anka/31

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TÜRKIYE'S CLIMATE TEST:

RENEWABLES RISE, EMISSIONS DON'T FALL

ONE SUMMIT TWO PRESIDENTS

ANTALYA ON A PLATE: 7 FLAVORS TO TRY BEFORE YOU LEAVE

A FEW HOURS TO SPARE? WALK BACK 2,000 YEARS



Termessos Crocus
An endemic flower found only in the mountains of Antalya

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FROM ANKA

A SUMMIT IS A BEGINNING, NOT A VERDICT

Antalya welcomes the world at a momentwhen climate promises are no longer enough. Heat is reshaping workdays, drought and floods are disrupting food and water systems, and coastal communities are already living with a changing sea. The question is not whether action is needed, but whether governments can turn ambition into results.

ANKA31 is a special publication created by ANKA News Agency for COP31 in Antalya. It will follow the negotiations, test climate promises against results and look beyond the conference halls at the city hosting them.

Because a summit this big deserves more than a daily headline.

Climate policy, after all, does not stop at the conference gates. It is not an abstract contest between ambition and realism, but a set of choices about who pays, who benefits and what happens to workers, households and neighbourhoods during change. Energy security, clean air, heat protection, reliable transport and affordable food belong in the same conversation as emissions targets.

Antalya is more than the host city. Its historic centre, Mediterranean coastline and regional landscapes offer visitors a living place to meet, not a backdrop to consume. The city pages invite readers to explore with curiosity, care and respect for residents and ecosystems.

A useful summit should leave more than a declaration. It should leave a visible path from decision to budget, from budget to action and from action to a result people can feel. Our job is to keep following that path. We hope this magazine helps readers ask the next question, and keep asking it after the delegates have gone home.

On the Cover:

The Termessos Crocus

The Termessos crocus (Colchicum baytopiorum) is native to southwestern Türkiye and closely associated with the ancient city above Antalya. Its scientific name honors Turkish botanists Turhan and Asuman Baytop, and the type specimen was collected by Turhan Baytop at Termessos in 1976.

Its connection with the ruins may run much deeper: researchers have identified crocus motifs carved into ancient sarcophagi at Termessos. A recent global assessment predicts the species to be threatened.



THE VENUE:
FROM EXPO TO COP



Rising above the conference grounds is the EXPO Tower, a 101-meter legacy building constructed during EXPO 2016 Antalya. Its three-part crown opens above the site like a flower: a reference to the "Flowers and Children" theme of the international horticultural exhibition for which the grounds were originally built a decade ago.

EXPO 2016 opened under the slogan "A Green World for Future Generations." A decade later, those grounds will become the working headquarters of COP31, where governments will arrive not to exhibit visions of a greener future but to negotiate on what is needed to get there.

WHAT HAPPENED HERE SINCE?

Antalya's international film festival has held award ceremonies at the EXPO Congress Center, while parts of the grounds have also

doubled as Hollywood film sets. Here, Guy Ritchie filmed scenes for Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre, starring Jason Statham, including on the EXPO Tower terrace and later returned for The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare, starring Henry Cavill.

WHY DOES THE TOWER LOOK LIKE THAT?

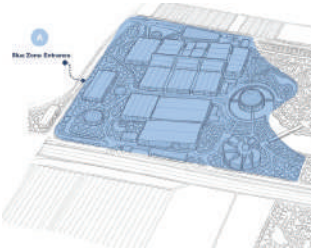
The EXPO Tower's observation level spreads into three petal-like sections. The original architectural concept linked the form both to EXPO 2016's flower theme and to the three arches of Antalya's ancient Hadrian's Gate.

The tower was designed to give visitors a 360-degree view across the grounds. Look seaward and the Mediterranean lies beyond the site, turn towards the opposite side and the landscape stretches inland. Ancient Perge, founded just a few kilometers from today's EXPO grounds, lies to one side of the tower. So, if you get the chance to go up, the site makes more sense from above.

ONE VENUE, TWO DIFFERENT ZONES

For two weeks in November, the old EXPO layout will acquire a new geography.

The Blue Zone is the diplomatic engine room: the UNFCCC-managed area where national delegations negotiate, ministers and officials meet, accredited observers follow the talks and journalists work. Entry requires UNFCCC accreditation.



Across the site, the Green Zone is designed for a much broader crowd. Businesses, researchers, NGOs, startups, civil society groups and visitors will find exhibitions, talks, workshops, cultural events and spaces devoted to climate innovation and public engagement.

If the Blue Zone is where climate diplomacy is negotiated, the Green Zone is where the wider climate conversation opens up to the public, and where ideas, demands and pressures that can shape the debate inside the Blue Zone often emerge.



And yes, the Mediterranean is closer than it looks. The coast is roughly a 15-minute drive from the COP31 grounds, traffic permitting.



ONE SUMMIT, TWO PRESIDENTS

For the first time, the COP presidency and leadership of the negotiations will be split between two countries.

The unusual arrangement was born from a diplomatic deadlock. Türkiye and Australia had both bid to host COP31, but the host had to be agreed by consensus within the Western European and Others Group. Neither side was willing to clear the way. With no simple majority vote available to break the impasse, the dispute ran into COP30 in Belem, where the two governments finally struck a compromise: Türkiye would host the conference and hold the COP presidency, while Australia would take charge of the formal negotiations.

The division of labor goes beyond titles. Türkiye's Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change Minister Murat Kurum, as COP31 President, will oversee the host presidency, the World Leaders' Summit and the Action Agenda.

Australia's Climate Change and Energy Minister Chris Bowen, as President of Negotiations, will run the formal talks, with "exclusive authority" over the negotiating process, including selecting facilitators and preparing draft text and the cover decision. Final decisions, however, remain with the parties and require consensus.

The real test may come when these roles intersect. Asked by international journalists in September, Kurum stressed that Türkiye and Australia were not co-presidents and said "the final decision lies with the presidency of COP31." So far, he said, the arrangement has caused no problems. Antalya may determine what happens if that understanding is tested in practice.

WHAT EACH PARTNER BRINGS

The partnership's promise and its credibility will be tested both inside and beyond the nego-

tiating rooms. A two-country presidency can widen the table. It cannot substitute for domestic action or the consent of the parties.

For Türkiye, COP31 is a long-sought diplomatic prize. Its government presents the presidency as a bridge between developed and developing economies, and as an opportunity to connect climate diplomacy with energy security, industrial growth and resilience.

The Action Agenda spans ten themes, from clean energy and electrification to food security, oceans, health, zero waste and green industrialization. The leaders' climate action summit is scheduled for November 11-12, the third and fourth days of COP31, while the twelve-day thematic program aims to connect sector priorities with partnerships and implementation.

But the host's credibility will be debated. Türkiye became Europe's largest coal-fired electricity generator in 2024. Climate Action Tracker argues that the country needs stronger near-term targets, a coal phase-out plan and less support for fossil-fuel expansion. Kurum frames the challenge as reducing emissions while continuing development. The question for Antalya is whether that principle produces measurable change or shields the status quo.

Australia's role is different. Having conceded hosting rights, Canberra retained control of the formal negotiations and helped place Pacific priorities at the center of the diplomatic calendar. Fiji hosted the pre-COP ministerial meeting and Tuvalu the leaders' event; the Taku Pakasoa Declaration emerged from that process. This creates a visible channel for Pacific voices, but access to a meeting does not guarantee influence over the final text. Island governments are pressing for protection of the 1.5°C limit, climate finance, ocean action and support for the Pacific Resilience Facility.

Australia's own record also faces scrutiny. Its 2035 target is a 62% 70% reduction from 2005 levels, yet the country remains a major fossil-fuel producer and exporter. The climate justice critique is direct: a government cannot credibly champion vulnerable neighbours abroad while sidestepping the emissions and export choices that shape risk at home.

The same consistency test applies to Türkiye and to every country with influence over the outcome.

The negotiations are likely to be technically dense. The presidency has put implementation, finance, electrification and resilience at the centre of its political frame, but longstanding disputes remain over fossil fuels, support for developing countries and the 1.5°C goal. COP31's value will depend less on its leadership formula than on whether voluntary targets become national policy, finance reaches vulnerable states and the outcome preserves confidence in the Paris process. A cooperative summit would be a diplomatic achievement. A partnership that produces only declarations would show how far institutional creativity can travel without greater political ambition.

Türkiye's Climate Test:
RENEWABLES RISE, EMISSIONS DON'T FALL

Promises are easy. Policies are harder. Türkiye will welcome the world to Antalya with a 2053 net-zero target, a climate law, an emerging emissions trading system and a rapidly expanding renewable-energy sector.

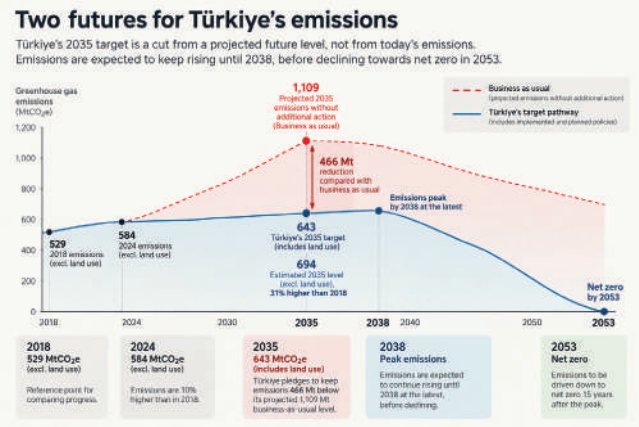
But climate policy is ultimately measured by results. We examine Türkiye's record through three lenses: what it has promised, what it is doing and what it is delivering.

AMBITION: HOW HIGH IS Türkiye ACTUALLY AIMING?

Under the Paris Agreement, each successive Nationally Determined Contribution, or NDC, is expected to represent a progression and reflect a country's "highest possible ambition.

Türkiye's target, however, is expressed as a reduction from projected future emissions rather than as an absolute cut from current levels.

In its 2035 NDC, submitted in November 2025, Türkiye pledged to cut its 2035 emissions by 466 million tons from a projected level of 1,109 million tons, bringing them down to 643 million tons of CO2 equivalent. Climate Action Tracker estimates that, excluding the effects of forests and land use, Türkiye could still emit 694 million tons of CO2 equivalent in 2035, 31% more than it did in 2018.



Türkiye does not plan for emissions to fall immediately. Its long-term strategy allows greenhouse gas emissions to continue rising until they peak by 2038 at the latest, before declining towards net zero in 2053.

Put together, the roadmap is clear: limit emissions in 2035, peak by 2038 and reach net zero 15 years later, while rapidly expanding renewable power along the way.

Türkiye also aims to expand its combined wind and solar capacity to 120 GW by 2035 - nearly triple current levels. If achieved, Ember estimates that wind and solar could supply about half of the country's electricity, potentially pushing fossil fuels below 20% of generation.

This promise can be tested relatively simply: How much renewable capacity is Türkiye actually adding, and how quickly?

ACTION: A CLIMATE POLICY EXISTS. BUT DOES IT HAVE TEETH?

The electricity transition seems advanced. Türkiye plans to use several routes to reach its 120 GW wind-and-solar target, including renewable energy auctions, storage integrated projects, unlicensed installations and hybrid solar plants. Through its renewable-energy auction program, known as YEKA, Türkiye plans to allocate 1 GW of wind and 1 GW of solar capacity each year.

But the scale matters. Ember calculates that Türkiye needs to add around 8 GW of wind and solar every year to reach 120 GW by 2035. The planned annual YEKA auctions would provide only 2 GW of that.

Other projects therefore need to deliver the remaining capacity, and many are running into the same constraint: the grid. Some 33 GW of storage-integrated projects have already been allocated, but further allocations have been restricted while those projects remain unfinished.

Türkiye is trying to tackle those bottlenecks. A 2025 legal reform aims to cut renewable permitting times to 18 months, down from as much as four years for wind and two years for solar. Meanwhile, the government reportedly estimates that an additional $28 billion in grid investment will be needed to accommodate 120 GW of wind and solar.

There are signs of strong investor appetite. Türkiye was wind-turbine maker Nordex's largest individual market for new orders in the third quarter of 2026, with more than 900 MW ordered.

Yet Türkiye has not set a coal phase-out date, while fossil-fuel subsidies remain significant. Ember points to a $8.7 billion purchase guarantee announced in 2025 for domestic coal plants, arguing that spending resources to keep ageing and inefficient plants operating conflicts with the country's renewable-energy goals. The OECD suggests that Türkiye needs to develop and rapidly implement a plan to move away from coal.

On economy-wide emissions, Türkiye has begun putting some of the architecture in place. Carbon is currently priced mainly indirectly through fuel taxes, while an

emissions trading system (ETS) has been planned as a central tool for putting a direct price on pollution. But the OECD's assessment is blunt: current policies are not sufficient to reach net zero by 2053. It says Türkiye needs stronger carbon pricing, implementation of the ETS and a transition away from fossil-fuel subsidies and coal.

OUTCOME: WHAT HAS ALL THIS DELIVERED SO FAR?

A government can strengthen renewable energy incentives and still see emissions rise. It can improve energy efficiency while economic growth pushes total energy demand upward. That is why a single indicator cannot tell Türkiye's climate story.

According to Türkiye's latest national greenhouse-gas inventory, total emissions excluding land use and forestry reached 584.5 million tons of CO_2 equivalent in 2024, up from 228.9 million tons in 1990. That is an increase of 155.3%. More strikingly, after falling slightly in 2022 and 2023, emissions rose again by 5.3% in 2024. So, in absolute terms, Türkiye has not yet bent its emissions curve downward.

But that is not the whole story. Türkiye's economy has expanded enormously over the same period, and the relationship between economic growth and emissions has changed. The national inventory notes that emissions per dollar of GDP began to shift direction after 2002, suggesting that the economy has become less emissions-intensive even as total emissions continued to grow.

On the other hand Türkiye's renewable-energy expansion is real. Wind and solar supplied a record 22% of the country's electricity in 2025. But clean power has not yet displaced fossil fuels at the scale required. Coal still generated 34% of Türkiye's electricity in 2025, and coal generation, at 121 TWh, remained close to its record high.

So far, Türkiye has proved that it can build renewables quickly. It has not yet proved that it can turn that expansion into falling emissions. That is the climate test Antalya will put under the spotlight.

Antalya on a Plate: 7 Flavors to Try Before you Leave



There is more than one way to understand Antalya. One is through its ancient cities and coastline. Another is through tahini.

In Antalya, sesame paste finds its way into far more than hummus. It gives the city's famous piyaz its creamy, unmistakable sauce, appears in a traditional appetizer called hibes, and even follows you to dessert. Add citrus, local produce and the Mediterranean habit of letting simple ingredients do most of the work, and you begin to get a taste of the city beyond the conference halls.

Mediterranean produce meets the cooking traditions of the Yoruk communities of the Taurus Mountains. The cuisine also carries traces of communities that arrived here over generations. The result is a cuisine that can be fresh and sharp in one bite, rich and nutty in the next, and occasionally tastes as though somebody has deliberately set your dessert on fire. If you are in Antalya for COP31 and have time for only a few local dishes, start here.

1. PIYAZ: FORGET WHAT YOU THINK YOU KNOW ABOUT BEAN SALAD

Antalya piyazi, one of the city's signature dishes. The beans come under a creamy, sharp sauce built around tahini and vinegar, usually joined by tomatoes, parsley, onion and boiled

egg. Unlike many versions elsewhere in Türkiye, it is substantial enough to behave less like a side dish and more like a meal.



Piyaz

2. HIBES: TAHINI, BUT WITH ATTITUDE

If piyaz introduces you politely to Antalya's obsession with tahini, hibes gets straight to the point. It is a thick local mezze made by whipping tahini with lemon, garlic, cumin and red pepper. Rich, acidic, garlicky and slightly fiery, it is one of those dishes whose ingredient list looks almost too simple to explain how addictive the result is.

Eat it with bread. Then order more bread.

3. SERPME BOREK: ANTALYA'S CRISPIEST BITE

Then comes serpme borek, the dough is stretched extraordinarily thin, scattered, serpmek means "to sprinkle," with fillings such as minced meat and parsley or cheese and herbs, folded and baked at high heat. Done properly, the outside becomes golden and brittle enough to shatter at the first bite.

This is not the thick, soft borek you may have met at a hotel breakfast buffet. It should crunch. It should flake. There should probably be evidence of it on your shirt afterwards.

4. KABAK TATLISI: A CLASSIC WITH AN ANTALYA TWIST

Pumpkin dessert exists across Türkiye. Antalya's version deserves its own stop. Here, pumpkin is cooked until soft and almost jammy, then traditionally finished with heat that caramelizes and slightly chars the surface. And then it can arrive under a generous pour of tahini, with walnuts and sometimes kaymak.

Sweet pumpkin, bitter-edged char, nutty sesame, cold rich cream.



Kabak Tatlısı

5. YANIK DONDURMA: BURNT ICE CREAM?

Yanik dondurma literally means "burnt ice cream." Yes, burnt. Yes, ice cream. Your first reaction may well be: "What the hell is that?" This is not creme brulee-fla-

voured gelato and the "burnt" part is not marketing language. Traditional versions use rich milk from the region's highlands and deliberately develop a pronounced smoky, scorched-milk flavor.

It is strange on the first spoonful. On the second, it begins to make sense. By the third, you may either love it or conclude that Antalya has ruined perfectly good ice cream.

6. BAGACA: BEST SERVED WITH TEA

Bagaca is an old Antalya bakery speciality: somewhere between a biscuit, a cake and a sweet bread, traditionally flavored with tahini, cinnamon and mastic. It is less famous than the other flavors.

That is partly why it belongs on this list. This is the thing to have with tea or coffee when you have already eaten too much but are refusing to admit the day is over.

7. AND TAKE SOME ANTALYA HOME: CITRUS PRESERVES

Finally, look at the fruit.

Antalya's citrus isn't just scenery on the road from the airport.

Turunc, the bitter orange that grows abundantly around the Mediterranean, is turned into one of the city's characteristic preserves, alongside other citrus jams. The provincial culture authority specifically identifies citrus preserves as one of the defining elements of Antalya's food culture and lists turunc receli among its traditional dishes.

It is also perhaps the easiest taste of Antalya to put in your suitcase.

ONE CITY, MANY FLAVORS

There are plenty of other things we could have put on this list: guluklu corba, domates civesi, oglak tandir, balik eksilemesi and Yoruk kebabi all belong to the region's much larger culinary repertoire. But if you only have a few days between meetings, start with these.





A few hours to spare? Walk back 2,000 years

COP31 may leave little room for sightseeing. But one of the Mediterranean's great ancient cities requires surprisingly little detour. Just beyond the EXPO area lies Perge, the ancient capital of Pamphylia and one of the best-preserved Roman cities in Türkiye. From the COP31 venue at EXPO Antalya, the archaeological site is close enough to reach on foot.

And Perge is much older than the monumental Roman ruins that first catch the eye. Archaeological work on the acropolis points to settlement beginning between the Late Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods and continuing into the Early Bronze Age. The city later became one of the leading centres of Pamphylia, flourishing particularly under Roman rule.

Today, Perge sits about 12 kilometers inland. In antiquity, that did not make it isolated.

The Kestros River, today's Aksu, connected the city to the Mediterranean. Ancient accounts indicate that the river was navigable, allowing vessels and goods to move between the coast and Perge. Researchers believe this access to maritime trade, combined with the fertile Aksu plain and abundant water, helped make the city wealthy. The river mattered so much that the people of Perge put its river god on their coins and erected a statue of him below the acropolis.

Ahead is the long colonnaded street, with a water channel running through its center. Shops, baths, fountains and an agora once surrounded it, making this the heart of everyday life in Roman Perge. These were not monuments. This was infrastructure. People shopped here. They bathed here. They met friends, argued, traded and watched the city go by.

Perge's theater could accommodate roughly 13,000 people, while its remarkably well-preserved stadium held around 12,000. For perspective, that means a substantial share of the city's population could once gather in the same place to watch a performance or competition.

LOOK UP AT THE HILL

There is another Perge above the Roman city. Perge did not begin on the plain. Its earliest

settlement stood on the acropolis, the hill rising behind the Roman city visitors walk through today. Over time, the city expanded down onto the plain, where the monumental streets and public buildings of Roman Perge developed.

Perge later became an important religious center revolving around the cult of Artemis Pergaia, the city's patron goddess. Her sanctuary has still not been securely located, despite her importance to the ancient city.

Then came another religious chapter.

Paul the Apostle visited Perge during his first missionary journey, travelling through the same river system that connected the city to the Mediterranean. By the fifth and sixth

centuries, Perge had become a major Christian ecclesiastical center, with monumental basilicas rising inside the city.

So within a relatively short walk through the site, you are crossing layers of Anatolian history that span prehistoric settlement, Pamphylian religion, Hellenistic urbanism, Roman imperial wealth and early Christianity.

If time is short, enter through the monumental southern section, see the stadium and theatre, pass the Hellenistic gate and then follow the colonnaded street towards the acropolis. Stop at the baths and fountains along the way, but spend at least a few minutes simply looking down the main street.

It is probably the best place to grasp what Perge once was.

There is something fitting about visiting Perge during COP31.

The city is a reminder that the relationship between people and their environment is hardly a modern concern. Perge prospered because its geography worked in its favor: the fertile plain fed the city, abundant water sustained it, and the navigable Kestros River connected an inland settlement to the Mediterranean and its trade routes.

Thousands of years later, just a short walk away, COP31 is asking a different version of the same fundamental question: how do societies live, prosper and adapt within the environmental conditions that sustain them?

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