

Embargoed until
5 June 2018
7:00 am CET

Climate Change Perception and Energy Preferences in Turkey



KONDA
ARAŞTIRMA VE DANIŞMANLIK

June 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

How is climate change perceived by Turkish society?

The increasing severity of extreme weather events and the resulting spread of health problems on a global scale prove that climate change has already started to affect our lives. The situation is no different in Turkey. As the latest scientific research shows, the Mediterranean Region, where Turkey is located, is one of the regions at greatest risk of severe climate impacts. This global threat that is upsetting thousands of years of natural balance, and deeply impacts not only on the environment but our lifestyles, the economy and all other layers of Turkish society.

The “Climate Change Perception and Energy Preferences in Turkey” survey was conducted by İklim Haber and KONDA Research and Consultancy and focuses on how this issue is being perceived in Turkey. The research also tries to understand citizens’ preferences regarding energy investments and to see whether Turkey’s current energy strategy is Turkish public’s opinion on best approach, an issue that is directly related to climate change.

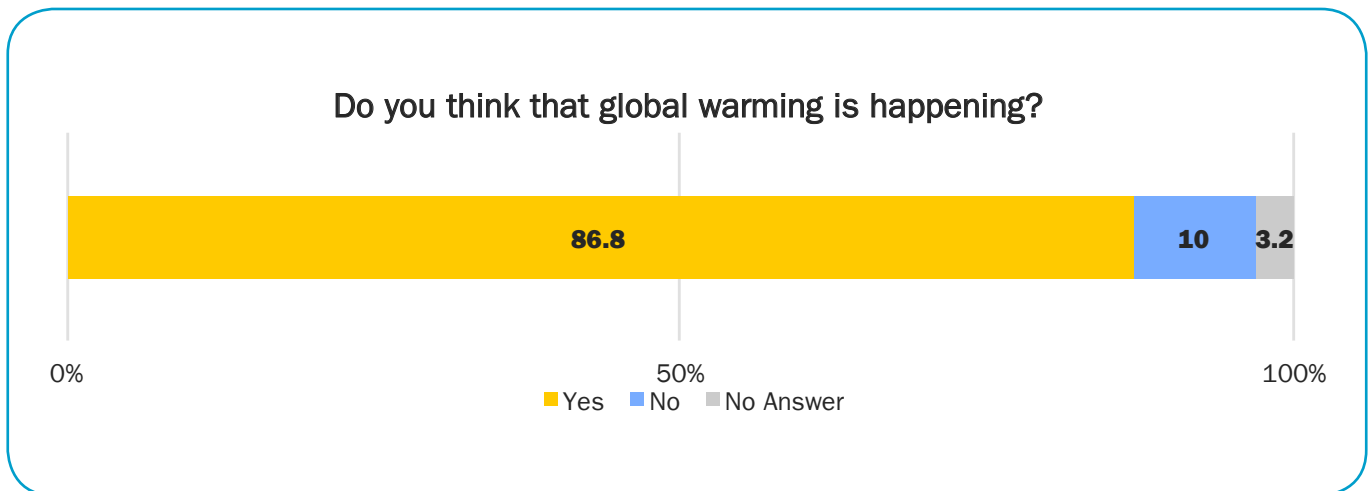
Seven questions were asked in face-to-face surveys to 2,595 people residing in 30 provinces, 100 districts and 147 neighborhoods and villages, and the answers

were compared to other answers on political and social preferences and trends.

Turkish society says climate change is happening and the majority of them (75%) are worried about climate change.

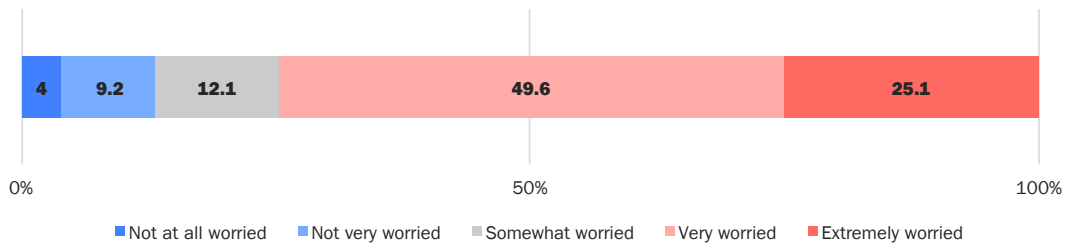
The survey’s first question was “Recently, you may have noticed that global warming has been getting some attention in the news. Global warming refers to the idea that the world’s average temperature has been increasing over the past 150 years, may be increasing more in the future, and that the world’s climate may change as a result. What do you think? Do you think that global warming is happening?”.

86.8% of respondents answered yes, 10% said that climate change is not happening, and the remainder 3.2% preferred not to answer the question. It should be noted here that there is an important consensus about climate change in Turkey. **In a society that is divided on a number of issues, 8 out of 10 people, regardless of political preference, economic and social status, say that climate change is happening.**



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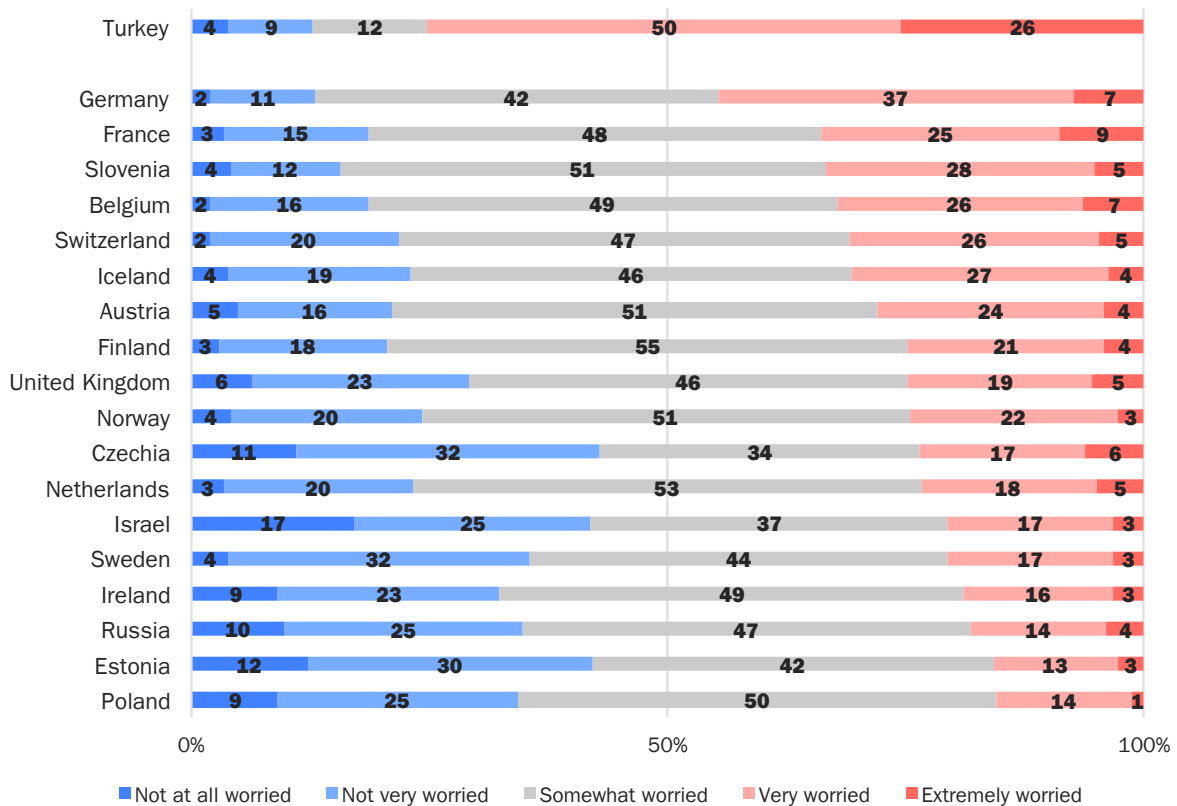
How worried are you about climate change?



Another question, was “How worried are you about climate change?” The question was taken from the European Social Survey undertaken in 18 countries and was translated into Turkish. 25% of participants expressed they were “extremely worried”, while

50% said they were “worried”. Despite Europe’s reputation as a leader on climate change, an even higher proportion of Turkish people are very worried or extremely worried about climate change than European average.

How worried are you about climate change?



When an identical question was asked in 18 European countries in 2017 by the European Social Survey, Germany came out on top with 86% expressing some degree of concern. However, while Turkey just shades

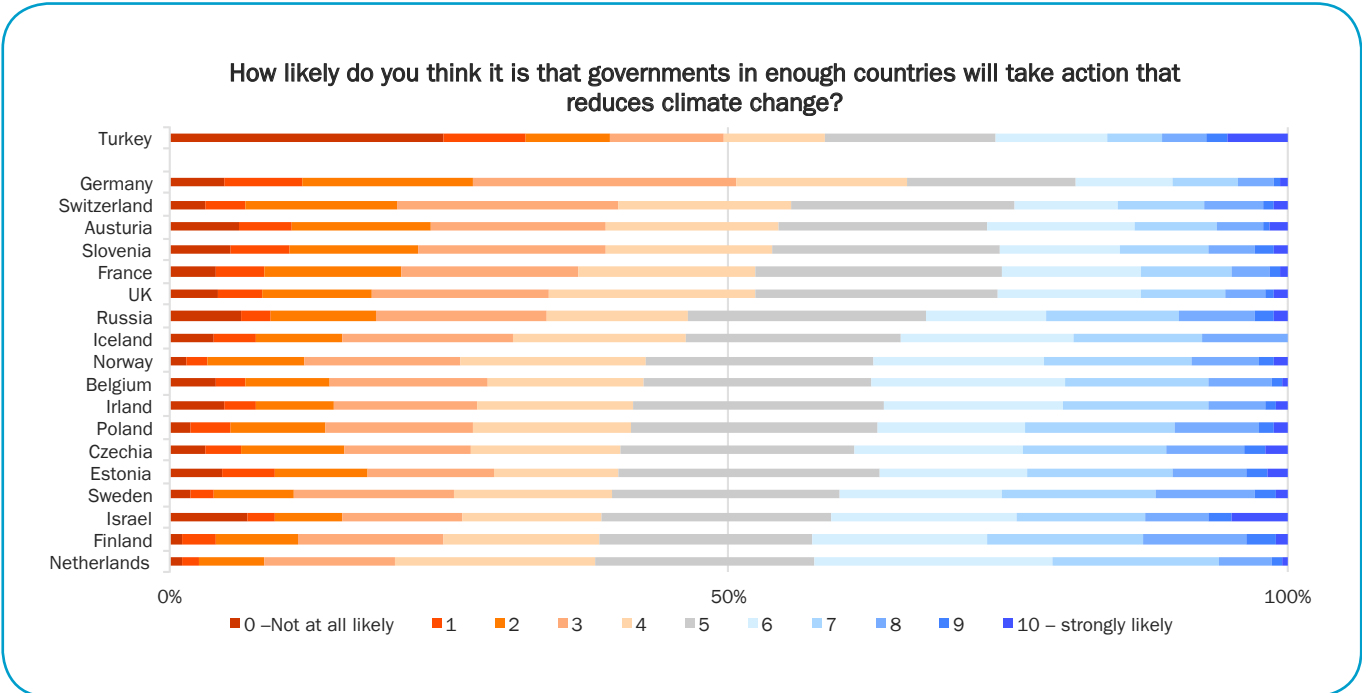
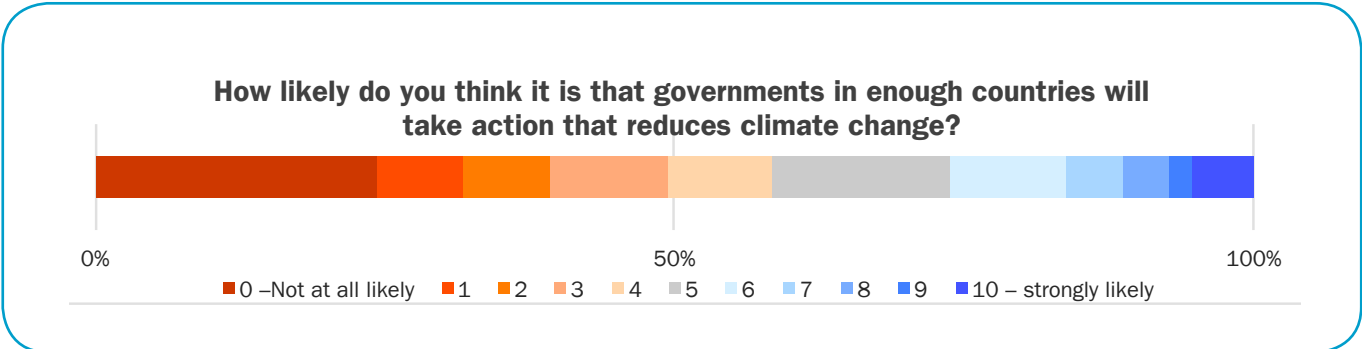
overall levels of concern, it had much higher levels of those very or extremely worried. In Germany this figure was just 44%, although that was still higher than any of the 17 others.

Governments are not taking enough climate action – including the Turkish one

Another question borrowed from the European Social Survey was about the government’s climate actions: “How likely do you think it is that governments in enough countries will take action that reduces climate change?”

The results showed that people in Turkey think governments are not taking enough action to reduce

climate change. Furthermore, a quarter of the population thinks that sufficient action by governments in the future is “not at all likely”. **Almost one out of two people do not have confidence that countries will take necessary action.** (Total number/ total percentage of people who answered from one of the 0, 1, 2 and 3 options from 11 scales from 0 to 10)



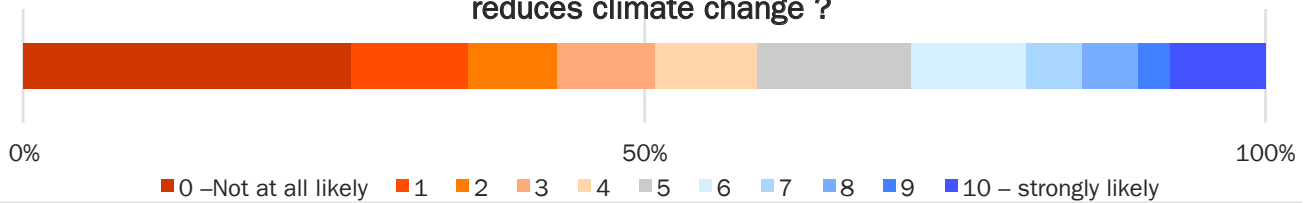
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A similar question was asked specifically in regard to the Turkish government. Answers indicate that, regardless of political party preferences, lifestyle and economic positions, the general belief is that Turkey will not show sufficient effort either. A quarter of the population regards sufficient climate action as impossible in Turkey and answered 0 on the 0-3 scale in the survey. Half of society believes adequate climate action is “not at all likely” or “highly unlikely.” (Total percentage of people who rated their confidence level as 0, 1, 2 and 3).

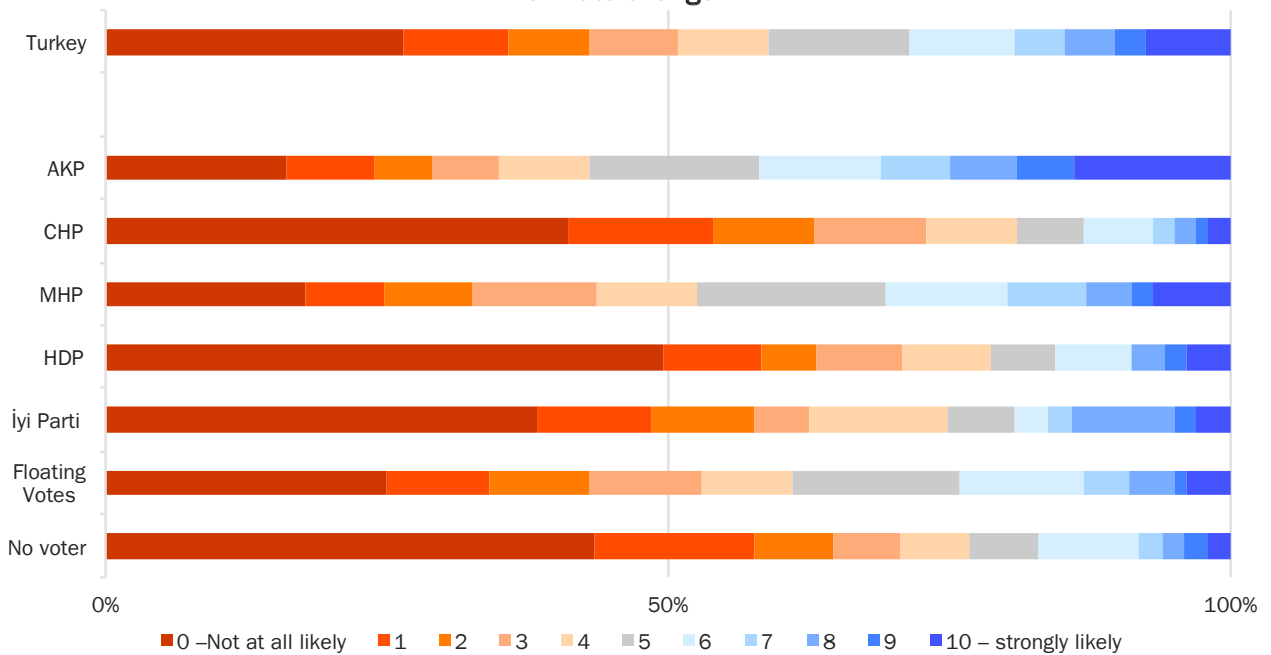
■ **Only 8% of Turkish society thinks the Turkish Government will “strongly likely” take enough climate action.**

■ Only 16% of voters of AKP, the governing party, think the Turkish Government will “strongly likely” take enough climate action.

How likely do you think it is that Turkish government will take action that reduces climate change ?



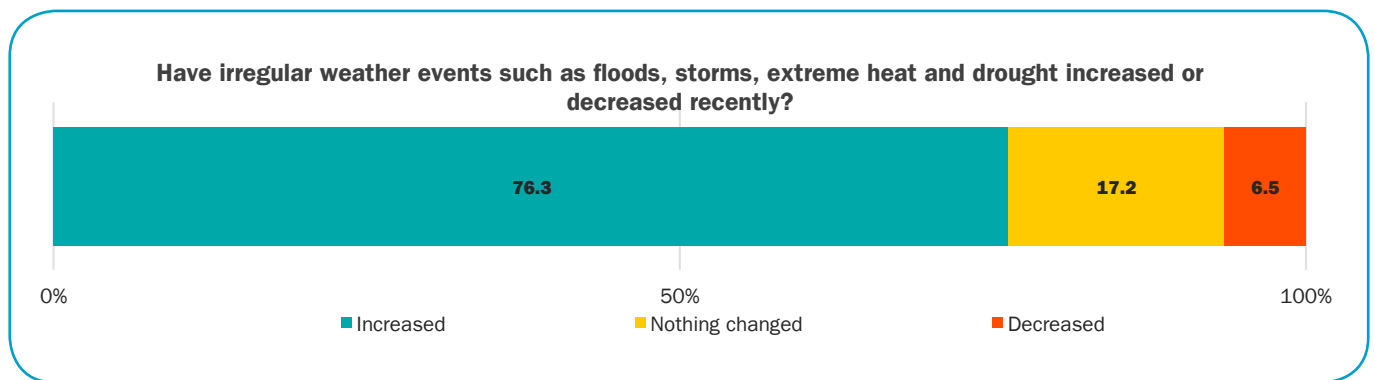
How likely do you think it is that Turkish government will take action that reduces climate change ?



Increasing meteorological disasters getting attention in Turkey

Scientific studies indicate that climate change has already begun to intensify the scale and increase numbers of extreme weather events. The frequency and impact of floods and similar disasters have also been increasing in Turkey. The survey looked at how this was perceived by Turkish society. Responders

were asked: “Have irregular weather events such as floods, storms, extreme heat and drought increased or decreased recently?” **76.3% said irregular weather events had increased, compared to only 6.5% who said they had decreased.**

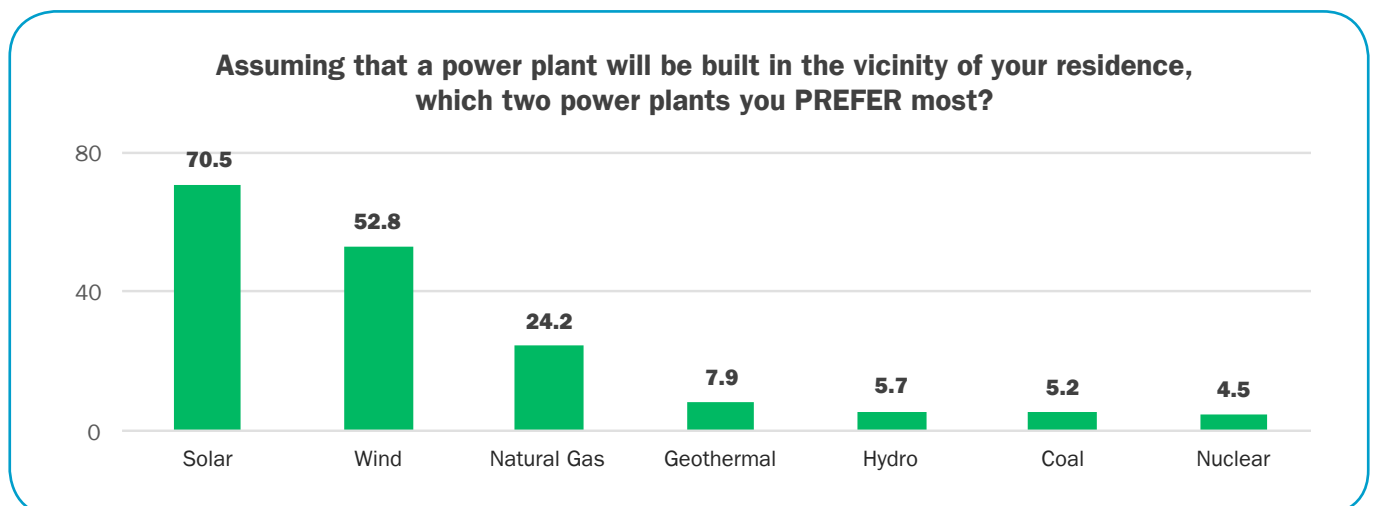


Turkish society strongly supports solar and wind while strongly opposing coal and nuclear

Fossil fuel-based electricity production has one of the highest shares of greenhouse gas emissions – responsible for climate change – of any industry. Power plants and the energy debate have been one of the hottest topics in Turkey in recent years. Therefore, the survey has also included questions to understand more deeply what Turkish society thinks on this particular topic. The answers proved that Turkish

society’s preferred energy choices are solar and wind energy by a large margin.

The participants were asked: “Assuming that a power plant will be built in the vicinity of your residence, which of the two power plants would you prefer most?” **The top two answers were a solar power plant (70.5%) and a wind power plant (52.8%).**



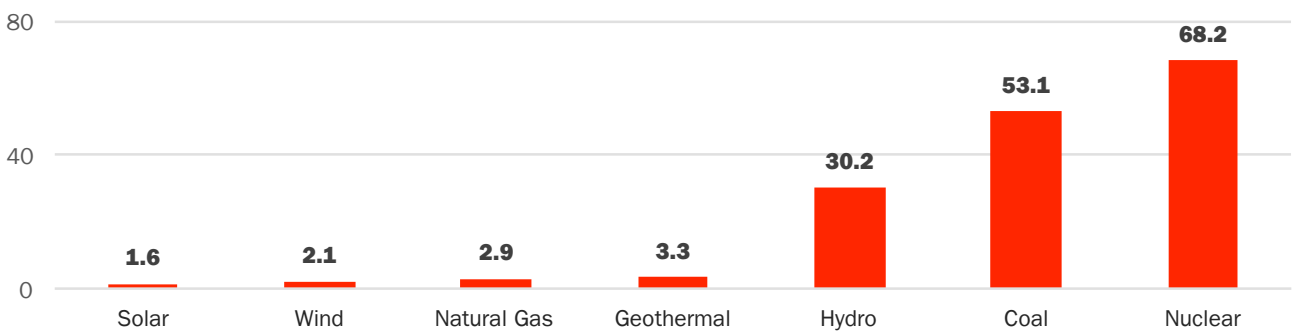
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In another question, participants were asked to pick two power plants they would oppose most. 68.2% of them declared nuclear and 53.1% of them declared coal as the electricity production facilities they would most oppose. Only 1.6% and 2.1% declared opposition to solar and wind respectively.

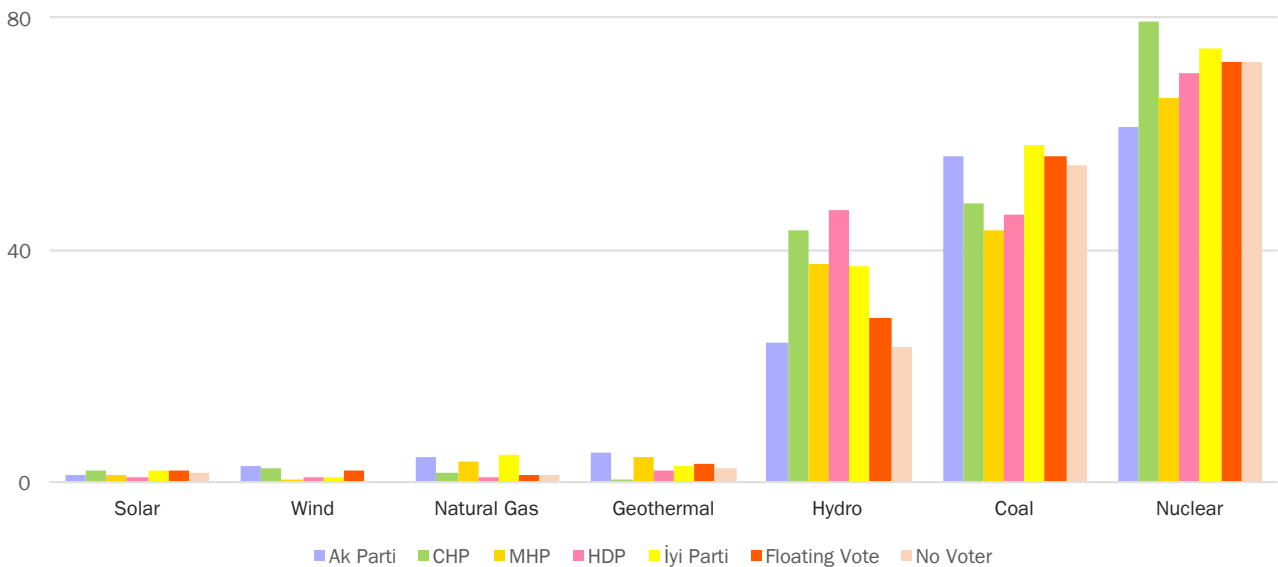
■ **Only 5.1% of Turkish society supports coal power plants.**

■ 57% of AKP voters don't want any coal power plant in their vicinity.

Assuming that a power plant will be built in the vicinity of your residence, which two power plants you OPPOSE most?



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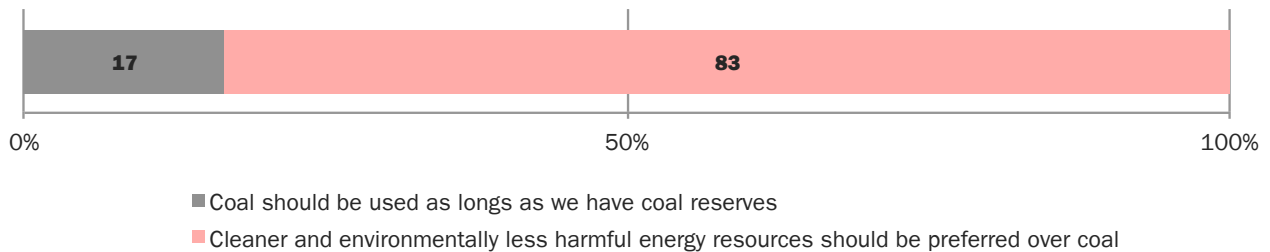
The coal power plant debate is particularly important since Turkey plans to increase the use of coal in the energy sector and install 43 GW of new coal capacity. The major argument used by those in favour of coal is that Turkey has the “right to development”. In this context, we also asked whether those surveyed would prefer coal for development or if they support clean energy. We shared two statements and asked, “Which of the below written do you affiliate with in terms of coal production?”

- “Coal should be used as long as we have coal reserves.”
- “Cleaner and environmentally less harmful energy resources should be preferred over coal.”

83% of the respondents think that instead of coal, cleaner and environmentally less harmful technologies should be preferred. Only 17% of the Turkish public supports coal. These results also corroborate the results of the previous questions.

- Coal has the support of only 22 % of AKP voters.

Which of the below written do you affiliate with in terms of coal production?



Turkish citizens find common ground on climate change, perhaps more than for any other issue. The survey results indicate that there is widespread public support for substituting fossil fuels with renewable energy resources and transitioning to a low-carbon economy. In recent years, Turkey has been seeing important developments in regard to solar and wind power. A new study, which reveals that Turkey's

infrastructure is capable of easily maintaining larger solar and wind power plant capacity, shows how rapidly the country can make use of this potential. The high level of existing public support for renewables is an important opportunity to make use of the solar and wind potential in Turkey while taking action on an issue that is deemed a cause for concern by a quarter of the population.

ABOUT IKLİM HABER

İklim Haber is a Turkey based online outlet covering latest global and national developments on the field of climate science, climate economy and policies. It is an impartial, specialized and non-biased climate news hub in Turkey that produces data driven articles and news to secure Turkish pioneers among the government and non-state actors to access latest developments in climate change debate.

İklim Haber, established by EKOLOGOS is a non-profit media oriented climate information hub aims to contribute climate change debate in Turkey by providing most recent, genuine content. Established in 2017, İklim Haber has become one of the most followed Turkish outlets on climate change through publishing more than 200 stories and 40 analyses and disseminating of those stories.

www.iklimhaber.org



ABOUT KONDA RESEARCH

KONDA, founded in 198 as a research and consultancy company, is fundamentally engaged with knowledge production with a specific purpose of providing insight for the specific needs of policy-makers, business leaders and academics. As the company collects data, it also processes it to suggest novel ways of challenging established orthodoxies and existing prejudices in the analyses of politics, society and the individuals in contemporary Turkey.

KONDA has conducted face-to-face surveys with almost 1 million people in the last 30 years. Therefore it would not be an understatement to suggest that the company has acquired the most extensive knowledge and experience on the social, economic and political behavioral codes of the contemporary society in Turkey.



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