

A Selection of Environmental News from Turkey

---

# Polen Ekoloji Bulletin

## November 2025

---

2

### **At A Glance: Ecological Developments in November**

In November 2025, communities across Turkey intensified resistance against mining, energy, and industrial projects that threaten water resources, biodiversity, farmland, and public health. Our bulletin highlights the growing power of large corporations backed by state approvals, alongside sustained grassroots, legal, and ecological struggles for the right to land, water, and the city.

4

### **On the Ground: A Selection of News**

In November 2025, at least 15 major extractive projects, 6 energy projects, and 5 large-scale industrial or urban infrastructure projects advanced across Turkey. These developments triggered over 20 documented cases of community resistance including protests, marches, lawsuits, and public campaigns.



---

# I.

## At A Glance: Ecological Developments in November

### Mining Projects

- **Community Resistance and Grassroots Mobilization:** Across Turkey, villagers and local communities mounted sustained resistance against mining, quarry, and extraction projects threatening their land, water, and livelihoods. From [Artvin](#), [Çorum](#), [Osmaniye](#), and [Samsun](#) to [Aydın](#), [Tokat](#), and [Manisa](#), residents organized marches, tractor protests, occupation watches, and public forums, frequently emphasizing risks to drinking water, agriculture, and human health. In several cases, protests were met with police or military intervention, highlighting the escalating tension between communities and extractive companies.
- **Ecological Destruction and Biodiversity Loss:** Many projects target ecologically sensitive areas, including forests, wetlands, water basins, and endemic habitats such as [Murat Dağı](#), [Kazdağları](#), [Seyfe River](#), [Latmos](#), [Akbelen Forest](#), and the [Toros Mountains](#). Reports consistently warn of irreversible damage to biodiversity, groundwater, forests, and agricultural systems due to cyanide leaching, open-pit mining, and quarry expansion.
- **Legal Struggles and Partial Victories:** Communities increasingly turned to courts, resulting in some significant legal wins: ÇED exemptions were suspended, permits annulled, and projects halted, such as the [Kaş marble quarry](#) and [Manisa's sand-gravel mine](#). However, many rulings were ignored or bypassed, with companies continuing operations despite ongoing lawsuits.
- **Corporate Power and State Approval:** Large conglomerates—including Cengiz, Limak, Koza, Çelikler, and Koç–Fernas partnerships—received state approvals for large-scale mining, often involving cyanide use and massive land expansion.



Photography: Özer Akdemir/ Evrensel

---

## Energy Projects

November witnessed a wave of new energy projects across Turkey:

- **Solar Energy Projects (GES):** In [Mardin's Midyad region](#), 1,110 decares of grazing land are planned for a solar power plant. In [İzmir's Karaburun Küçükbahçe](#), a solar power plant project is facing legal opposition from local communities and civil initiatives due to threats to grazing and agricultural lands.
- **Wind Energy Projects (RES):** In [Çanakkale's Kaz Dağları](#), Innovative Energy's wind project, approved by the Ministry of Environment, will result in the cutting of 3,066 trees. In [Edirne's Enez-Çandır](#), an 8-turbine wind project with storage facilities threatens Gala Lake, Meriç Delta ecosystems, and local agricultural and forest lands, prompting legal challenges from residents and NGOs. In [Dersim's Pülümür](#), a six-village wind project is similarly contested for violating public and environmental interests.
- **Hydroelectric Projects (HES):** In [Ankara](#), Keçikaya and Bozcakır HES projects approved on the Polatlı river will affect water resources, prompting citizen lawsuits. In [Konya Taşkent](#), a GES-HES hybrid project was annulled by court due to misrepresented land and unassessed environmental risks. [Munzur Valley in Dersim](#) is legally protected from HES and dam projects to preserve its unique ecosystem.
- **Geothermal Projects (JES):** In [Aydın](#), Efendi Jeotermal plans new wells in Kuyucak after previous resistance in Mezeköy. In [Manisa](#), Zorlu Jeotermal's project was canceled by court. Local environmental groups in Uşak and Salihli continue mobilizing against geothermal and mining projects. In [Germencik, Aydın](#), a geothermal plant explosion highlights ongoing oversight deficiencies.

## Urban Rights

In November 2025, communities across Turkey mobilized against widespread violations of the right to the city, environmental justice, and public health. Residents protested toxic waste facilities in [İzmir's Harmandalı](#), industrial and OSB projects threatening farmland in [Zonguldak](#) and [Kocaeli](#), plastic waste imports in [Adana](#), and industrial pollution contaminating the Tigris River in [Diyarbakır](#). Courts upheld protections for [İstanbul's Sazlıdere](#) drinking water basin, while urban green spaces in [Hatay](#) and [Kadıköy](#) faced development pressures. People demanded the return of public land in [İzmir's Basmane](#) district, emphasizing transparency, public ownership, and residents' rights to healthy, livable cities.





---

## II.

### On the Ground: A Selection of News

The monthly Polen Ekoloji Bulletin in English comprises a selection of news on environmental destruction and environmentalist resistance from the more comprehensive monthly bulletin in Turkish. Both bulletins are available [here](#).

**02.11.2025**

#### **Authorities Approve Kırşehir Gold Mine Backed by Koç Holding–Fernas Partnership**

**Kırşehir**  
[Yeni Demokrasi](#)

Turkey’s Ministry of Environment approved a controversial gold mining project in the Kervansaray Mountains near Kırşehir, led by DEFAŞ, a joint venture involving Koç Holding and Fernas, owned by AKP MP Ferhat Nasıroğlu. The decision was finalized at the third Environmental Impact Review Commission meeting, despite objections from municipalities, environmental groups, and professional chambers. Kırşehir Mayor Selahattin Ekicioğlu warned that around 200,000 tons of concentrated ore would be exported annually, raising concerns about the extraction and loss of valuable elements without transparent oversight. Local platforms also stressed severe risks to water resources in one of Turkey’s driest regions, pledging continued legal resistance.

**03.11.2025**

#### **Plastic-Free Ports Project Launched in Foça and Mordoğan**

**İzmir**

[Evrinsel](#)

The Plastic-Free Ports Project, aiming to reduce plastic pollution in Turkey and Tunisia, was launched on October 21 in İzmir. Led by WWF-Mediterranean and planned to run for three years, the project focuses on reducing plastic waste at its source in the ports of Foça and Mordoğan, particularly from tourism and fishing activities. It promotes a circular model involving fishers, port workers, recycling companies, and local governments. Experts emphasized the importance of political responsibility and international cooperation in combating marine plastic pollution. The opening meeting concluded with a workshop where participants shared policy and practice-based solution proposals.

**05.11.2025**

#### **57,000 Trees to Be Cut for Cengiz Holding’s Cyanide Gold Mine: The Mine Will Destroy Local Livelihoods**

**Eskişehir**

[Evrinsel](#)

A cyanide-based gold and silver mining project planned by ETİ Bakır A.Ş., a subsidiary of Cengiz Holding, has received environmental approval in Eskişehir. The project will result in the cutting of over 57,000 trees and significant changes to local topography, threatening agriculture, beekeeping, and livestock farming. Residents warn that cyanide leach ponds and intensive water use from the Sakarya River will harm public health and crops. Critics point out serious inconsistencies in the revised Environmental Impact Assessment, including the removal of active fault line data and drastic changes to water-use figures. Endemic species and wildlife are expected to suffer irreversible damage.

**08.11.2025**

#### **186 of Turkey’s 240 lakes have dried up Countrywide**

[Evrinsel](#)

Turkey is facing an escalating climate crisis marked by severe water loss and desertification, according to a report by DEM Party MP Sinan Çiftyürek. Of 240 lakes in Turkey, 186 have already dried up, while the remaining 54 are at risk. Çiftyürek warns that desertification could spread across much of the country within 50–60 years, threatening biodiversity, agriculture, and freshwater supplies. Wildlife populations have reportedly declined by 73 percent. Key regions such as the Amik and Konya plains may become unsuitable for farming. Çiftyürek calls for urgent measures, including ending environmentally destructive mining and reducing fossil fuel use.

**10.11.2025**

**120 million tons of waste generated in Turkey in one year: 42 million tons hazardous Countrywide**

[BirGun](#)

Turkey's statistical office (TÜİK) released its 2024 waste statistics, reporting a total of 120 million tons of waste generated across manufacturing, mining, thermal power plants, organized industrial zones (OSBs), and households, including 42.2 million tons of hazardous waste. Mining dominated overall waste volumes, reaching over 1 billion tons when excavation materials were included. Thermal power plants produced 26.5 million tons, mostly ash and slag. Municipalities collected 32.3 million tons of waste, averaging 1.09 kg per person daily. In total, 195 million tons of waste were processed nationwide, with 139 million tons disposed of and only 56 million tons recovered or recycled.

**11.11.2025**

**Turkey processes 75 million tons more waste than it produces Countrywide**

[Evrensel](#)

Turkey's Statistical Institute (TÜİK) announced its 2024 waste statistics, reporting that 120 million tons of waste were generated domestically, while 195 million tons were processed. According to Prof. Dr. Erkan Aktaş from Mersin University, the 75-million-ton gap indicates that Turkey is processing large amounts of imported waste, creating a hidden environmental burden. TÜİK does not disclose how much of the processed waste is imported, its origin, or its type. Aktaş emphasized that "processing" largely means disposal rather than recycling: 139 million tons were landfilled or destroyed, while only 56 million tons were recovered, and just 448,000 tons converted into energy. He argued that Turkey has become a country that buries waste rather than valorizing it. Aktaş also criticized the "Zero Waste" policy as a symbolic showcase, noting that weak regulations and low environmental costs have turned Turkey into a global waste destination after China banned waste imports. He called for an immediate ban on waste imports and a shift toward a truly waste-free economic model.

**15-19.11.2025**

**Cengiz Holding's Cyanide Confession: "There Is No Guarantee That Leaks Won't Occur" Artvin**

**15 November:**

[Evrensel](#)

In Artvin Murgul, the new copper and cyanide leach plant project by Eti Bakır A.Ş., a subsidiary of Cengiz Holding, faced opposition from local residents. During a meeting held on November 13, citizens specifically questioned the safety of the leach ponds. Eti Bakır's Environmental Director Yusuf Topçu stated, "In engineering, there is no such thing as zero; 100% leak-proof guarantees cannot be given," which fueled further concerns. Residents opposed the new facilities, noting that the existing Lebiskür Waste Storage Facility has been leaking for years, and also raised the company's 2014 pledge not to produce cyanide. The meeting also addressed Murgul's geology, which is prone to landslides. Citizens warned that the leach ponds pose serious risks due to ground movement and cracking.

**18 November:** [Evrensel](#)

The Emek Party (EMEP) Arhavi District called on Artvin residents and democratic forces to unite against the planned cyanide leach plant in Murgul. The statement described the project as a capital-driven attack threatening the environment, natural resources, and community life, emphasizing that the struggle defends life, labor, and the region's future through organized, collective action.

**19 November:** [Evrensel](#)

The "No to Cyanide in Murgul" march, organized by the Murgul Siyanüre Hayır Platform, began at Damar Mahallesi Square and ended at Eti Bakır's mining center. Citizens, political party representatives, and NGOs participated. Speakers, including CHP MPs Uğur Bayraktutan and Harun Özgür Yıldızlı, emphasized unity across political lines, defending Murgul's land, water, and life. Mayor Mehmet Yıldırım stressed that the issue transcends politics, framing the cyanide plant as a threat to community safety and survival.

---

13.11.2025

### **ÇED Approval for Limak Holding's Toxic Mining Project**

**Balıkesir**

[Evrensel](#)

Limak Holding's subsidiary Altınordu Madencilik has received Environmental Impact Assessment (ÇED) approval for a cyanide-based gold mining project in Balıkesir, despite severe environmental risks. The project will involve cutting nearly 20,000 trees and using hundreds of thousands of tons of hazardous chemicals annually, including cyanide, sodium hydroxide, and hydrochloric acid. Located in an ecologically sensitive area that includes parts of the Kazdağları region, the mine will affect forests, pastures, and agricultural land. Over the past decade, Balıkesir has seen 429 mining projects approved, highlighting the intense pressure of extractive industries on the region.

17.11.2025

### **Meriç's Water to Be Transported to Organized Industrial Zones (OSB)**

**Edirne**

[Sendika.org](#)

The final Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report has been published for the project planned to provide industrial and utility water from the Meriç River. Under the project, a pumping station to be established in Edirne's Uzunköprü district will extract more than 7.2 cubic meters of water per second from the river. The water will be supplied to contracted areas, including the Çorlu Organized Industrial Zone, the Çerkezköy Organized Industrial Zone, and surrounding OSBs in Tekirdağ. The report also foresees the construction of three reservoirs (Yeniköy, Kadriye, Nadırlı On Dönüm) and material quarries totaling approximately 516 hectares. Project areas cover numerous villages, neighborhoods, and towns in Edirne, Kırklareli, and Tekirdağ.

### **Villagers Protest Organized Industrial Zones (OSB) in Zonguldak**

**Zonguldak**

[Sendika.org](#)

Planned Organized Industrial Zones (OSBs) in Aydınlar and Süleymanbeyler villages, Karadeniz Ereğli district, faced strong opposition from local residents. Villagers warned that the OSB plans seriously threaten fertile agricultural lands, living areas, and local water basins. They protested with the slogan, "We will protect our land, village, and future." Residents criticized the site selection for ignoring first-class farmland and forested areas, highlighted that they were not informed during the process, and noted the lack of comprehensive technical and social impact assessments.

18.11.2025

### **Call from the Turkey Ship Recycling Monitoring Coordination to the EU: Cancel Ship Recycling Approvals in Aliğa**

**İzmir**

[Evrensel](#)

The Turkey Ship Recycling Monitoring Coordination called on the European Commission to revoke all EU approvals for ship recycling facilities in Aliğa, citing repeated violations of waste management, asbestos handling, and leakage control. In a press conference, Selma Akdoğan highlighted unsafe working conditions, environmental risks, and exemptions from Environmental Impact Assessment procedures. The coordination criticized "beach dismantling" methods and double standards allowing banned practices. They urged the EU to update approval procedures, ensure safe, healthy, and sustainable ship recycling practices, and collaborate with Turkish authorities and civil society to protect coastal ecosystems and human rights. Several NGOs and local organizations endorsed the call.

---

## U.S.-based Hydropower Projects on Ankara River Spark Local Opposition Amid Drought

### Ankara

[Cumhuriyet](#)

In Ankara, the government's approval of two hydropower projects on the Ankara River has raised concerns amid ongoing drought. U.S.-based H2O International received Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) approval for the 18-stage, 54-turbine "Keçikaya Archimedes Screw HES" and the 16-unit "Bozçakır Archimedes Screw HES," valued at nearly 2 billion TL combined. Both projects aim to generate electricity using water from local regulators, but residents fear impacts on prime agricultural land. Citizens have filed lawsuits against the approvals and compulsory expropriation orders, pledging continued resistance to protect water sources, local agriculture, and community livelihoods.

## Parliamentary Oversight Fails on Animal Rights in Turkey

### Countrywide

[Ethra](#)

The Animal Rights Monitoring Committee (HAKİM) reported that in the first half of 2025, Turkey's Parliament showed significant gaps in oversight on animal rights. Of 48 parliamentary questions submitted, 22 went unanswered, and many responses were superficial. Key issues—including imported animals, disease data, wildlife protection, and shelter conditions—remained largely unaddressed, leaving the public uninformed. Two parliamentary research proposals on animal rights were submitted by DEM Party deputies but were blocked or ignored due to the current parliamentary majority. HAKİM emphasized that transparency, accountability, and pluralism are essential for strengthening animal rights and democratic governance in Turkey.

**19-22.11.2025**

### Akbelen Turned into a Desert in Two Months

#### Muğla

**19 November:** [Yeni Demokrasi](#)

In Akbelen Forest, located in İkizköy, Milas district of Muğla, coal mining operations have resulted in the cutting of hundreds of thousands of pine trees, the removal of olive groves, and the transformation of the area into a largely barren landscape within just two months. Residents, reacting to the rapid destruction of forests and agricultural land, stated that the activities in Akbelen are irreversibly damaging their living spaces and affirmed that they will continue their struggle.

**22 November:** [BirGün](#)

A site inspection took place yesterday in the lawsuit against the exemption of tree cutting and mining activities in Akbelen from the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process. Life defenders protested the inspection, saying, "When the soil goes, we go too."

**27.11.2025**

## İzmir Demands Basmane Land Returned to Public Use

### İzmir

[Pirha](#)

In İzmir, 165 NGOs, associations, and political groups issued a joint statement demanding the "Basmane Çukuru" land, long unused and slated for a cultural center, be fully returned to public ownership. The groups emphasized the area's integration with Kültürpark and rejected commercial development such as shopping malls, labeling it urban crime. The statement, read by architect İlker Kahraman, highlighted the need for transparency and public approval in planning processes and criticized past unlawful transfers to private interests. Activists marched to İzmir Metropolitan Municipality to submit their petition and pledged to monitor the ongoing property transfer case.



