatization of water

More than 20,000 people are expected to flood into Istanbul this week as the curtain is raised on the long awaited and much anticipated gathering for the 5th World Water Forum.

Held once every three years and considered the largest global water-related event, the forum will start Monday at the newly renovated Stlce Culture and Conference Center. Organizers have launched an eco-friendly services initiative to offset the environmental impacts of this monumental event.

The main aims for this year's forum, which will run through March 22, is for stakeholders in the water community to create a framework for political processes and for local leaders from around the world to sign the Istanbul Urban Water Consensus. Although it is a non-binding document of principles, the consensus seeks to strengthen commitments from mayors and bring issues and solutions to the attention of governing bodies, legislators and the international community.

The forum's agenda includes raising the importance of water in politics, discussing international water issues, putting together proposals on water issues and ensuring political loyalty. One clear end goal for the forum is to integrate every viewpoint in regard to management of water resources.

The forum will also cover topics such as drought and global climate change, and discuss the health, energy and agriculture sectors in relation to water issues while debating new technologies and potential solutions.

The forum is welcoming politicians, professionals and nongovernmental organizations, or NGOs. The 5th World Water Forum's preparatory meeting, which took place at the end of February, was the first one to formally host NGOs.

In addition to the sessions and panels, the forum will be bustling with various events such as the Water Expo and Fair, Children's Forum, Youth Forum, Learning Center, Speakers Corner, Partnership Bazaar, and Water & Film Events.

While the forum is ongoing, an "alternative" forum will take place at Bilgi University's Santralistanbul campus, facing the Stlce Culture and Conference Center. The Alternative Water Forum, with the motto "Another Water Management is Possible," in a way protests the privatization of water.

The forum's main planning was carried out by the World Water Council, which collaborates with the host country, the General Directory of State Hydraulic Works, or DSİ, the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, or İBB, and the Istanbul Water and Sewerage Administration, or İSKİ.



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Brand new historic venue

The 5th World Water Forum will be held at the Sütlüce Culture and Conference Center and the Feshane Registration and Fair Center. The centers are on opposite sides of Istanbul's Golden Horn and will be linked by an old, floating edition of the Galata Bridge.

The renovated Sütlüce Center was previously a slaughterhouse but has been transformed into a contemporary convention center with a concert and congress hall, cinemas, exhibition and meetings facilities, a theater and plenty of parking. It will host the thematic, regional and political sessions. While on the other side of the Golden Horn, the Feshane Center, which was a factory during the Ottoman times, will be the main registration center. It was planned separately in order to ease overcrowding at the Sütlüce Center.

There will be regular ferries operating to facility activity attendance on either side of the Golden Horn. The ferries will also take attendees from the city center to the waterfront in front of the building where forum registration will take place.

The Sütlüce Culture and Conference Center has a parking lot large enough for 700 vehicles and Feshane Culture Center has capacity for 1,000 cars.

The 5th World Water Forum will be one of the biggest events to take place in Turkey and with it expectations for eco-friendly services arose and called for the Green Forum Initiative, or GFI, to be formed within the forum. The new program for the forum aims to reduce the environmental footprint that results from preparation and organization of the event, including waste and emissions. One of the projects of the program is to plant a tree for every participant.

The GFI, founded in 2008, will work to classify the main environmental impacts of the 5th World Water Forum. It will also reduce printed publications and plastic waste in the secretariat and at meetings, offer green products and transport for participants and inform participating hotels about greening measures.

Former forums

The 1st World Water Forum was held in Marrakech, Morocco, in 1997 and aimed to create a vision for water, life and the environment in the 21st Century. The forum's results were discussed even during the 2nd World Water Forum in 2000 in The Hague, Netherlands.

During the 3rd World Water Forum in Kyoto, Japan, held in March 2003, the forum clearly stated its declaration to involve all stakeholders. By gathering more than 24,000 participants, it was the largest water-related event ever organized. Hundreds of commitments were made by the 130 ministers who attended the ministerial conference during the forum.

Bridges to bridge divide

When the 5th World Water Forum comes to Istanbul next week, it will mark the first time the international event is held so close to the water. The forum will take place at the Sütlüce building, a historic Ottoman structure on one side of the Golden Horn. The Feshane facility on the opposite shore



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will host the affiliated Water Fair, housing many festive water-related activities, including a learning center, a global water education village, a citizen's water house. Though the forum's theme is "Bridging Divides for Water," in this case water will divide the forum itself.

That's why the old Galata Bridge, which was previously dismantled, was relocated to literally bridge the divide between the two sides of the Golden Horn. The relocation work started in February and was completed last week, though some technical adjustments are still being made. During the weeklong forum, the bridge will host various shops and venues.

Dense security measures

Security is of course a major issue for the 5th World Water Forum, as it is going to be one of the biggest events that the future European Culture Capital, Istanbul, will host. The police have been practicing at the center for a month now, to familiarize themselves with the layout of the building and improve tactics to provide security. There will be 5,000 police working inside and outside the forum. The whole Golden Horn area of Istanbul will be under tight police control.

However, it is not only the forum area which needs extra security. A security drill was exercised Thursday at Atatürk Airport, also in preparation for the forum. Attendees to the event have already begun arriving in the city. Expecting presidents, ministers and high ranking officials from various countries, the airport drill was monitored by Istanbul's Chief of Police Celalettin Cerrah.

Unofficial court to try gov't

To judge the many disputed policies on water, the "Istanbul Water Court," organized by the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Foundation and Latin America Water Court, took place March 10 and 11. The court and its seven-person jury investigated the proposed Yusufeli, Hasankeyf and Munzur dams. The unofficial court's decisions will be announced Saturday. The water tribunal's organizer, Dr. Ulrike Dufner, said it was not a court organized by activists. "The judged governments, companies and identities all knew that this court was taking place in Istanbul and we invited all of them to attend. The court is not a part of the Turkish Republic. Heinrich Böll Stiftung Foundation is a supporter of the Alternative Water Forum.

Managing water is the real issue, says OECD

The OECD, which has been working for the effective management of water resources for the past two years, releases a report called 'Managing Water for All: An OECD Perspective in Pricing and Financing.' It examines the costs of managing water resources, the need for an integrated approach and to establish development and implementation. The report focused also focuses on financial sources for investment in water

The private sector was the focus of the agenda on Tuesday at the World Water Forum.

Just as soon as the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation had called for more effective management of water resources, while sustaining human and economic development and maintaining ecosystems, IBM, a multinational computer technology and IT consulting company, announced their new environmental projects for the first time at the forum.



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Besides strengthening the efficiency of water use, the OECD also explores how to improve financing for water supplies and sanitation.

Billions lacking water

The report, which claims that poor governance and the lack of investment has resulted in billions lacking access to water and sanitation services, was presented by the representatives of several organizations. Arjun Thapan, the director general of the Asian Development Bank, or ADB, the OECD Environment Director Lorents Lorentsen, who was present as the moderator of the panel held in the morning, the Secretary General of the OECD Angel Gurría, the president of AquaFed, Gerard Payen, a global water practitioner, undersecretary of the Environment and Forestry Ministry, Professor Hasan Sarıkaya, and the president of the World Water Council, Loic Fauchon.

According to the speakers, agriculture needs special attention as it is responsible for a large majority of water used around the world and in underdeveloped countries the most. In Turkey as much as 74 percent of water is used for agriculture, while its only 40 percent in the OECD countries.

Water needs to be thought of more strategically, said Gurría. The OECD's plan is to work on the financial planning of water when it comes to strategy, but the bigger goal is sustainable cost recovery in the water sector.

The public sector is the main financial resource but for there is to be an efficient management of water, the private sector needs invest more, Payen said.

In his speech, Fauchon underlined that money is needed for water everywhere and in every situation. While the President of the World Water Council called for financing investments and infrastructure, IBM a few hours later released its "smarter planet" projects.

IBM offers a new and cheap solution to problem of water scarcity. Many of its scientists worked on a highly technical system to filter salt and deadly toxins in the water such as arsenic.

Since 2004 IBM has presented an annual technology and business forecasting processes to the world with the first IBM Global Innovation Outlook (GIO).

The filtering technique has been launched by other companies but this technique, presented for the first time in Turkey, also prevents bacteria reproduction besides saving energy. The system named i-Phobe turns dirty water into fresh drinking water. According to the GIO report on water there are 2 trillion liters of fresh water for every man, woman and child on the planet but the problems starts with



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the shortage of fresh water. There is a management problem that requires knowledge of how to use the water used by individuals, governments and industry.

The report highlighted that some 60 percent of water used in agriculture went to waste. IBM aims to diminish the waste of water in Turkey in particular, since it signed the Kyoto Protocol.

World Water Forum measures its greenness

For the first time an initiative, the Green Forum Initiative, or GFI, led by Thad Mermer and Janine Tabasaran, has a stand at the World Water Forum. It aims to raise awareness of the environmental impacts of the event

The Green Forum Initiative, or GFI, has opened stands at the 5th World Water Forum to raise awareness of the environmental impacts of the event and to show people how to be greener. It is the first time that such an initiative has been established at the forum.

Thad Mermer and Janine Tabasaran, who lead the GFI, have spent a lot of time in the run up to the forum making sure that everything was in place, such as the waste management system and the recycling system. All around the forum venue participants are able to throw their garbage into different bins for them to be recycled or decomposed. There are color-coordinated bins for metal, plastic, paper, glass and compost waste.

The GFI is also working with Öktaş catering company and Istanbul Education Tourism and Health Investments Company, or BELTUR, for managing the Sütlüce and Feshane venues and the Intertex exhibition and fair organization company for the expo to make sure they are also informed and willing to help the GFI with the waste management recycling system.

Bins and posters installed

Before the venues opened their doors to participants, 96 bins were installed and posters were designed to raise awareness. The posters are placed above the bins to show which materials should go into which bin and where they go after they are collected.

"Most of the waste is going a relatively short distance are being treated and recycled. We also added a new waste management partnership with a group called 'Çöp Madam.' We are going to be collecting plastic packages for them to be designed and used as bags," Mermer said.

According to Mermer they have spent a lot of time working on their communications. "Of course what we want to do primarily at the forum is to raise awareness," he said.

They have three stands at the forum venues. One of them is in the expo fair area. They call it the GFI Partnership Village. Inside the expo they are working with their partners on green hotel projects, the waste management system and one partner, the World Wildlife Fund Turkey, is working with them on carbon emissions compensation.



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The second stand is the one at the Sütlüce Center, next to the World Water Forum Secretariat stand. There are posters that raise awareness on how to save and use water both in English and in Turkish and posters about water in food. The posters inform people on facts such as how much water is spent for a hamburger and producing a sheet of paper.

On the stand they have cardboard tubes that are horizontal to the ground sticking out which with their length describe the carbon emissions in kilograms from different cities such as New Delhi, New York, Tokyo and Amsterdam. The information they use comes from two Web sites: waterfootprint.org and carbonfootprint.org.

"We seem to be succeeding in raising awareness," Tabasaran said. The cooperation they have with WWF is not a reduction strategy but a compensation strategy instead. Because the emissions are already gone into the air while the forum participants were flying to Istanbul. But the GFI advises them to make donations to WWF for their awareness raising activities on climate change in Turkey. "Our aim is to keep the money in Turkey so that it can benefit from all the donations that come from abroad," said Mermer.

They also have a global project called the 'Earth Hour.' The project requests people to turn off their lights at 8 p.m. although there are different time zones.

They are also in charge of the logistics and how to provide a greener transformation for the forum. "For the reduction strategy we were working with a logistics company to make sure that we have enough vehicles to carry participants to the venue using the least amount of carbon dioxide. One of the biggest success on that side is the Galata Bridge," said Memer.

The old Galata Bridge, which is relocated for the forum allows people to walk between the Sütlüce and Feshane venues instead of using other transportation.

Other countries want to be in Turkey's shoes

A conference room at the 5th World Water Forum was packed on Wednesday with important names and participants from all around the world gathering to discuss Turkey's water resources.

General Manager of the General Directorate of State Hydraulic Works, or DSİ, Haydar Koçaker, president of the World Water Forum Loic Fauchon and Environment Minister Veysel Eroğlu were accompanied to the conference by Süleyman Demirel, the 9th president of Turkey.

Protecting Turkey's biogeography

Underlining the water forum's theme, "Bridging Divides for Water," Koçaker said DSİ aimed to provide water resources responsibly and protect Turkey's biogeography. Water in agriculture is one of the most important topics of today's world agenda and we have provided water for 3 billion hectares within the Turkish territory, he said.

Koçaker said sanitation work is the priority in Turkey. "DSİ has built 636 dams in Turkey which provide 47 billion kilowatts of energy per hour," he said.



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Indicating his happiness about the forum's success, Fauchon said many people around the world don't have access to water and Turkey is one-step ahead of many countries with its Southeastern Anatolia Project, or GAP, which aims to improve regional development. "Many countries around the world want to be in Turkey's shoes," he said.

Demirel agreed with Fauchon, but said that the world's water resources were diminishing and measures needed to be taken quickly. "One of them is building dams. Although many people are against building dams, we need them. Otherwise it will be impossible for Turkey to access clean water during the summer," said Demirel.

Turkish banks give further assistance to energy projects

Turkish banks are providing funding for energy projects by dipping into their own resources as well as the resources of the World Bank, European Investment Bank, development agencies and foreign lenders. They also utilize the resources of financial institutions and funds, as demand for energy surges throughout the country

Turkish banks have begun to weigh in when it comes to providing funding for the rising number of investments in Turkey's energy industry.

As demand in the industry surged, local banks cranked up the amount of support they have been providing for the energy projects. The industry was supplied with funding worth billions of dollars within the past five years.

The energy industry in Turkey will require an investment of nearly \$130 billion until 2010 in order to maintain healthy growth, according to some experts. The energy demand in the country is rising in line with its economic growth. Rising demand deems energy very attractive for local and foreign companies that are seeking investment opportunities. The increasing interest to invest in the industry generates a much bigger need and demand for funding.

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Investment projects for renewable energy, including hydro, geothermal, solar and wind stations, have placed themselves among the most funded areas in the past years, as environmental consciousness began to rise.

Garanti Bank, the Turkish lender co-owned by General Electric, have so far provided loans worth \$1.5 billion for energy, which is the industry foreseen to survive the crisis with minimum impact. The bank has also been authorized to find financing for projects worth \$500 million.

Meanwhile, officials of İşbank, Turkey's biggest publicly traded bank, have announced the bank's decision to increase the amount of support it has been providing for energy projects due to the rising



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demand. Although it is easier to obtain loans for hydroelectric plants at present, the wind energy investments in Turkey have also been rising significantly, according to İşbank officials. Turkey ranks on top among other European countries with its wind energy technical potential, which is estimated to be around 10,000 megawatts.

Many energy investors have knocked on İşbank's door, according to bank officials, who revealed that the bank has financed 21 renewable energy-based projects to date. The total financing İşbank provided in renewable energy reached nearly \$790 million, they said. Considering the projects that are currently undergoing the evaluation process that figure is expected to surpass \$1 billion.

Required investment

According to energy market experts, Turkey requires an investment of \$105 billion in electricity only. The total amount of investment required by the entire energy industry until 2020 totals to \$130 billion, they said.

Within the last two years, Yapı Kredi has allocated loans worth nearly \$1.3 billion for energy projects. The Turkish bank co-owned by Italy's UniCredit SpA provided financing for an installed capacity of 2,500 megawatts, said Mert Güvenen, a member of the Yapı Kredi executive board.

Meanwhile, state-owned Vakıfbank helped realize 15 energy projects worth \$324 million as of the end of December 2008. Among the bank's energy projects, renewable energy consists of 65 percent while co-generation covers 35 percent, the bank's authorities said. The bank's project financing department is currently assessing 20 energy projects estimated to be worth around \$600 million, they said. But they also warned that the loans provided for the energy projects would be affected by the crisis.

Halkbank, another state-owned bank, is evaluating 21 hydroelectric plant projects that are estimated to be worth a whopping \$190 million euros. Ömer Baktır, vice managing director at the state-controlled lender, said that the bank is expecting a decline in foreign energy investments due to the global crisis. However, the financing needs of the companies investing, particularly in renewable energy, will continue to increase. "Mergers and acquisitions will also continue in the upcoming period, so banks will continue to see high demand in financing."

The Energy Market Regulatory Agency, or EPDK, has recently begun to play a more active role in the industry. Also, companies that are part of Turkey's private sector have become more and more interested in the industry. They have been playing a more active role in tenders for licenses to establish or run power plants in the country. The partnerships established between global energy giants and large Turkish firms also constitute the source of attraction for the financing of the sector, according to Cem Mengi, vice managing director at Akbank.

"Akbank's corporate banking department has financed 31 energy projects with an investment volume of \$6.4 billion. Akbank provided loans worth \$2.1 billion for these projects," he said, adding that the bank is also planning to provide \$300 million in loans for a 610-megawatt hydroelectric power plant project.



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Denizbank has so far provided \$400 million in loans for the energy sector, including project funding as well as corporate loans, said Denizbank Project Funding Department Manager Ceyda Çetin Erten. The bank currently works together with other banks on two large-scale energy projects worth \$1 billion, which are likely to be completed this year, Erten said.

The Industrial Development Bank of Turkey, or TSKB, has evaluated 130 projects since 2005, and financed 71 projects with an investment volume of \$2.5 billion euros, said Burak Akgüç, vice managing director at TSKB.

Norwegian Energy Company plans to invest up to \$1.2 bln in Turkey

Norwegian energy company, Statkraft, which acquired a 95 percent stake in a subsidiary of Turkey's Global Investment Holdings (GYH) on Wednesday, is expected to invest up to \$1.2 billion in seven hydropower projects.

Turkey's Yesil Enerji holds controlling interests in seven hydropower projects with a combined installed capacity of 633 MW and an annual generation capacity of 2.1 TWh, the statement said, adding that development and construction of the seven hydropower plants is expected to require a total investment of up to 700 million euros (\$1.2 billion).

The transaction and transfer of the shares is expected to take place in June, Global said in a statement.

One of the hydropower projects, a 20 MW facility, is currently under construction and scheduled for completion at the end of 2009. The development of other projects is expected to begin after 2010 at the earliest.

Four of the hydropower projects hold generation licenses from the Energy Management Regulatory Authority of Turkey (EMRA), and the remaining two are in the final stages of obtaining permits.

Global is a public Turkish company operating in several key sectors in the country, including the operation of privatized cruise and commercial seaports, natural gas distribution, energy, real estate, brokerage and corporate finance.

Statkraft is Europe's largest renewable energy company, which develops and generates hydropower, wind power, gas power and district heating.

Global Investment Holdings, a Turkish diversified holding company, have signed an agreement with Norwegian power company Statkraft to sell 95 percent of its Yesil Enerji subsidiary, the company said in a statement on Wednesday.

Forestry minister makes a sexist gaffe

The environment and forestry minister has courted controversy with remarks during a recent visit to his home province in the run-up to local elections March 29.



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When a group of women asked him for employment opportunities, Veysel Erođlu jokingly responded by saying, "Doesn't your household work suffice?" The reply was, "Dear minister, we can't make ends meet."

Campaigning

Erođlu was visiting Afyonkarahisar to boost support for the Justice and Development Party, or AKP, local candidate. He said high-speed train links to İzmir and Antalya are also in the works following the inauguration of the Ankara-Eskişehir route and he hopes the train's route will pass through Afyonkarahisar and the Dazkırı area.

Including Afyonkarahisar in the regions covered by the law to promote investments proved beneficial as it created more employment opportunities, he said while visiting the Dazkırı area. "One of our districts that benefited the most from this law was Dazkırı. Due to its proximity to the province of Denizli, businessmen from there have invested here and reduced unemployment. To keep these investments coming and to create a better and more comfortable life for our people we will also be doubling our efforts to speed up work on the Denizli dual carriage highway," he said.

Pamukkale to be promoted to world

Environment and Forestry Minister Veysel Erođlu has said the ministry has been researching Pamukkale's biodiversity and would promote their findings to the world.

Erođlu, pointing out how they would promote Pamukkale to the world, said: "Tourists coming to Pamukkale are taking into consideration the biodiversity of the area. We have begun studies into the diversity of Pamukkale. When we complete the research, we will use it to promote Pamukkale to the world." Pamukkale was recently included as one of the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage sites for its limestone travertine, which is a crystallized rock formation.

Denizli Governor Yavuz Erkmn accompanying the minister said it was pity that there was no a spa center in Pamukkale. "Both local and foreign tourists who come to Pamukkale bemoan the lack of a spa center. We believe that if a spa center was opened, lots of foreign tourists would come to Pamukale."

Stating that they had already allocated the land to build a spa center to the city council, Erođlu said: "When work started here we were at least 5 million tourists in the first phase, then 10 million tourists. Due to this potential, we have to build a spa center here immediately. Then we should get in touch with international health institutions. We, as the government, will support you."

Famous for its rock formations, Pamukkale, known as "white heaven," welcomes record numbers of tourists each year. Last year domestic and international tourists to the area passed 1.4 million.



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Rains save Bafa Lake

Bafa Lake is not feeling the threat of drought anymore. Recent heavy rainfalls help raise water levels in the lake located in the southeastern part of Muğla, according to the environment and forest minister. 'I thank the Public Waterworks Administration,' he says

Danger of extinction and drought at Bafa Lake no longer exists as a result of recent heavy rainfall and rising water levels, according to the environment and forest minister.

Minister Veysel Eroğlu explained the findings of his recent research and excursions in Muğla and its nearby districts during a press conference for the Forest District Management. Bafa Lake is located in the southeastern part of Muğla near the Aegean region's Büyük Menderes River.

Drought problem

Bafa Lake was about to dry out as a result of the drought a short time ago, Eroğlu said. "I really thank the Public Waterworks Administration teams. They made it possible to regulate the water level at Bafa Lake by applying a special method in the Söke district, which is very rare in the world," he said.

"Bafa Lake's water level has substantially increased, which means an end to the danger of wildlife extinction and drought at the lake," said Eroğlu.

A previously decreased water level and possible drought were not the only problems that Bafa Lake faced. Following the cases of fish deaths and a decrease in productivity, pollution problems in the 21-meter-deep Lake recently reached alarming levels. Wastewater and chemicals from nearby facilities aggravated the lake's pollution problems but the area's olive plants helped reduce the harmful pollution by providing oxygen.

"We still need to create some regulations for Bafa Lake. One of these regulations is to bring a solution to the problem of 'Karasu,' or olive oil, waste. Some pump olive oil waste into the lake, which definitely contributes to pollution. It is widely known that the olive and its byproducts are quite healthy for humans. So we should think of some ways to turn Karasu into a useful material or even a healing medicine. This of course requires further research," he said.

Natural wonder

Bafa Lake is one of Turkey's most beautiful natural wonders, Eroğlu said. Underground water is used as drinking water in Muğla, so the ministry plans to conduct a work-study program to bring water from Sandras Mountain and various dams to Muğla, Eroğlu said.

"The Muğla people deserve the best of everything. Our plan is to save the day by doing more than just measuring Sandras Mountain water's ingredients. Rather, we want to use the most up-to-date methods to meet Muğla's water demand until 2050. This will provide Muğla people with drinking water and the best possible conditions for the long term," he said.



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Gökova Project sets an example for Europe

The environment and sustainable development project in Gökova, one of the most fascinating areas in Turkey's Aegean region, draws the plaudits from European authorities. An EU representative praises how local institutions work to preserve the Gökova Cove as it is now

The environment and sustainable development project to protect Muğla's Gökova coastal areas is considered the best of its kind in Europe in terms of the environment, history and socioeconomics, said Professor Atilla Yücel, coordinator for the project. Yücel said the European Union SMAPP III Gökova project was announced to be an example-setting project and the most successful out of the 10 participating Mediterranean countries. "That is why we are going to print the project as a book in Turkish and English next month and sent it to Turkish and European officials," he said.

The future of the Gökova Cove, The Island of Sedir and Kadın Backwater were on the table in scope of the EU SMAPP III Gökova Project at a panel organized at Muğla University. The project's contents such as the island of Sedir, backwaters, socio-economic research, sea pollution and wastes, agricultural works, fishing, coastal erosion, geographical information systems and education for raising awareness were discussed at the panel. Decisions were also made to buy cameras and other equipment for underwater research, the preparation of some publications and work to be done for the preservation of the sands of the island of Sedir.

Aydın Şalçı, former scholar at Istanbul Technical University and the elaborator of the backwaters part of the project, said that the boat traffic on the backwaters tributary to Gökova and the inner sea and Gulf of Akyaka negatively affects nature and the number of boats and their passengers on the backwaters must be limited. Şalçı offered that the number of travel boats on Akyaka Kadın Backwater should be limited to 14 and their length should not be more than nine meters. "We will definitely experience irreversible environmental problems if that is not done. Natural walking paths may be built alongside the backwater instead of increasing the number of the boats," Şalçı said. Şalçı also said that natural aquariums may be built at the area and the backwater may be preserved as a natural park. "We cannot allow the slaughter of nature for money anymore. The bells toll for danger," said Şalçı.

Etienne Bajiot, EU representative and SMAPP III team leader, visited Gökova, the Island of Sedir, Akyaka and Köyceğiz said he was amazed by Gökova. Bajiot also said that the last preparations for the project were complete and this was the best project among the others from 10 countries. "The project will cost approximately 1 million euros, with 80 percent covered by the EU and 20 percent covered by Turkey. Our aim is the popularization and actualization of such projects to solve environmental problems of Mediterranean countries." Bajiot said and added that was why they are aiding such areas through EU funds. "We will finish the Gökova project first because it is the best. Besides, I am amazed by Gökova during the work done here for three years. I must settle and live here someday," Bajiot said.

Pride of Europe

Professor Yücel indicated that the project aimed to preserve the Gökova Gulf environment, specifically its sea life and ecological balance. "That is why we are going to publish the project as a book in Turkish and English next month and send it to Turkish and European officials. I hope the example the project sets may be practiced for both our country and the world. SMAPP is an EU environmental project



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covering the 10 Mediterranean countries. The project will both provide the means for the preparations to save the future of the Gökova and set an example for similar countries of the world."

Denmark a role model to local water market

As one of the leading countries in energy efficiency and as market leader in energy saving equipment, Denmark could be a role model for the Turkish market according to Jesper Vahr, the Danish ambassador to Turkey.

103 Danish companies are active in Turkey in regards to environment related issues. The Danish pavilion that features at the expo center of the 5th world water forum in Istanbul, has much to offer Turkey through its consultancy, investments and initiatives and expertise in the water technology industry, said Vahr in an interview with Hürriyet Daily News & Economic Review. Danish energy consumption relative to GDP is the lowest in the European Union. The Danish ambassador expressed his excitement about the forum, saying water was an important part of the equation for energy efficiency and environment related issues, all coming together in Istanbul at the biggest international gathering for on water related issues.

"The key is to build the awareness of consumers about environmental responsibility in order to bring down consumption and develop technology and facilities that can sustain less water consumption," said Vahr, adding that in Denmark the total use of water has decreased by nearly 40 percent in the last decade.

Vahr explained that various Danish consultancy companies, such as Grontmij, have been active with the Turkish central government and municipalities in projects to increase water supply and handle waste water in an environmentally safe manner. According to Vahr, new drinking water equipment has been put into place and water pipes have been implemented in order to circulate sea water and waste water safely without seepage.

Vahr said that only 20 percent of waste water was treated and recirculated in Turkey, where as in Denmark the majority of water in Denmark is redistributed through the system.

Commenting on the types of water projects Denmark is contributing to in Turkey, the ambassador said that in the main cities of Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir the focus of the projects were based on water transportation.

When asked about Turkey's progress on environmental issues, Vahr said it was evident that these issues receive strong political attention in Turkey and this was confirmed during President Abdullah Gül's visit to Denmark in August 2008. The sticking point according to Vahr is that it is a huge investment for Turkey to be brought to EU standards and then to sustain those standards. Vahr pointed out that Turkey signing the Kyoto protocol was of utmost importance where much can be obtained.

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