

Turkey to Northern Cyprus Water Pipeline by 2012

A Multi-million-dollar undersea pipeline designed to bring water to North Cyprus from Turkey could be up and running by 2012.

As there has been a period of water shortage, President Demetris Christofias, the internationally-recognised Greek Cypriot leader, is presently trying to supply the southern part of the divided island through tankers bringing water from Greece.

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said work on the 110km plastic pipeline scheme would start in June 2009.

"The project should be completed at the latest within three years beginning in June next year (2009)," the PM told a news conference in Nicosia alongside Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat. "The (Turkish) government has given the necessary instructions to the environment ministry so the project can be finalised," he added.

A dam will be created at Alakopur, near Anamur in southern Turkey, to collect water from the Dragon River. This water will then be pumped to a new dam in North Cyprus by converting the reservoir at Gecitkoy, south of Guzelayali.

Selin Ekinci, an engineer from Alsim-Alarko who is working on the project, said water would be transferred to a 10,000m³ storage facility through a 21km pipeline in Turkey.

Mr Ekinci said the water would then be sent along 80km of plastic pipeline submerged 250 metres below the surface of the Mediterranean.

The pipeline will be attached to large weights which are essential to prevent it floating on the surface.

At Gueliyali beach, a pumping station will be constructed to send the water to Gecitkoy dam along a 4km pipeline.

Mr Ekinci said, "The pumping station will not have a great impact on the beach where it will be constructed, either environmentally or scenically. It will not be a huge construction."

The project, which was signed between Turkish Water Works General Directorate and Alsim-Alarko in 2005, will carry 73 million m³ of water from Turkey each year. About 15 million m³ will be used for drinking water after being purified in a facility that will be constructed near Lefkosa.

The remainder will be used to irrigate 7,650 hectares of agricultural land in the Mesaoria plain.

The project aims to meet the drinking and irrigation needs of North Cyprus up to the year 2035, when the population of the TRNC is estimated to grow to about 350,000.

Orhan Aydeniz, chairman of the Association of Forestation and Prevention of Erosion (Kema), said the project to bring water from Turkey was "very good".

However, he also said that it would take at least four years for the project to be completed, and urged the government to take tough measures in order to protect existing resources.

There should be a limit on the number of wells opened, he urged. Apart from this, meters should be put on wells to limit the amount used. The municipalities should not plant exotic plants which need a lot of water- they should plant local plants which can withstand drought.

In addition, the government should identify those agricultural products that are marketable, and the water should be used on them.

About the Author

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