

R.O.T
PRIME MINISTRY
General Directorate of Personnel and Principles

No: B.02.O.PPG.O.12-383-02209

11/1/1993

Re: Protection of Wetlands

CIRCULAR
1993/1

Besides being a survival environment for water birds, wetlands creates equilibrium of the water regime within their areas and provide shelter for rich and characteristic plant and animal groups. They are the ecosystems producing the highest organic materials together with the tropical forests of the world and have a very high economical value. Furthermore they form a large source for scientific and recreational uses.

Turkey is the richest country within Europe and thye Middleeast with respect to wetlands, excluding Coomowearth of Independent States. The main reason for wetlands in our country to have internationally significance is that these areas constitute the focal point of bird migration between Europe, Asia and Africa continents.

Therefore, the wetlands in Turkey and the precautions taken for them are known and closely monitored by the World public opinion.

This topic has been emphasized during the "Conference on Environment and Development" which was held in Rio de Janerio between 1-15 June 1992 and agreement was reached for protecting the wetlands. Furthermore it was decided that the international meeting on the "Protection and Management of Wetlands" which will be hosted by Turkey is planned to take place at the end September in Cappadocia.

Some of the issues threatening the wetlands are drying the areas for agricultural or settlement purposes, pollution occuring due to local sewerage, industrial wastes, agricultural pesticides and fertilizers, tourism, housing, illegal and excess gaming, over grazing, egg collecting and uncontrolled rush cutting.

Although as Turkey we are the part of the international agreements for wildlife protection there are no sufficient legislation in our national juridical system for protection and development of such areas.

Efforts are being made for legal arrangements on the subject. However, the "Agreement on Protection of European Wildlife and Natural Survival Environments" (BERN), published in the Official Gazette of 18318 dated 20.2.1984; "Agreement on Protection of the Mediterreanean against Pollution" (BARCELONA), published in the Official Gazette of 19404 dated 13.8.1987 and "Agreement on Protection of Birds" which have been endorsed by Law No 797 imposes obligations for the protection of these areas. In additon the "Convention on Protection of Wetlands Having the Internationally Significance Especially as Survival Environment of Aquabirds" (RAMSAR) is submitted to the Parliament for endorsement.

Due to our international responsibilities from above mentioned Agreements and RAMSAR Convention the following measures are to be taken immediately.

- The projects that may cause drying of wetlands and deteriorste natural equilibrium will be reevaluated and any occurence of negative impacts where reversion is not possible will not be allowed.

- Establishment of essential purification systems will be ensured for all kinds of facilities polluting wetlands and standars indicated in "Regulation on Controlling Water Pollution" will be met for discharging waste waters into wetlands or rivers feeding these areas.

- Incorrect and excessive fertilizer and pesticide usage in the agricultural areas adjacent to wetlands will be kept under control, corresponding training and steering activities will be accelerated.

- Touristic and industrial structuring especially within lagoons at sea coasts and in the surroundings of in-land lakes will be inspected meticulously and preventive measures will be taken.

- Excess, incorrect and illegal gaming, uncontrolled rush cutting and burning in wetlands will be hampered and monitored with great care.

- Destruction of areas such as meadows, pastures, forests supporting the ecosystems of the wetlands will be hampered and measures will be taken to prevent usage for other purposes.

- As was indicated in article 9 of the Environment Law, No 2872, the wetlands are the basic ecological ecosystems of our Country and the Ministry of Environment is authorized under paras b and d of article 10 of the Decree Law, No 443, for determination of protection and utilization principles of these areas and to take protection measures. Therefore during the decision phase of any implementation that may have impact on wetlands the consideration of the Ministry of Environment should definitely be taken.

- Furthermore, essential cooperation between the Ministry of Environment and concerned agencies will be ensured for protection and development of the wetlands and the said areas will continuously monitored and protection measures be taken.

I hereby request that the Ministries, Governors and Municipalities should emphasize above mentioned points and necessary implementation, inspection and monitoring for protection and observation of the wetlands should be conducted meticulously.

Süleyman DEMÝREL
Prime Minister

(Signed)

DISTRIBUTION:

Action:

Minister of State and Deputy Prime Minister
Ministries of State
(Attached and Concerned Agencies)
Ministries
(Governors and Metropolitan Municipalities
by the Ministry of Interior)
Agencies attached to or concerned Agencies
Central Organization of the Prime Ministry

Information:

Board of Higher Education
(Universities by YÖK)
(NGOs by the Ministry of
Environment)