

12 June 2009



Vereinte  
Dienstleistungs-  
gewerkschaft

### Ilisu Dam Project:

## Comment on the impending export credit guarantee decision



By July 6, 2009, the German government needs to decide whether to withdraw from the highly controversial Ilisu dam project in Southeast Turkey or not. As outlined below, close to the deadline it has become obvious that the project continues to violate international standards. Therefore, we urgently ask the governments, banks and companies involved to irrevocably withdraw from the project.



*Background information:* In March 2007, the German government<sup>1</sup> approved export credit guarantees for the participation of the Stuttgart construction company Zueblin and DekaBank in the Ilisu dam project. As the project did not fulfil international standards, the government attached 153 conditions to its guarantees and commissioned a committee of international experts to monitor their implementation. As these experts as well as non-governmental organisations and the media repeatedly reported violations of the conditions, the German government ordered the suspension of the guarantee and delivery contracts for 180 days in December 2008. This last ultimatum for Turkey to provide evidence for the implementation of the conditions ends on July 6.



Over the last weeks the Turkish authorities have therefore submitted new resettlement plans and additional studies to promote the lifting of the suspension. As the following information shows, however, Turkey is nonetheless far from fulfilling the conditions. On the contrary, latest developments highlight once more that central problems cannot be solved and the Turkish government still lacks the commitment to implement the conditions.



- **Violations of the conditions during the ultimatum by the Turkish government:** Even during the current suspension of contracts the Turkish authorities conducted further expropriations and granted the affected population only minimal compensation for their land – instead the replacement value as stipulated by the conditions (cf. <http://www.gegenstroemung.org/drupal/de/node/67>).



<sup>1</sup> All decisions by the German government regarding the export credit guarantees for the Ilisu dam project were taken jointly with the Austrian and Swiss governments which granted cover for the Austrian and Swiss companies in the consortium.

- **Severe impacts on Iraq grossly neglected:** As Hasan Janabi, former consultant of the Iraqi government on water issues and now Iraq's ambassador to the United Nations in Rome, stated at his visit in Berlin on May 28/29, 2009 in Berlin, the impacts of the Ilisu project will be immense. Already now Iraq suffers from severe drought, as the Turkish government is filling its reservoirs on the Euphrates river. An additional dam on the Tigris river would increase the water problems and proliferate environmental damage and social tensions. This cannot be the aim of German foreign politics. The government of Iraq has repeatedly protested the construction of the Ilisu dam but (and) an agreement between the riparian states of the Tigris (Turkey, Iraq, Syria) is still non-existent.
- **No concept for the preservation of Hasankeyf:** A central element of the conditions is the development of a concept how the cultural heritage of the 10,000 year old town of Hasankeyf can be transported into an archaeological park which would attract tourists and provide the inhabitants of Hasankeyf with new income. Research in the region has however revealed that even now there is no proof of the feasibility of the transposition for even a single monument. On the contrary, renowned experts and archaeologists on site stress that the specific type of construction does not allow the transposition of the monuments. Thus the fulfilment of the conditions can no longer be expected. Proceeding with the Ilisu project would therefore doom the town of Hasankeyf with its unique cultural goods. And, as even the official resettlement planners state, the people of Hasankeyf would be rendered to a future in misery.
- **Ill-conceived resettlement planning:** The new resettlement policy of the Turkish government for Ilisu constitutes some improvements compared to the current Turkish practice. The fact however that the Turkish environmental minister refused to sign part of the new regulation shows that the commitment of the Turkish government to actually implement international standards is limited. Also, central elements of the policy which are meant to provide resettlers with new income, are not included in the written policy, but are mere promises by the consultants in charge of the resettlement planning. At the same time, the new measures are totally untested. If construction was continued now, the population would be used as guinea pigs of a trial-and-error-scheme with dubious outcome. In addition, detailed planning is only available for few villages. Tens of thousands of affected people are not even included in the data.
- **No participation of the population:** Even outside of the security zone around the construction site the military is very present in the region. This leads to massive intimidation of many of the affected people and in many cases makes it impossible to speak freely with them. At official information meetings objections to the project were not admitted and the authorities threatened to break off the meeting if fundamental critique of the project would be voiced. Newly installed resettlement committees are also met with resistance by the population, as committee members were selected at random and several of these were pressured to take part in the committees.

As shown by the explanations above, the Turkish government still is either not willing or not capable to implement international standards. If the export credit guarantees remain in place, conflicts with the Turkish side will for certain continue and Ilisu will remain a constant burden on the German-Turkish as well as German-Iraqi relations. The campaign in Turkey and Europe which demands the withdrawal of the European institutions and the stop of the project grows from day to day. Together with nobel prize winning author Orhan Pamuk, Turkish pop star Tarkan, the current and former mayors of the German town of Bremen and Members of the new and old European Parliament thousands of citizens demand the protection of the antique town of

Hasankeyf and the Tigris valley as world cultural and natural heritage site. All these people will not dwindle in their efforts to save Hasankeyf. Therefore we urgently ask all governments, banks and companies to draw their consequences from the unsolved problems of the project, to withdraw forever from Ilisu and thus to make a peaceful development possible in Turkey and Iraq.

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A detailed analysis of the current state of implementation of the conditions can be found in the report on a fact-finding mission to the region at <http://www.gegenstroemung.org/drupal/node/64>.

Further information: [www.gegenstroemung.org](http://www.gegenstroemung.org), [www.stopilisu.com](http://www.stopilisu.com)