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RAISE AN ISSUE!

If you have an environmental cause you are passionate about as a citizen, but are experiencing obstacles in making it reach to the policy-makers desk; If you feel you can spark that next change in the environment you live in, but are not quite certain about how to raise it, get in touch with us, via our facebook page or www.env-net.org. We look forward to hearing from you!



SPOTLIGHT: NUCLEAR ENERGY INVESTMENTS IN TURKEY

Turkey's long standing environmental conflict between the state and the civil society regarding the plans for building nuclear power plants (NPPs) continues to be a hot topic in the country's agenda, especially after the recent developments regarding Akkuyu and Sinop NPPs. (Read on page 4)

EU Progress Reports Published for Western Balkan and Turkey

April 17, 2018 – The European Commission published the progress reports for the WB and Turkey region. Generally speaking, the reports could be described as encouraging, with the aim to give wind beneath the wings of the governments and their citizens, but also with clear demands for further actions for harmonisation, implementation and enforcement of their laws, strategies and action plans.

Albania

The European Commission published the country progress report for Albania where some of the key recommendations made within the environmental realm were:

- Ensuring an adequate budget for the drafting of the final cross-cutting environmental strategy, and strengthening the monitoring and reporting of national environmental agency.
- Developing water institutional capacity and a sound legal framework: The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process needs to improve, particularly with regards to hydropower plants constructing permits or constructing in the mining sector.
- The Commission has also suggested to implement the Paris Agreement by devising a national strategy and legal framework on climate change.

The report also lists some developments, some of which do reflect the current reality, such as:



Source: Co-PLAN archive, 2016, Discharges of waste water into water bodies

1. Problems related to waste treatments in landfills do not indicate any improvements, as none of the 61 municipalities have a differentiated waste collection system.
2. Regarding waste water treatment plants, the latest one constructed was that of Orikum Municipality, in 2016. Tirana Municipality has started the construction of the waste water treatment plant back in 2013 and it is expected to conclude in 2018. Therefore, it can be concluded that, there is no increased number of these plants during 2017. In fact, adding to the limited number of plants, there is still the problem with the sewer networks not covering all of the population, meaning that, this waste never

makes it to the plant (even if there is one). The latter contributes to the further pollution of water bodies as significant amounts of waste water are discharged in them.

On a last note, Albania has reportedly a long way to go concerning the enforcement of its strategy for air quality, as there is still a considerable mismatch between country and EU requirements when it comes to monitoring practices and technology for air quality, and the most recent monitoring results date back to 2016.



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The European Parliament has adopted new laws to prevent waste and boost recycling.

Belgium

April 2018 – The European Parliament has formally approved higher recycling targets and new measures to reduce waste across Europe. The vote comes four months after the same laws and targets were agreed by the European Commission, Parliament and governments as part of the three-way negotiations known as trilogues. Environment ministers from all the 28 EU countries are also expected to formally approve the agreement in the coming weeks, before the laws can officially be transposed into national legislation within 24 months from that moment. EU countries will now be required to recycle at least 55% of their municipal waste by 2025, 60% by 2030 and 65% by 2035. Other approved measures include a 10% cap on landfill by 2035, mandatory separate collection of biowaste and stricter schemes to make producers pay for the collection of key recyclables.

Recommendations also include economic incentives for reuse, deposit-return schemes, food donations and the phase-out of subsidies that promote waste.

Below is a table outlining the major agreements. Read here for more information or contact the EEB to learn more.

Commenting on the news, Piotr Barczak, waste policy officer at the European Environmental Bureau, said:

“Cities across Europe have already made steps forward to reduce waste and improve recycling. The new laws could have been more ambitious, but their successful implementation will help governments consolidate this progress with benefits for the people and society as a whole.”

“After years of discussions, it is now time for EU countries to walk the talk on waste reduction. These laws are necessary to tackle some of the world’s most pressing issues such as pollution in our cities and environment.”

A transparency problem

In May, we asked government officials whether they are going to support these much-needed proposals. Our aim is to promote an open and transparent process of decision making at the EU level, and a full transition to a circular economy. Unlike amendments and votes in the European Parliament, where discussions are recorded and publicly available, inter-institutional negotiations

take place behind closed doors. In many cases, EU citizens are prevented from knowing the position of their governments—let alone joining the debate. Member states failing to disclose their position are therefore shown in red on the map. While their lack of transparency does not necessarily mean they will oppose the proposals in the negotiations, as civil society organisations we denounce this level of secrecy.

Bosnia-Herzegovina

The EC (Draft) Report for Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2018, was presented on 17th of April, 2018. This report is a draft, as the EC is revising the opinions/answers presented in the Questionnaire, and the final Report will be published following the Questionnaire evaluation.

Some of the key recommendations concerned the fight against corruption, the judicial system, reforms in the public administration sector, freedom of expression and media transparency, etc.

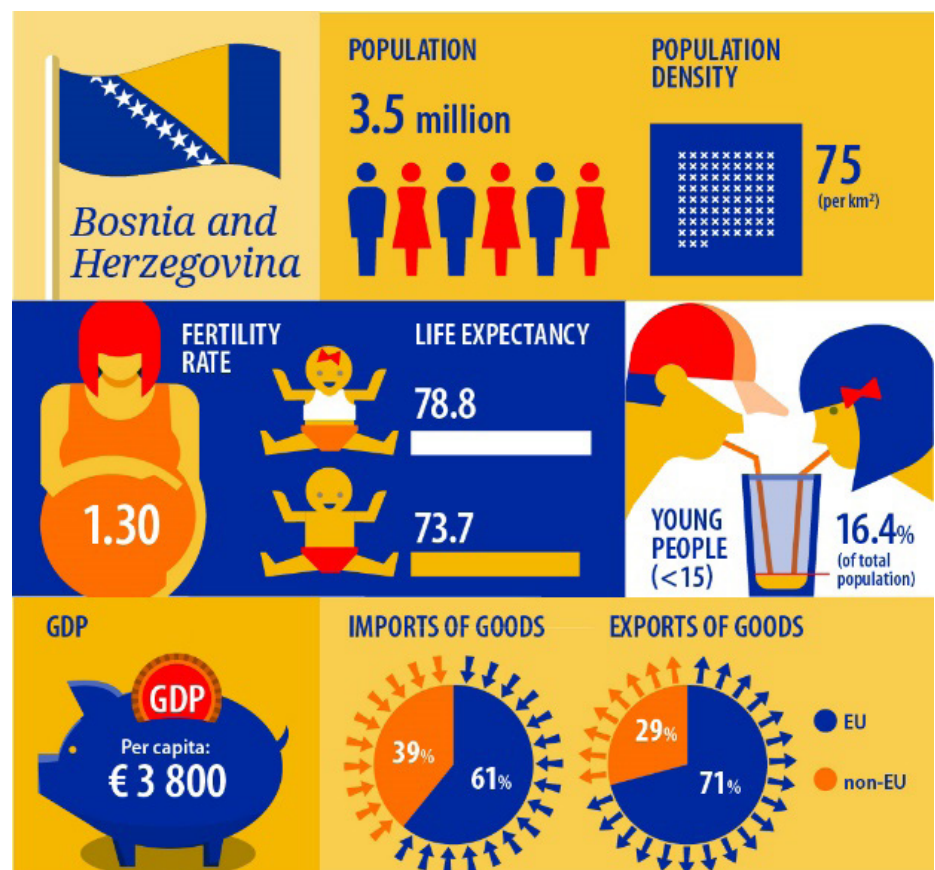
In the meantime, the Regional Center for Environment (REC) is working on developing Waste Management Plans for all entities and districts in the country.

Kosovo

The European Commission published the EU Progress Report for Kosovo for 2017, with the following recommendations:

- Environmental protection and climate change requires considerably more political willingness to tackle the growing challenges: Kosovo is at an early stage when it comes to environmental management and climate change.
- Regarding horizontal legislation, further progress is needed for full alignment and implementation of the remaining cross-cutting environmental directives. The lack of enforcement of Environmental Liability Directive undermines the effectiveness of environmental protection.
- Measures to improve air quality have yet to be adopted.
- A strategy and action plan on water protection should be adopted and urgent efforts are required to ensure the functioning of the river basin authority.

A week following the publication of the report, the Environment Committee of the Assembly of Kosovo, reviewed the State Strategy for Waters 2017-2036.



Macedonia

The key message from the EU Country Progress Report for Macedonia: A U-turn from backsliding, still, much needs to be done. More specifically, for chapter 15 (Energy) and chapter 27 (Environment and climate change) the report recommends as follows:

Under the Energy chapter - transposing and implementation of the EU's Third Energy Package; completion of the unbundling of transmission systems operators, improvement of the capacity of the Energy Department in the Ministry of Economy, as well as the Energy Agency.

Under the Environment and Climate Change chapter – improvement of coordination between the government, central level institutions and municipalities to actively work towards air quality improvement, intensify the efforts for implementation of adopted regional waste management plans and establishing of integrated regional waste management system, start implementing the Paris Agreement, also by developing a comprehensive strategy on climate-related action consistent with the EU 2030 framework.

Distinctively, related to the waste management legal framework, the report points it is partially aligned to the EU acquis, noting that a new law on waste, incorporating the updated circular economy principle, is being prepared and is expected to be adopted by the end of 2018.

Regarding climate change, and the legal alignment, the Report clearly states that the country needs to seriously step up efforts to transpose and start implementing the climate acquis, particularly on emissions monitoring and reporting, EU Emissions Trading System and effort sharing.

As in almost all previous country reports, the administrative capacity is assessed as largely insufficient, and the need for considerable strengthening of the awareness-raising activities is (like in the previous reports) emphasized.

Montenegro

The EU progress report for Montenegro was published in April 2018, emphasizing the fact that "Montenegro has made some progress in further aligning legislation with the acquis; yet significant efforts are still needed on implementation and enforcement, in particular on water quality, nature protection, and waste management. Some of the recommendations made, are:

- Accelerate implementation of the national strategy for transposing, implementing and enforcing of the EU acquis on environment and climate change, especially in the waste and water sectors;



Source: 2018 EU Report for the Republic of Macedonia:

<https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-the-former-yugoslav-republic-of-macedonia-report.pdf>

- Take measures to preserve and improve the ecological value of protected areas and potential Natura 2000 sites such as Ulcinj Salina, Lake Skadar and river courses;

- Start implementing the Paris Agreement, by implementing the national strategy and legislation on climate change, as well as related energy and transport policies”.

- Start with the identification and designation of the marine protected areas.

The report states that no progress has been made concerning waste management.

Serbia

Serbia: Reflection to EC 2018 Serbia Report and 2018 EU Enlargement Policy.

The EC Western Balkan 2018 strategy provides a historical window of opportunity to bind the region's future to EU. "Fundamentals first" remains essential (rule of law, fundamental rights, democratic institutions and public administration reform, as well as the economy).

EU accession negotiation with Serbia has progressed, with 12 chapters opened, 2 of which provisionally closed. Regarding Chapter 27 (Environment and Climate Change) the main recommendations were:

- Enhancing administrative and financial capacity by strengthening the Environmental Protection Agency, operationalizing and adequately resourcing the Green Fund and further improving interinstitutional coordination, in particular between central and local levels;
- Intensifying the implementation and enforcement work, such as closing non-compliant

landfills, investing in waste separation and recycling, reinforcing air quality monitoring, advancing river basin management and preparing for Natura 2000;

- Implementing the Paris Agreement, by developing a comprehensive strategy for climate change, consistent with the EU 2030 framework for climate and energy policies, and well integrated into all relevant sectors.

Turkey

European Commission has published the 2018 report on Turkey.

According to the progress report published by EC, Turkey has made almost no progress over the past year regarding the Chapter 27 on Environment and Climate Change, except in some areas related to chemicals. Similar to the previous reports, implementation and enforcement of the legislation are once again highlighted in the 2018 report, as being weak, especially regarding the waste management and industrial pollution. Having no progress in 2017 regarding the Chapter 27, the commission once again reiterated the recommendations in its 2016 report, as follows:

- Complete its alignment with the directives on water, waste management and industrial pollution and ensure the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive is correctly implemented;
- Ensure harmonisation with and the effective implementation of cross-cutting legislation, including the acquis on public participation and the right to access environmental information;
- Complete its alignment with the acquis on climate change, ratify the Paris Climate

Agreement on climate change, and implement Turkey's contribution to this.

In relation to the energy (Chapter 15), the report states that Turkey is moderately prepared and some progress has been made in this area, especially regarding the security of supply and renewable energy. However, once again, the commission stated that its recommendations from 2016 still remain valid.

The commission points out that the progress on nuclear energy, nuclear safety and radiation protection remains still quite limited. Turkey's existing legislation is only partially aligned with the Euratom acquis, specifically the Nuclear Safety Directive and the Spent Fuel and Radioactive Waste Directive. The draft framework law on nuclear energy is still pending. Furthermore, Turkey has not yet acceded to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, and is not yet a member of the European Community Urgent Radiological Information Exchange system.

Nuclear Energy Investments in Turkey

Turkey's long standing environmental conflict between the state and the civil society regarding the plans for building nuclear power plants (NPPs) continues to be a hot topic in the country's agenda, especially after the recent developments regarding both the planned Akkuyu and Sinop NPPs. First, the construction of the first unit of

Akkuyu NPP to be built by the Russian Rosatom, started with a ceremony, with the participation of Russian President Putin. Then, on April 19, the governorship of Sinop cancelled the anti-nuclear public gathering and conference commemorating the 32nd anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster, which were planned to be held in Sinop on 21st and 22nd of April. These two developments arrived on top of the recent approval of the EIA report for the Akkuyu NPP. On March 7 the Council of State rejected all 13 court cases and decided to continue the process with the current report. Even though the Council itself admitted that the EIA report lacks several elements, they still decided that these omissions are not of great importance and do not decimate the EIA report.

These new developments constitute only a small part of Turkey's long and complicated history concerning nuclear energy. For the last six decades, Turkish governments have been advocating the construction a nuclear power plant on the grounds that it is necessary for the development of the country, in particular for energy independence and technological advancement. To this end, in 1970s, a small bay on the eastern Mediterranean coast, Akkuyu, was selected for the construction of Turkey's first NPP. However, the first attempts in late 1970s provoked an immediate reaction from the civil society, concerned over the controversies such as the impacts on environment and health, waste management, and risks of nuclear accidents, which are associated with issues of ecological complexity, uncertainty, and irreversibility, giving rise to a long-standing ecological distribution

conflict that is yet to be settled.

In order to better understand Turkey's previous and current motivations to build a nuclear power plant and hence the background of this ecological distribution conflict, it is important to have a brief overview of the current energy policy practices in Turkey. Turkey's energy policies have been predominated by concerns over the security of supply, affordability of energy prices, and competitive power. These concerns

Overall, Turkey currently has plans for two nuclear power plants, with a total capacity of 9280 MW, in Akkuyu and Sinop, using similar strategies of Build-Own-Operate. The details of the two projects can be found in Table 1.

AKKUYU NPP

Akkuyu NPP is a planned nuclear plant at Akkuyu, in Büyükeceli, Mersin Province, Turkey. It will be Turkey's first nuclear power plant.

Reactor type: **VVER-1200/491 PWR**

Reactor supplier: **Atomstroyexport (Rosatom)**

Units planned: **4 × 1,200 MW**

Nameplate capacity: **4,800 MW**

Expected Cost: **US\$20 billion**

AKKUYU NPP

The Sinop NPP is a planned nuclear plant located in Sinop in northern Turkey. It will be the country's second nuclear power plant after Akkuyu.

Reactor type: **Atmea I Gen. III (PWR)**

Reactor supplier: **Atmea**

Units planned: **4 × 1,120 MWe**

Nameplate capacity: **4,480 MW**

Expected Cost: **US\$22 billion**

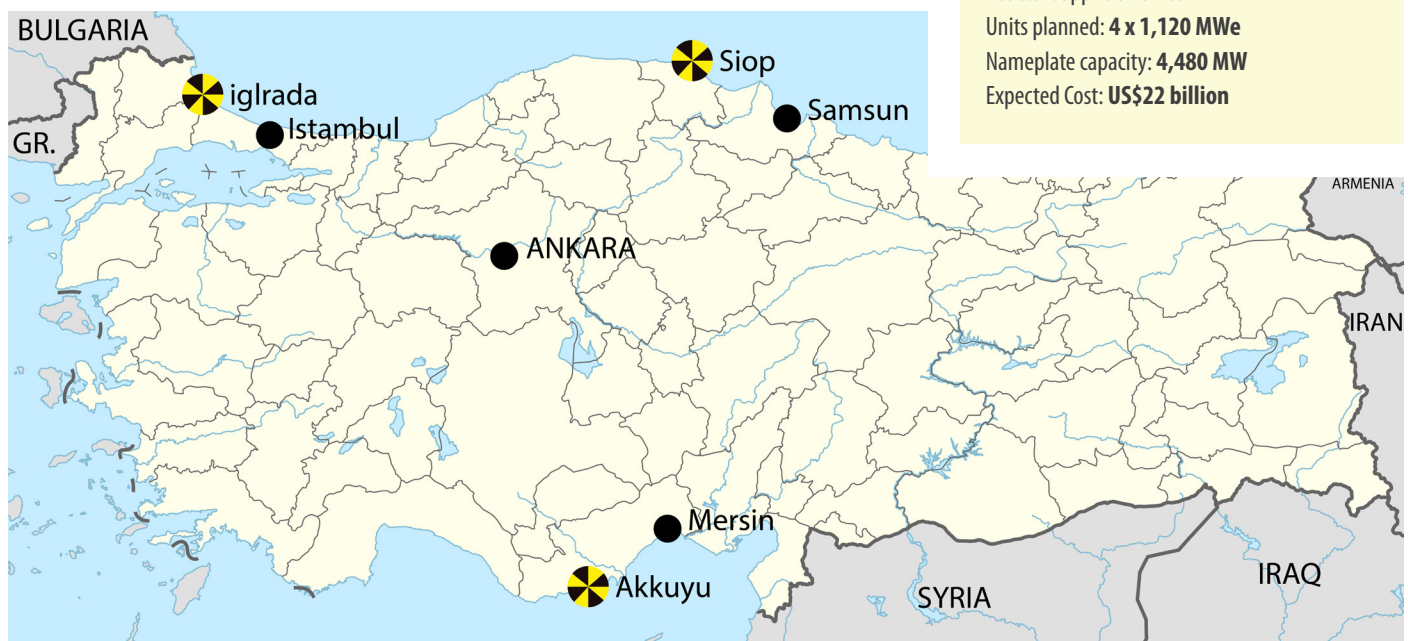


Figure 1: The three planned nuclear power plants in Turkey. While there are detailed agreements for Akkuyu and Sinop, the details for İğneada are yet to be disclosed.

entail a number of important challenges and responsibilities for the country, both in terms of energy and environmental policies. With a population of more than 80 million and GDP of approximately 1,800 billion dollars, Turkey sees the consumption of more energy as a precondition for the economic and social development of the country in line with its comprehensive ideology of modernization and progress. Accordingly, there are two main trends that have shaped the energy strategy of Turkey: the rapid increase in the demand for energy and electricity and country's dependence on imported fossil fuel, mainly natural gas, oil, and hard coal, leading to a significant deficit in its current account. Currently, around 76 percent of all energy consumed in the country is imported from abroad.

Turkey's current energy strategy involves the construction of three nuclear power plants (NPPs)

a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1957 and adopted its first legislation for the "Implementation of Nuclear Power in Turkey" in 1959. From that point onwards, Turkish governments, regardless of their political stance, attempted several times to build a commercial nuclear power plant in Turkey. However, all these attempts failed since the government was not able to secure the high amounts of initial financing. The continuous civil society resistance in the legal front played a role in stopping the projects, as well.

It is clear that the three major nuclear disasters in the history, namely the Three Miles Island, Chernobyl, and Fukushima disasters, have had a substantial negative impact on nuclear energy development in the world. For instance, Germany started to phase out its reactors after Fukushima, while Japan shut down all its reactors after that.

of high-level technical knowledge, the attempts for finding a private company to build and operate the plant failed several times. Turkish governments attempted to find an international investor at least four times and organised open tenders, which failed due to different economic, political and legal reasons.

After facing several impediments over the last five decades, such as the cancellation of nuclear legislation by the High Court, various legislative and administrative difficulties, court cases, and failed tenders, the government eventually decided to continue the project directly with Russia. In order to avoid the legislative "chaos" and delays due to another tender process, the government signed a bilateral intergovernmental nuclear cooperation agreement with Russia, in 2010. According to this agreement, Rosatom would build, own and operate the Akkuyu Nuclear Power



in different regions of the country, namely in Akkuyu, Sinop and Iğneada. In fact, the interest in nuclear power is not new, as Turkey has had rudimentary plans to build a nuclear plant for more than five decades now. The primary argument in favour of the construction of the NPPs is that the country needs nuclear energy for its economic growth, and more importantly, the plants mark a milestone in Turkey's modernisation aspirations and they are seen as a source of high prestige. However, national and local opposition has also been there from the beginning, as old as the initial plans. Having experienced the catastrophic effects of the Chernobyl disaster, Turkey has a very active anti-nuclear movement. The history of nuclear power in Turkey dates as far back as 1955, following Turkey's involvement in the "Atoms for Peace" initiative. In 1956, the national agency, i.e. "General Secretariat of Atomic Energy Commission", was established (TAEK, 2017b). Briefly after this, Turkey became

USA's decision to cease nuclear expansion even predates the Fukushima disaster, going back to late 1970s. No new nuclear power plant licenses were granted in the USA after the Three Miles Island accident in 1979 (the first large scale accident to raise suspicions over nuclear safety), and no new constructions were started after mid-1980s. The Chernobyl disaster in 1986 had also made countries reconsider the safety of nuclear energy, and the expansion of their nuclear capacity decelerated afterwards. The share of the nuclear in total electricity production first stalled and then decreased from 1986 onwards, hinting at the tentative conclusion that the new additions to the world's total electricity capacity are coming from sources other than nuclear.

However, these three major accidents do not seem to affect Turkey's appetite for pursuing the construction of NPPs. Since construction of a nuclear power plant is not an easy task due to the large scale of the operation and requirement

Plant until the end of its decommissioning (a new scheme different from the previous Build-Operate-Transfer strategies), and Turkey would provide the Akkuyu site free-of-charge and guarantee to purchase the electricity generated from Akkuyu for 15 years, at a price of 12.35 dollar cent per kWh. The fuel would be provided by the Russians, and again, the Russians would be in charge of the nuclear waste disposal. This exceptional deal



prompted a strong reaction from the antinuclear movement, and even a considerable number of pro-nuclear engineers and academics opposed the agreement. The construction of the plant was expected to start in 2013, but it has been delayed due to the administrative difficulties and civil society opposition.

Shortly after the agreement with Russia, the disaster in Fukushima happened in 2011; however, Turkish government did not withdraw or even suspend the project. In contrast, a similar agreement for nuclear cooperation was signed

Even though the intergovernmental agreements themselves are immune to court cases, the environmental impact assessment (EIA) report of the Akkuyu project (a 5500 pages long report) was brought to the court by several organisations. However, as mentioned earlier, despite the several important objections by the civil society, the council of state decided to continue the process with the current report, just one month before the arrival of Russian President Putin in Ankara.

Legal action is not the only means used by the opposition. Large anti-nuclear mobilisations

among the most unsuccessful ones. Nearly every government since 1960s, regardless of their political stance (conservative or left-wing), has pursued the aspirations of building nuclear power plants, but failed to realise them due to financial constraints, lack of administrative or technical capacity, civil society opposition, or as some claim, due to the proliferation concerns of the western countries. Turkey seems to have overcome these problems by adopting BOO strategy through intergovernmental agreements with Russia and Japan. Although this strategy solves the



Figure 1: The three planned nuclear power plants in Turkey. While there are detailed agreements for Akkuyu and Sinop, the details for İğneada are yet to be disclosed.

with Japan, with another Build-Own-Operate scheme, for the construction of Sinop Nuclear Power Plant, with capacity of 4480 MW and an expected cost of 22 billion dollars. According to this agreement, a Japanese led consortium would build the plant and own no less than 51 percent. The consortium would consist of Mitsubishi and Itochu from Japan, and GDF Suez (now Engie) and Areva from France. Again, similar to the agreement with Russia, an electricity purchase guarantee was granted with a price of 11,80 dollar cent per kWh.

Overall, Turkey currently has plans for two nuclear power plants, with a total capacity of 9280 MW, in Akkuyu and Sinop, using similar strategies of Build-Own-Operate. The details of the two projects can be found in Table 1.

were organised in Sinop and Mersin, as well as in big cities such as Istanbul, Izmir, and Ankara. The mobilisations in Sinop in April 2015 was one of the largest environmental protests the country has ever witnessed (Gürbüz, 2016). Local branches for Anti-Nuclear Platform, which was previously a predominantly national platform, are now established in many cities, including not only Sinop and Mersin, but also major cities such as Adana, Ankara, Antalya, Bursa, Istanbul, Izmir, Kocaeli, Ordu, and Samsun. The Anti-Nuclear Platform still maintains a strong, vocal opposition, even though less and less street mobilisations are permitted by the government due to the current state of emergency.

To recap, Turkey's nuclear program, albeit one of the oldest in the world, is also arguably

challenges such as lack of financial and technical capacity, it creates new problems. Over the years, the proponents of nuclear energy have based their arguments on the much-needed energy security and energy independence. Especially, the increasing dependence on Russia for natural gas imports in the recent years is presented as a strong argument in favour of NPP construction by the government. However, civil society opposition argues that the intergovernmental agreement will not reduce the overall dependence on Russia: if anything, it will only exchange the dependence on gas imports (to the Russian gas company GazProm), for the dependence on nuclear power (to the Russian nuclear power company Rosatom).