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Protecting the environment through transparent, inclusive and accountable land use

Motion for a resolution

tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

In order to ensure decent living conditions for the present and future generations, it is important to sustain essential ecological processes and ecosystem services provided by nature. The Sustainable Development Goal 15 of the United Nations requires the governments to ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services.

At the same time, there is a constant pressure on our societies to perform in a competitive global environment. This sometimes leads to previously protected natural reserves being re-opened for economic and commercial activities and results in conflicts between environmental agencies and businesses, the local population and investors, governments and NGOs.

In Turkey, there is currently a growing concern with respect to a “re-zoning” project, which, according to civil society organisations, will open a vitally important part of the natural reserves for construction and will result in irreparable damage to natural habitats in the Aegean region. The NGOs claim in particular that no public consultation has taken place and that the reports prepared to justify this project have not been made public. Regretfully, this situation is not unique to Turkey. It therefore requires a broader debate and urgent action.

How to reconcile the need to protect the environment and to respect the right to a healthy environment of future generations with competitive market economies? How to take into account the needs of the local population without stifling economic development? How can international standards be used to support the decision making in this area?

Sustainable development is a precondition for the enjoyment of human rights. Access to information, participation in decision-making and access to justice are crucial, and can help reaching fair and viable solutions. The Parliamentary Assembly should make recommendations with a view to ensure a transparent, inclusive and accountable use of land.

