



Delta-Eko

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Green buildings not distant dream

Low environmental impact "green" buildings have already been operating for many years in many parts of the world. Now these eco-friendly buildings, designed to use resources like energy and water efficiently, are becoming a reality for businesses in Turkey as well.

Green buildings not distant dream The first green building in Turkey will be the Siemens factory now under construction in Gebze in the Marmara region. Siemens is preparing to acquire a globally recognized green certificate from The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Rating System, or LEED. In a press release about the building, Siemens Turkey CEO, Hüseyin Gelis, said the factory would be the most environmentally friendly building in Turkey.

"It is foreseen that 2009 will be a difficult year for Turkey energy-wise. Everyone says we must build new plants to produce energy, but actually, the first thing to do is increase energy efficiency. We, at Siemens, aim to reduce our energy consumption by 25 percent over the next five years," he said. There are currently five or six green buildings under construction in Turkey. Most of these buildings aim to receive a green certificate from globally recognized organizations like LEED from the United States or BREEAM from the United Kingdom. There is no national green certificate in Turkey that would provide a blueprint and an incentive for green construction.

Much of Turkey's progress in this area is due to the Green Building Association, or ÇEDBİK, which was founded by Ali Nihat Gökyiğit and Duygu Erten in 2007. ÇEDBİK organized the first of a series of training sessions about green buildings and global environmental certification systems at the Yıldız Technical University in Istanbul on Jan. 10.

Erten, one of the co-founders of ÇEDBİK, said one of the main goals of her association is to fill an important gap and "create a leadership certificate in environment and energy design that would support the standardization and application of this certificate system in new buildings throughout the nation."

Erten is one of the first people in Turkey to become a "green assessor," a professional eligible to determine how green is a building.

Erten said green buildings could only become standard practice in Turkey if the government lends a hand. "A large part of the responsibility falls upon the Public Works Ministry. Many countries now require each new building to be in line with sustainable construction practices. If you ask me, TOKİ, the Housing Development Administration of Turkey, should be constructing only green buildings from now on."

She said some Turkish construction companies are very interested in developing green projects. Among them is Soyak Construction. Their Mavişehir project in İzmir is an example of the company's commitment to sustainable living.



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Head of the corporate communications department at Soyak, Fatma Çelenk, said they have "used environmentally friendly materials in every step of the construction process for Mavişehir," including for air conditioners that utilize eco-friendly gases, energy-saving lighting systems, modern insulation systems, double-glazed windows that filter ultraviolet rays, and batteries with sensors that save water by up to 50 percent. "We have worked with a British consulting firm to make sure we meet the green construction standards of Building Research Establishment (BRE)," said Çelenk.

Another recent initiative comes from the Ankara OSTIM Industrial Area, which is renovating its administrative building to meet the highest level of green building standards, the LEED platinum standard.

Zorlu sets up wind farm in Pakistan

Turkey's Zorlu Enerji is planning a 50-megawatt wind farm in Pakistan at an estimated cost of \$120 million, according to a report published on the Power Engineering International Web site. The capacity of the farm may be extended to 250 megawatts at a later stage.

Zorlu Enerji's Murat Sungar and Karm Buksh Qureshi, chief executive of the Hyderabad Electric Supply Company, or Hesco, have signed an energy purchase agreement for six megawatts of electricity generated at the company facility in Jhimpir, the Web site said.

Pakistan's plans

Raja Pervez Ashraf, Pakistan's minister for water and power affairs, also attended the ceremony. Speaking to journalists after the signing ceremony, Ashraf said more than 4,000 megawatts of electricity would be added to the national grid system by the end of the year with the support of the private sector.

The minister also congratulated Zorlu Enerji for undertaking the project that would pave way for other companies to set up wind turbines in Pakistan for electricity generation.

Ashraf said the Pakistani government chalked out a plan to add 15,000 megawatts of electricity by 2015 to the existing system that would require a substantial investment from the private sector, stating that the private sector might account for \$20 billion of such an investment and the public sector \$10 billion.

Murat Sungar, president of Zorlu Enerji, said incentives offered by Pakistan's renewable energy policy were a major factor in the company's decision to invest in the country.

Metrobus gets 'sustainable' award

Metrobus, a public transit system in Istanbul, received the honorable mention award at the "Sustainable Transportation Awards 2009." The award, given each year to a city that has provided an innovative transportation strategy, is given by the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, or ITDP.



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The working project should lessen the impact of climate change and reduce air pollution and greenhouse emissions from transportation. The institute, founded in 1985 to promote environmentally sustainable and socially equitable transportation worldwide, is one of the leading organizations promoting environmentally friendly projects. During its first 10 years, the sustainable transport supporters' institution successfully promoted multi-modal transport solutions.

The Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality's Metrobus project received the award Jan. 13. Competing for this year's award were Istanbul, New York, Milan, Mexico and Pekin. New York received the big award with its PlaNYC 2030, a huge environmental project for the coming 25 years.

In 2008 Paris and London received the Sustainable Transportation Award and in 2007 Guayquil, Ecuador, was the winner. On the Web page of the ITDP Metrobus project is explained as a very sustainable project compared to Istanbul's many other high-cost transportation projects.

'Other cities in Turkey look for ways to have metrobus'

"The system now carries 450,000 passengers a day over 43 kilometers of bus lanes separated from the highway. Metrobus was built on expressways, so its travel speed is uncommonly fast at 40 kilometers per hour. This has reduced travel time by 75 percent. The system is also integrated with the underground metro and existing bus services. Other cities in Turkey are looking to this low cost, quickly implemented example as a model," the site said.

The awards were presented at the Conference of Transportation Research Boards. General Director of the Istanbul Car Parking Management, or ISPARK, Kadir Gurbetçi, Assistant to the General Director of Istanbul Transportation, or ULAŞIM Co., Ali İhsan Uygun, and specialists from other countries were present at the ceremony.

Women absent in water politics

Women's role in water management should be strengthened both in households and at the political level, especially in a patriarchal society such as Turkey where the majority of women have been given secondary social roles, according to environmental engineer Arzu Özyol.

Women absent in water politics Women play the largest role in utilizing water resources but have the smallest role in policies relating to water management, according to environmental engineer Arzu Özyol.

"It is women who have a more instinctive knowledge and experience in the management of the ecosystem, compared to men, but they have the smallest role in shaping environmental policies. It is women who make the maximum use of water in their daily lives but they have no role in the decision making processes of water management," Özyol said. Özyol is the Turkey representative of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, or BPW, and has undertaken doctoral studies on the importance of participation, including the involvement of women, in the formation of environmental policies. The relationship between women and water management will be open for discussion at the 5th World Water Forum to be held in Istanbul from March 16 to 22. Özyol, likewise,



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plans to highlight the importance of women's involvement in water policies with the participation of women, the real users of water, in the forum where she will take part as BPW's representative.

Women have knowledge but no role

"Because of these roles, women have considerable knowledge and abilities when it comes to water management, which actually make them natural components of water and environmental policies," Özyol said.

"The influence of women on environmental policies contributes to sustainable development, but in Turkey, neither environmental policies nor the involvement of women in the decision making process on these issues are a priority."

A link between women's involvement in environmental policies and sustainable development began to be established in the world after the 1970s. In the 1960s, it was understood that radical changes were needed in social and economic spheres to overcome environmental problems. In the 1970s, awareness was raised about these issues and rational concepts, such as the deep ecology, environmental ethics and the social and political movement of eco-feminism, emerged.

Maximizing women's role in water management

"The number of female parliamentarians is already limited. It is even more interesting that women who entered parliament did not feel obliged to increase their role in environmental policies. In some other decision making processes, meanwhile, male specialists are preferred to women due to excuses such as pregnancy," Özyol said.

The local administrations' authority should be strengthened and some commissions involving representatives from different disciplines should be established in local institutions to maximize women in water management, she said. The public should be well-informed about ecosystems and different messages should be disseminated to different target audiences such as women who work in rural areas, intellectual woman and less-educated women about the importance of women in water politics.

"There is no need for a big rhetoric. The message that the more they are engaged in water management, the more they contribute to the economy of their households should be given to women," she said. "And female programs and serials on TV play even more of a role than any scientific conference on this matter. Women do not forget the messages on these programs."

İzmir's water hailed by international scientists

International scientists visiting İzmir hailed the city's battle for cleaner water, comparing it to other countries' attempts to reduce arsenic levels. Scientists gather in İzmir for the International Congress of Safe Water Production.

İzmir's successful battle to purify its waters has been praised by international scientists.



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Visiting the western city for the International Congress of Safe Water Production, international scientists cited examples of cities that had high amounts of arsenic in their waters and hailed İzmir as undertaking one of the most prolific efforts to fight it.

First discovered in tests conducted in the summer of 2007, arsenic levels in İzmir's water were declared to be dangerous. Metropolitan Mayor Aziz Kocaoğlu said after measures had been taken the arsenic level had now been reduced to standard levels.

"I must say proudly that we took giant steps to find a solution for the water problem in İzmir," said Kocaoğlu. "Although the water level in our dams is not very high due to rainfall frequency, we came up with a project to avoid any future water problems."

International scientists' comments proved Kocaoğlu's statements were true. "The numbers in İzmir may seem high, but in fact they are not, compared to our country," said Dr. Marta Litter of Argentina's General San Martin University. "In Argentina, the arsenic level can be as high as 1,000 micrograms per liter, although it differs among seasons."

Litter said İzmir's water quality awareness should be praised.

"I have seen that İzmir has been very interested in the problem and has been seriously battling it," she said. "I think the work done here has been really successful."

Swedish scientist Prosun Bhattacharya of the Royal Technology Institute spoke to participants about the situation in his country.

"There is an arsenic problem in northern Sweden, an important area for mining," said Bhattacharya. "Recently, research has proven that there is a serious amount of arsenic in the water, for example, 82 micrograms per liter in Stockholm, and there is now work being done to fight it. There is a project to establish filtration system for homes."

As part of his job with the Sustainable Reducing of Arsenic project of the Swedish International Development Association, Bhattacharya is working in Bangladesh, where the situation is even worse than İzmir.

Ten times higher

"Since 1990, there has been a serious arsenic problem in Bangladesh," said Bhattacharya. "There, the arsenic levels are almost 10 to 15 times higher than in İzmir, as high as 900 micrograms per liter. People are still not using the filtration system and drink arsenic-filled water."

Bhattacharya also praised the successful battle in İzmir.



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"I have been informed about the kind of processes İzmir is following," he said. "The first step should always be to locate where the arsenic is coming from and why. I am very pleased to see that İzmir is undertaking that kind of work."

Japanese scientist Dr. Kazuharu Yoshizuka of the Kitakyushu University chemical engineering department said İzmir water was cleaner than water in Japan.

"There is almost 10 times as much arsenic in Japan's geothermal waters than in İzmir," said Yoshizuka. "We try to change the way the water is flowing to reduce the arsenic levels and try to make the water as clean as İzmir's water."

He added, "More than 200,000 people are using water with arsenic levels higher than the standards set by the European Union in my country."

Paul Sylvester from the U.S.-based Solmetex said the problem could also be seen in the United States. "In some parts of the United States, especially in the Northeast and the Southeast, there are 400 to 500 micrograms of arsenic per liter, which is way higher than İzmir's levels," said Sylvester. "Some states were given five years to move their levels to within EU standards but it can be very expensive."

Turkish scientist Cafer Yavuz, who is working at Rice University in the United States, also praised İzmir, adding that he drank the water in the city. "There is no problem health here," said Yavuz. "I drank İzmir's water, too."

Environmental battle on gold mines pays off

The environmentalists in İzmir can be happy with the work they have done, as the activity of a gold mining company was halted by the metropolitan municipality. The general manager of the company asserts that the decision is illegal, though, planning to continue mining

Environmentalists' battle on using cyanide in gold mines has just gained important momentum.

Turkey is known for its rich and untouched underground sources but the gold mines are under heavy pressure from environmentalists due to the use of cyanide in mines. As environmental awareness strengthens along with global warming, the spotlight is on the gold mines.

The most recent example came from the western city of İzmir. A gold mine of the company Tüprağ, near the Menderes County's Efemçukuru Village, has been sealed and shut down by the Metropolitan Municipality of İzmir.

İzmir Metropolitan Municipality has reached the verdict that the gold mine cannot be licensed is due to the negative opinion of the directorate of waterworks of İzmir. The verdict also included the determination of the area as being part of an area of conservation of the Çamlı Dam. The mine had already opened one of its three galleries and prepared a "dump zone" for the mine's wastes and also trees have been cut in the area.



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Mehmet Yılmaz, General Manager of Tüprag, said that the process was illegal. "The Ministry has said the mining activities are yet to reach the level of operating license level and the actions of silver and gold mining should not be hindered," said Yılmaz. "The sealing, done in spite of that, is unlawful."

Yılmaz reacted against the verdict of the Municipality. "We have every legal document according to the Mining Law. We are at the construction stage," he added. "The municipality has made an official complaint to the prosecutor's office to halt the construction. The prosecution had the verdict of nonsuit. You have to be opened first to be closed".

The General Manager also said that the Ministry of Energy and Natural Sources have written to the Municipality of the action being unlawful and the Ministry of Internal Affairs gave instructions for it to be followed.

'Extremely important'

Mustafa Gül, spokesperson for the NGO Elele (Hand-in-Hand) Movement, said that the clauses from the Mining Law and the Environment Law that eases searching and mining underground resources has been canceled by the Constitutional Court, therefore the currently operating mines should be shut down.

Gül also said: "The cancelation verdicts by the Constitutional Court are extremely important for stopping the plunder under the name of mining. The new law of mining opens the natural site areas, special areas of conservation and even national parks to mining."

Gül said actions that caused pollution, such as taking samples and drilling, were no longer in scope of the Environmental Effect Evaluation. "Since the Constitutional Court had the verdict of this plunder law, which neglects environmental wellness and wildlife, against the constitution the regulations and licenses based on it have no legal basis anymore."

He argued that all regulations based on the mentioned law must be cancelled, starting with the ones on mining, and all gold mines should be sealed.

A lawyer said that miners' increasing the pressure could be expected now. "The Constitutional Court has decided that new arrangements should be made on the canceled clauses between six months to one year," explained lawyer Arif Ali Cangı. "During that time the miners will increase the pressure for a new law. It is not just about the gold mines, even quarries will be under question with these laws."

Reports on water fill city billboards

After university students documented traces of phenol, or carbolic acid, in the city's water, the Erzurum Metropolitan Municipality printed posters containing results of analytical reports jointly prepared by several authorities to refute the claims.



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Despite the posters stuck on billboards around the city, people continued drinking water from historic fountains rather than from city supplies. Some officials working in the Parks and Gardens Department were also seen filling barrels with water from fountains.

The analytical report was carried out by the Sanitation Region Directorate, the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, or TÜBİTAK, and the Metropolitan Municipality Waterworks.

The issue arose after Nuhi Demircioğlu, an assistant professor in the Atatürk University Environmental Engineering Department, and eight masters students carried out research on the city's water for a water chemistry class, during which they found traces of carbolic acid in the drinking water.

Ahmet Küçükler, the mayor of Erzurum, decided to print posters about drinking water around the city after drinking water in front of cameras to prove the water, which had been transported to the city from the Palandöken dam, was of a good standard.

No matter what the quality reports on the posters said, the public continued queuing in front of the fountains to collect fresh drinking water. The public reacted when they saw employees of the municipality filling barrels with water from the fountains, many asking how they could trust the municipality when its employees were also waiting in line for water from the fountains but not from the taps, despite claims the water was clean.

Problems solved

Küçükler, at a press conference a couple of weeks ago, said no chemical problems existed in the city's drinking water and that it was no carbolic acid, but manganese in the water. "The reason the water is yellow is that manganese mixes with chlorine. It is of no risk to humans. We took precautions in water treatment facilities to prevent dangerous results. The color of the water will not be yellow anymore and there will not be any problems with the taste," he said at the last press conference.

Furthermore outage in the computer system and chlorine tanks at the 30 million Turkish Liras-treatment facility had been repaired.

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