



Delta-Eko

Cinnah Cad. 106/6, Çankaya, 06550 ANKARA

Tel: 0312-440 7940 Fax: 0312-440 1011

www.delta-eko.org

18.06.2009 – 25.06.2009

Green new deal: A way out of turmoil?

Environmentally friendly policies wrapped under the concept of 'Green New Deal' may be a way out of the global crisis, according to participants of a conference that took place over the weekend at Istanbul's Bilgi University.

"Green economy" means more than just an economic system, said Miriam Kenneth, a member of Green Economics Institute at Oxford University. "Economics and ecology are not separate causes," she said. "Green New Deal opens new horizons for finance, since it demands different kinds of investments."

'Green New Deal' foresees a "renewable revolution," the creation of thousands of "green-collar jobs" and reining in the distorting power of the finance sector while making more low-cost capital available for pressing priorities.

"Especially countries such as Turkey need this new economy style in order to get out of this crisis rapidly," she said.

Quoting the words of Ban Ki Moon, secretary-general of the United Nations, Alain Lipietz, a French lawmaker from the Green Party, predicted a "global transformation" after the crisis. "

"Now the importance of the Kyoto accord is more obvious," Lipietz said.

"The European Union created 8 million jobs in transport and 4 million jobs in cars, but we need more lighter policies in the economy," he said. "For example, quality organic food and environmental-friendly buildings would mean more jobs as these areas require craftwork."

The world has to move from "individual spending to collective spending," Lipietz said. "Turkey and the European Union need each other in terms of economy and energy. I support Turkey's full membership to the EU."

"In order to overcome poverty in Turkey, Green New Deal is a must," said Ahmet Atıl Aşıcı from the Istanbul Technical University. "The government has launched a stimulus package, but nothing in the package includes renewable energy or green economy," he said.

Billions needed for environment reforms

As Ankara readies to push for opening the chapter on environment in the European Union accession talks during the Swedish presidency of the EU, a nongovernmental organization estimated that the reforms would cost the country about 70 billion euros.

The chapter on environment has been noted as one of the most problematic areas that Turkey needs to advance in. The Regional Environment Center, or REC, an NGO recognized by the European Commission, puts the cost of fixing the problems at 70 billion euros.



Delta-Eko

Cinnah Cad. 106/6, Çankaya, 06550 ANKARA

Tel: 0312-440 7940 Fax: 0312-440 1011

www.delta-eko.org

Parliament's Environment Commission discussed preparations for opening the environment chapter at a meeting on Thursday that was attended by REC representatives. Commission President Haluk Özdalga said the government aims to open the chapter during the six-month Swedish presidency, arguing that this would invalidate arguments from those in the EU who are against Turkey's membership. "By opening this chapter, we would discredit claims against Turkey," Özdalga said. "If we can achieve this, opposing Turkey would be more difficult."

Assistant Director of REC's Turkey branch Kerem Okumuş said it would cost Turkey 70 billion euros to comply with the EU acquis on the environment. Okumuş noted that Turkey needs to look for outside financing because he considered the EU's assistance as inadequate. He also reminded Turkish officials that it could take longer than Turkey expects, considering the interests of 27 different countries and other NGOs; it could take five years to pass a single piece of legislation, he said.

Germany likely to rescind Ilisu support

The German government is withdrawing its financial support for the controversial Ilisu Dam project, German daily Frankfurter Rundschau reported over the weekend.

The Ilisu Dam in the southern province of Batman is part of Turkey's Southeastern Anatolia Project, or GAP, which aims to build a series of dams to exploit the agricultural potential of the region and provide much-needed electricity to the country.

The Ilisu project is particularly controversial because once built, it will flood a wide region that includes the ancient town of Hasankeyf and force the resettlement of 65,000 people. European and local environmentalists have been campaigning for an end to the dam's construction.

Austria, Germany and Switzerland, the original financiers of the dam, have asked Turkey to address the environmental and cultural concerns raised by critics of the project.

The German daily, citing unnamed sources close to the federal government, said all relevant departments in the German government had agreed to withdraw support for the dam.

Credit agencies from the three European countries had agreed to provide financial support for the dam project, but then suspended funding until Turkey fulfilled 153 criteria, including conducting research into the biological diversity of the region and reaching an expropriation agreement with the people who would be removed from the area. The criteria were supposed to be fulfilled by Dec. 2008.

When that deadline arrived, the credit agencies suspended financing, saying Turkey had not fulfilled the criteria, and gave the country a 180-day extension until July 6.

Official announcement soon

According to the daily, the German government will officially announce its decision when the extension period ends.



Delta-Eko

Cinnah Cad. 106/6, Çankaya, 06550 ANKARA

Tel: 0312-440 7940 Fax: 0312-440 1011

www.delta-eko.org

More than 20 cultures have made their home in Hasankeyf, which was listed by the monthly Smithsonian magazine as one of the 15 Must-See Endangered Cultural Treasures of the World in its April issue. The city was of significant commercial importance in the Middle Ages.

Despite the threat to Hasankeyf and the withdrawal of credits, the Turkish government is determined to proceed with the construction of the dam, Forestry and Environment Minister Veysel Erođlu said last Wednesday. Erođlu said foundations for the new Hasankeyf would be laid July 20. The government has announced that the ancient city will be moved to another location to save it from the flood.

Istanbul's green space disappearing

Istanbul, Turkey's window to Europe, has witnessed so much unplanned urbanization that one might actually be able to count the number of trees in the city. According to environmental experts, the ratio of green spaces to population is well below European standards.

Istanbul has fallen victim to out-of-control development. The metropolis is one of concrete and in some districts it is hard to spot a tree, let alone a park.

Erhan Demirdizen, the Istanbul branch president for the Ministry of Public Works and Settlement, set up after the 1999 earthquake, said the ratio of green spaces in the city should be at least 10 square meters per person, while people in most European cities had 20 square meters. According to Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, the green area ratio per person in Istanbul is only 6.4 square meters.

When viewed from a vantage point, the sparse number of trees scattered between the thousands of buildings can almost be counted. The few areas of greenery in the city are mostly military zones, palace gardens, historical sites, cemeteries and mausoleum areas.

'Nowhere to escape during an earthquake'

Demirdizen said green areas in a city were very important for aesthetic reasons, preventing air pollution, softening the climate and creating a habitable environment.

The chamber president spoke about how Istanbul needed to be saved from becoming one big block of concrete. "According to international standards, there should be at least one park, or green area, within walking distance from anywhere in an area with a 700- to 800-meter radius. Forests outside of the city and open areas at crossroads are not useable areas. Besides, in a city susceptible to earthquakes, people need open spaces they can go to in a time of danger. But such areas do not exist in many places".

Kerem Ateş, the general secretariat for the Turkish Environmental and Woodlands Protection Society, or TÜRÇEK, said green areas in Istanbul were being marked for construction through rapid zoning changes in recent years. "The green spaces of Istanbul are about to become extinct. Istanbul is practically being left without oxygen. There is a great effect from the lack of trees and uncontrolled urbanization in these sub-Saharan temperatures experienced in summer."



Delta-Eko

Cinnah Cad. 106/6, Çankaya, 06550 ANKARA

Tel: 0312-440 7940 Fax: 0312-440 1011

www.delta-eko.org

Officials from Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality said the amount of green areas per person in Istanbul was 6.4 square meters, which includes the green areas at roadsides and crossroads and are described as passive. Municipality officials said the average rate for the rest of the world was seven square meters and 10 for the European Union. They have said the city's goal is to increase the ratio for Istanbul in line with the rest of Europe.

According to assistant professor Yıldız Aksoy from Bahçeşehir University's Department of Architecture, Istanbul is behind many cities for its lack of parks and open spaces. Some humbling comparisons to Istanbul's 6.4 square meters of parkland per person are: Amsterdam with 45.5 square meters, Rome with 45.3 square meters, Stockholm 87.5 square meters, New York 29 square meters and London with 27 square meters per person.

More water for Iraqis

Turkey said it agreed to send 500 cubic meters per second of water to Iraq to help this downstream country fight the drought.

Energy Minister Taner Yıldız announced the agreement following a meeting with Kareem Vahid Hasan, Iraqi minister for electricity, on Monday.

After a request from Iraq last month for more water, Turkey increased the amount of water it is giving the country. Yıldız said they agreed that Iraq would receive between 400 and 600-650 cubic meters of water per second on a daily basis and no less than 500 cubic meters per second average on a monthly basis. While underlining the existence of global problems linked to drought, Yıldız emphasized that water is an important tool to be used for the continuance of cooperation and good relations with Iraq. Hasan noted they had a meeting about water with Syria before their visit to Turkey, and he stated that in line with their demands, Syria had agreed to increase the quantity of water passing to their country.

Job offers fail to convince villagers

Locals and environmentalists have reacted harshly to plans for a second power plant in Muğla's Yatağan district, despite the argument that it will create jobs for the region.

A meeting organized Tuesday night to inform locals about the Environmental Effect Evaluation, or ÇED, became a platform for more than 100 locals and environmentalists to raise their voices against the project.

Ant Energy Ltd. is planning to build a 320-megawatt power plant in Yatağan's Kırık village. The town has had major problems with its current power plant, which had to stop production various times for causing pollution.

Selahattin Hacıömeroğlu, general manager of Çınar Engineering, which prepared the ÇED report, said the new plant would create 700 jobs. Villagers reacted harshly when a group of shop owners backed him, arguing the region needed new jobs. There was a small brawl between the two sides, and the protesters were still unconvinced.



Delta-Eko

Cinnah Cad. 106/6, Çankaya, 06550 ANKARA

Tel: 0312-440 7940 Fax: 0312-440 1011

www.delta-eko.org

'Tell the truth'

"What good are jobs if one doesn't have his health," asked Hidayet Aykurt, an 18-year-old asthma patient who was wearing a T-shirt with a skeleton on it. "I am a high school graduate, I don't have a job, but I don't know how long I will live. Do not try to deceive people with good words. Tell us the truth."

Tayyibe Demirel, a 55-year-old villager, accused state officials and the general manager of the firm that plans to build the plant of "telling lies."

"The first power plant has been poisoning the people for years," she said. "No tobacco is left on our lands, no olives are left on our trees. Every house around has an asthma or cancer patient. Don't tell lies any more, leave here immediately."

Environmentalists support villagers

Environmentalists agreed with the local villagers that the town must not have a second power plant. Nuray Şahbudak, spokesperson for Yatağan Environmental Protection Platform, or YAÇEV, said the ÇED report was "a disaster."

"A ÇED report should include the effects on the health of the locals, and the effects on the local produce," she said. "But the report does not once mention tobacco or olive. One must not dream about a second power plant in Yatağan, let alone organizing a meeting like this. We will do everything to stop this plan."

The meeting, which lasted two and a half hours, ended when only 12 people were left in the room.

Speaking after the meeting, Bilge Contepe, the co-leader of Turkey's Greens, argued that European energy companies wanted Turkey to build more power plants because they could not anymore.

"Power plants are one of the main forces of climate change, which is why European countries are giving them up," she said. "We will not let one be built here, and we will pursue every legal process to stop it."

Source: www.hurriyetdailynews.com