

EU Parliament demands stop of work in Ilisu dam project – investigation by EU Commission?

Vienna, Feb 3rd 2010. In its resolution on Turkey's progress report, adopted yesterday, the European Parliament demands that Turkey stop all works on the Ilisu dam project. At the same time the EP calls on the EU Commission to conduct a study on the impacts of dams in South-East Anatolia. Until the results of this study are presented, all works on the dam project should be halted.

With this resolution the international pressure towards Ankara to finally stop the Ilisu project increases yet again. It puts pressure on Turkey's government, and above all its Minister of Environment Mr. Veysel Eroglu, to meet all project requirements concerning the resettlement of affected people and the protection of the environment and cultural heritage. In their view, Germany, Austria and Switzerland's withdrawal from project involvement was purely politically motivated. The three European countries had used an environmental default clause to pull out of the project in July 2009 after Turkey had repeatedly failed to fulfil project conditions.

“This is a strong signal from the EU to Ankara, that Europe will continue to watch over the Ilisu dam project, even after the the withdrawal of Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The project is turning into an important gauge for the state of the accession talks between the EU and Turkey. We welcome this step forward.“, says Ulrich Eichelmann from the Stop Ilisu Campaign

At the moment all work on the Ilisu construction site has come to a halt. Turkey is seeking new financing to replace the funds originally provided by European banks. Despite strong political pressure, the Turkish Banks Akbank and Garantie Bank have so far not approved further loans for the project. Ankara has announced the resumption of work activities for spring 2010. The threatened cultural monuments in and around the ancient city of Hasankeyf will not be moved to an „archaeological park“ (which dam critics have said is impossible all along), but rather „conserved under water“, according to Minister of Environment Eroglu.

Further Information:

European Parliament resolution of 10 February 2010 on Turkey's progress report 2009:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0025+0+DOC+XML+V0//DE>

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