

## **Civil Society Calls for Urgent and Ambitious Climate Action**

More than 25 civil society organizations active in Turkey ask Turkish decision makers to step up, not step back

This year's 24th Conference of the Parties (COP24) hosted by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Poland is considered the most critical turning point since the signing of the Paris Agreement in 2015. The meeting will determine the guidelines to put the agreement into action through the Paris Rulebook. Countries are also expected to agree on more climate ambition and revise their climate pledges to be in line with the aim of preventing global climate change from reaching a point of no return.

COP24 will take place just two months after the release of the ground-breaking IPCC 1.5°C Special Report. Prepared by request of global decision-makers, the report warns about the urgency of taking responsibility in limiting global average temperature from increasing 1.5°C above industrial levels, and the need to take immediate action for more ambitious emission targets.

According to the IPCC Special Report, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions should halve by the year 2030, and go down to zero by 2050. Otherwise, average global temperature increase is expected to surpass the 1.5°C threshold between 2030 and 2052 -- this would mean a disaster on Earth and would change life as we know it.

The Turkish delegation's priority negotiation topic for COP24 is to exit the list of developed countries in the Annex I to the convention — the group of developed countries that are expected to contribute more in climate financing and emission reductions. This demand was raised in previous COPs and is now added as an official discussion point on the COP24 agenda.

Under the Paris Agreement, developed nations' financial assistance relies heavily on their own pledges. As an Annex I country with "Special Circumstances", Turkey has no obligation to increase its contribution in climate finance, and at the same time, exiting the Annex I does not mean access to the Green Climate Fund.

We, as the civil society representatives active in Turkey, believe that it is crucial for the country to approach the UN Climate Summits with a broader presence, including pushing to improve its climate pledges rather than limiting itself to the issue of access to the Green Climate Fund.

By becoming an official party to the Paris Agreement and ratifying it, and shifting away from fossil fuel-based energy policies, Turkey is also more likely to maintain climate finance streams from multilateral development banks and international finance institutions -- which the country is currently among the biggest beneficiaries. Raising the issue of global inequality in numerous contexts, Turkish decision makers should take a step forward on one of the most pressing issues requiring action: climate justice. During the negotiations, Turkish officials should also look beyond access to other financial resources, and focus on intra-regional and inter-regional climate injustices. By doing that Turkey should also fulfill its responsibilities as a developing country.

An immediate and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement, in addition to speedy decarbonization, can prevent irreversible losses in economic, social, cultural assets, and can save thousands of lives. Yet the country insists on bringing its Annex I country status to the agenda, and delays its ratification and pushes back any commitment to improve its insufficient climate pledge — and wastes and incredible opportunity to benefit from its promising renewable energy sector.

Turkey's refusal to ratify the Agreement could also cost its status in the international cooperation — once the Paris Rulebook is adopted, failing to ratify the Agreement this year will make the country unable to play active role in future negotiations, making it more an observer rather than a real actor.

Energy transformation has occurred many times throughout history, and countries able to lead them benefitted the most. In a time when even financial resources are taking distance from fossil fuels, Turkey should not isolate itself. Instead, it should use the advantages of being a rapidly emerging economy with high renewable energy potential, and become a real actor influencing the global just transition to a decarbonized future.

Turkey is in the Mediterranean Basin, one of the regions that will be most affected by climate change. However, this is not reflected in Turkey's climate as ambitious emission reductions. In its INDC, submitted prior to the signing of the Paris Agreement, Turkey pledged to decrease emissions from a projected high-level increase in its emissions in the next decade. This means greenhouse gas emissions are set to increase more than double their current levels, by 2030.

Such pledge shows that Turkey will keep on insisting the high-carbon, energy-intensive growth path based on coal and other fossil fuels, instead of determining an emissions peak date. With its impressive solar and wind potential, Turkey should reap the benefits of the low-carbon transition and make effective contributions in the global effort to save the planet and its people.

NewClimate Institute (NCI), CAN Europe (Climate Action Network Europe), and the Turkish Climate Network (iklim Ađı) had reported that energy policies in line with the Paris Agreement would mean a stronger Turkish economy. According to the study "Co-benefits of Climate Action: Assessing Turkey's Climate Pledge", Paris-compliant measures can reduce dependence on fossil fuels and save \$23 million dollars, prevent 35,000 air pollution related deaths, and create 64,000 new, green jobs in the energy sector. Other recent studies add onto these findings by demonstrating the costs of climate inaction in terms of loss and damage of livelihoods and the economy.

As civil society organizations working on climate change in Turkey, we believe that global actors within the new climate dynamics should be well differentiated, and that countries with bigger historical responsibility should take even more urgent and ambitious action. The Turkish government can also give constructive contributions in the improvement of the existing Annex system within the convention framework.

Unfortunately, we are already living in a "more-than-1°C degree warmer" world. We think that countries should be real about preventing the disasters that a "over-1.5°C" world would bring. We don't have time to step back. Therefore, we ask the Turkish government to immediately step up, take the leadership flag in global climate efforts and ratify the Paris Agreement, and strengthen its climate pledges.

### **Signing organizations:**

Adana Çevre ve Tüketicuyu Koruma Derneđi (ÇETKO) – *Adana Association for the Protection of the Environment and the Consumers*

Adana Tabip Odası – *Adana Chamber of Doctors*

Akdeniz Yeşilleri Derneđi – *Mediterranean Greens Association*

Antakya Çevre Koruma Derneđi – *Antakya Association for Environmental Protection*

Buđday Association for Supporting Ecological Living

Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe

Çevre ve Arı Koruma Derneđi (ÇARIK) – *Association to Protect the Environment and Bees*  
Dođa Koruma Merkezi (DKM) – *Nature Conservation Center*  
Ekoloji Kolektifi Derneđi – *Ecology Collective*  
EUROSOLAR Türkiye Yenilenebilir Enerji Birliđi  
Foça Çevre ve Kùltür Platformu (FOÇEP) – *Foça Platform for Culture and Environment*  
Foça Forum  
Greenpeace  
İskenderun Çevre Koruma Derneđi – *İskenderun Environmental Protection Association*  
Kadıköyü Bilim Kùltür ve Sanat Dostları Derneđi (KADOS) – *Kadıköyü Friends of Science, Culture and Arts Association*  
Kazdađı Dođal ve Kùltürel Varlıkları Koruma Derneđi – *Mount İda Association to Protect Natural and Cultural Assets*  
Mersin Çevre Dostları Derneđi – *Mersin Friends of the Environment Association*  
Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)  
Tarsus Çevre Koruma Kùltür ve Sanat Merkezi Derneđi – *Tarsus Center for the Protection of Environment, Culte and Arts Association*  
Türkiye Çevre Platformu (TÜRÇEP) – *Turkey Environmental Platform*  
WWF Türkiye  
Yeryüzü Derneđi – *The Earth Association*  
Yeşil Düşünce Derneđi - *The Green Thought Association*  
Yeşilist  
Yuva Derneđi – *Yuva Association*  
350 Türkiye