

# Turkey Approaching the Kyoto Protocol?

Earlier this year, the Government of Turkey submitted its First National Communication to the UNFCCC. It describes the economic, demographic and energy sector developments and the consequences these have had for Turkey's GHG emissions. At present, Turkey is not a Party to the Kyoto Protocol, but it is included in Annex I of the UNFCCC.

## Special circumstances

Turkey has had a special history during the development of the international climate policy regime. As an OECD country, it was included in Annex I of the UNFCCC in 1992 and even in Annex II, which is the list of relatively advanced industrialised countries who have committed themselves to financial and technical transfers to developing countries (see UNFCCC Article 4.3-5). The main difference between Annex I and Annex II was that the countries with economies in transition in Central and Eastern Europe were included in Annex I, but not in Annex II.

During the negotiations on the UNFCCC, Turkey objected to being included in both Annexes and it continued its reservation to the Annexes after the Convention had been adopted. However, these objections were not taken into account and under these circumstances Turkey did not ratify the UNFCCC. For Turkey, its inclusion in Annexes I and II was problematic because the country's per capita GHG emissions

were much lower than those in the EU (almost a factor three less) and its economic profile too much different from the other Annex II countries to be able to commit itself to technology and financial transfers to developing countries.

Eventually, Turkey requested the Conference of the Parties (COP) to recognise its special circumstances within Annex I. This resulted in Decision 26/CP.7 taken by COP-7 in 2001, through which Parties were invited "to recognize the special circumstances of Turkey, which place Turkey, ..., in a situation different from that of other Parties included in Annex I to the Convention" and which deleted Turkey from Annex II. Following that decision, Turkey officially announced that it would accede to the UNFCCC by publishing Law No.4990 in the *Official Gazette* on 16 October 2003. The official accession took place on 24 May 2004.

## Annex I / non-Annex B

Since Turkey was not a Party to the

## "Increase of lignite must be considered carefully"

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"At present, the dependency on import of oil and natural gas is very high in Turkey. With current economic trends, it is projected that this import dependency will increase even further. It is recognised that specific climate policies could improve countries' energy security position and air quality. This could be particularly relevant for Turkey as it has significant potential of renewable energy sources. The main sources are biomass, wind, small scale hydro and solar energy. If imported fossil fuels can be substituted with these sources, they would have multibenefits in both the fields of energy and climate. However, they need to be determined and climate change policy needs to be integrated with policies in other sectors. On the other hand, the First National Communication states that Turkey will increase its domestic energy resources, which also means increasing the use of domestic lignite reserves. The latter must be considered carefully."

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UNFCCC by the time the Kyoto Protocol was adopted in 1997, it could not be included in the Protocol's Annex B with countries that had adopted quantified emission limitation and reduction commitments (QELRCs). Turkey's situation is comparable to that of, among other Parties, Belarus, which is also included in UNFCCC Annex I, but not in Annex B of the Kyoto Protocol. Experts within the country realised that this situation was complicated. In fact, should Turkey decide to ratify the Protocol, it could not host CDM projects, as these can only be hosted by non-Annex I Parties (*i.e.* developing countries). As an Annex I Party, Turkey could host JI projects, but that would require adoption of a QELRC for 2008-12.

At a *Conference on Clean Development*, organised two years ago by the Bogaziçi University in Istanbul (16-18 February 2005), two possible strategies were described for Turkey should it decide to ratify the Kyoto Protocol:

1. Adopt a QELRC under Annex B. This would enable Turkey to host JI projects, but would also require complex negotiations about a reasonable national GHG emissions cap, which would be particularly complex given Turkey's strong GHG emission growth due to the acceleration of industrialisation since the mid-1990s.

## "Combining climate issue with energy policy"

JIQ: According to the First National Communication, Turkey has a large domestic energy supply potential. Moreover, only 30% of the landfills in Turkey are managed. How could, in your view, these issues be linked with the climate change issue?

Ms Nursel Berberoglu  
Head of Department Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey:

"Turkey is taking several steps to address the topic of landfills and waste. We have informed the European Commission that Directive 99/31/EC on landfilling of waste would be transposed through the adoption of a By-law drafted within the framework of a twinning project. The draft By-law is at the final stage and is planned to be published later this year. Within the same project, a questionnaire on controlled and uncontrolled landfills was sent to municipalities for the preparation of inventories. In another waste management project, two plans have been prepared while eight plans are still at the stage of feasibility study. There is also a project that aims to establish a network for the collection and processing of waste management data.

Under existing legislation, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry is responsible for issuing permits and for landfill facility inspection. Local authorities are in charge of the collection, transport and disposal of municipal and medical waste. The costs involved with the latter activities are covered by specific cleaning taxes paid by residents.

Turkey is also taking measures to address climate change and energy issues in a comprehensive manner. The main challenge is to reconcile the need for economic and social development with the increase in GHG emissions. Presently, Turkey's per capita GHG emissions are lower than those in the OECD and countries with economies in transition.

Turkey faces the challenge of meeting the rapid increase in its energy demand. While we have been working on increasing our energy supply, we have also taken measures to promote energy efficiency, energy conservation and renewable energy use. More emphasis has recently been put on the use of advanced energy technologies and on projects focusing on energy saving. The Turkish government provides financial assistance to that end. Research projects related to climate change are supported by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey."

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## “Turkey’s base year after 2000”

Dr Gürkan Kumbaroglu:

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### Climate / Energy package

“Over 75% of total primary energy supply in Turkey comes from imported sources. Turkey can reduce this extremely high import dependency through the development and implementation of renewable energy technologies and waste-to-energy projects. This would deliver a double benefit from both the climate and energy supply perspective and could easily be combined in a climate/energy package for Turkey as (a) entrepreneurs look forward to implementing such projects and (b) policy-makers look forward to reducing the import dependency of the country. The only necessity is to provide a financial incentive, an example of which could be emission certificate trading.”

### Upcoming Parliamentary elections

“None of the political parties with good chances to overcome the 10% hurdle for parliamentary elections refer to the Kyoto Protocol in announced policy documents. However, I believe that there will be a difference in Turkey’s position after the elections. A Parliamentary Commission, established earlier this year to elaborate Turkey’s position on the Kyoto Protocol, has recently finished its work and posted its draft report on the official website of the Grand National Assembly. In this report, the country’s current policy is criticised by noting that Turkey should not only ‘observe’ the Kyoto Protocol, but identify her position and start negotiations as soon as possible. Following an invitation, I had personal contact with the Parliamentary Commission and believe that the draft report represents a consensus of all Commission members with different political backgrounds. It is an encouraging outcome leading to the expectation that Turkey’s position to the Kyoto Protocol might change from a passive policy towards a more progressive approach. Moreover, I believe that the new Government of Turkey will find it hard to resist the growing public pressure against the current passive country policy, and will need to develop a solid strategy and convincing arguments identifying the conditions on how to approach the Kyoto Protocol.”

### Feasible way for Turkey to adopt commitments

“Unless there will be a technological revolution, it does not seem feasible that Turkey reduces its GHG emissions to the levels that we had back in the 1990s. However, an emissions trajectory with a base year chosen from one of the years of this century could be established under the negotiations. It is essential to make a fair distribution of responsibilities between countries, which can be based on various energy, economic, and GHG emissions indicators. Obviously, the Annex I classification of Turkey under the UNFCCC is not fair as there are various non-Annex I countries such as Malta, Israel or Cyprus with considerably higher per capita income and emission levels than Turkey. Still, I believe that Turkey could adopt some commitments which are sustainable, that is to say: which do not limit economic growth. In this respect, a feasible way might be to open the way for international cooperation. After all, as the country cannot readily benefit from the Kyoto Protocol flexibility mechanisms due to her Annex I and non-Annex B status, there should be some form of cooperation and financial assistance in order to encourage Turkey to adopt commitments.”

### Emissions trading

“Emission certificate trading seems to be the most promising way to foster a diffusion of GHG reducing technologies, applications and practices in Turkey. There are some examples of Verified Emission Reduction certificates trading, which are issued for projects realised in Turkey and traded in the global marketplace. But these cannot really provide an incentive for a wide expansion of GHG reducing projects as VER prices are too low. I see a big potential in the electricity sector, in particular, because (a) power generation has the highest share in Turkey’s CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, 34% in 2005, and (b) there is an annual demand growth of 7-8%. This requires a continuous flow of new sustainable investments.”

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2. Request the COP/MOP to amend the Kyoto Protocol and allow Turkey to host CDM projects as an Annex I/non-Annex B country.

Both strategies would require a time consuming process of amending the Kyoto Protocol. First, the request for an amendment must be circulated to other Parties via the UNFCCC Secretariat six months before the session of the COP/MOP. Then COP/MOP must approve the amendment, after which it must be ratified by 75% of the Kyoto Protocol Parties. Even in case of a rather smooth process, this amendment might take about two years. The experience of Belarus, which adopted a QELRC within Annex B in November last year (at COP/MOP-2), but which eventual endorsement through ratification by three-

quarters of the Kyoto Protocol Parties is still far from certain, is illustrative in this context. Now that Turkey still has not ratified the Kyoto Protocol, it is unlikely that it will be able to host JI or CDM projects during the 2008-2012 commitment period.

### Non-Annex I?

Recently, on 5 June of this year, a discussion panel on *The Kyoto Protocol: Opportunities and Threats for Turkey* was organised at the Bogaziçi University by the *Turkish Association for Energy Economics*. At this workshop, the debate, first, centred around the issue of whether Turkey should request the COP to be deleted from UNFCCC Annex I, so that it would not have to adopt a QELRC as a Kyoto Protocol Party and would be able to host CDM projects as a

non-Annex I Party. A representative of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs argued that ratification of the Kyoto Protocol as an Annex I Party would not automatically imply that Turkey would have to adopt a QELRC. She said that there is no legal basis for such an assumption.

After that, the debate focused on the post-2012 climate regime. Some participants argued that being a Party to the Kyoto Protocol, even without being an Annex B Party and without benefiting from the CDM, would give Turkey more influence during negotiations within the *Ad-hoc Working Group* context. Others, however, were concerned that ratifying the Kyoto Protocol would increase the likelihood that Turkey would have to accept quantified commitments after 2012.

### Irrelevant

With a view to this, some participants underlined that formulating quantified commitments for Turkey on the basis of 1990 GHG emission levels would be problematic as Turkey’s GHG emissions increased by almost 70% between 1990 and 2004. This is mainly due to an acceleration of the industrialisation process during this period. Participants argued that 1990 as a base year has become quite irrelevant. In addition, Turkey’s per capita CO<sub>2</sub>-eq emissions in 2003 amounted to 4.1 tonnes per year, which is 2.5 times lower than average per capita GHG emissions in the EU-25 and more than 3 times less than the average for all Annex I countries. In terms of CO<sub>2</sub> per capita emissions, Turkey was slightly below the 2003 world average (see Turkey’s National Communication, 2007, p. 6, Table 1.1, which can be downloaded from unfccc.int, under ‘National Reports’). Participants underscored the need to keep these special circumstances for Turkey, as formulated in Decision 26/CP.7, in mind during future negotiations.

After the panel meeting, *JIQ* spoke with three panel experts about the issues explained in this article. Their views are highlighted in the boxes on these pages.



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