



senex

ASSOCIATION FOR
AGING STUDIES

To: To inform the Independent Expert's forthcoming report to the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly

From: Senex: Association for Aging Studies (from Türkiye)

Topic: Report on older persons in the context of climate change-induced disasters in Türkiye

SENEX REPORT

ON OLDER PERSONS IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE-INDUCED DISASTERS IN TÜRKİYE

Özgür Arun^a and Banu Karademir Arun^b

^a Ph.D., Chair of Senex: Association for Aging Studies, E-Mail: arun@akdeniz.edu.tr

^b M.A., Board Member of Senex: Association for Aging Studies

1. Legal, policy and institutional frameworks: Is there national legislation on emergency disasters? Does the legislation address the specific needs of older persons? Is there a national plan, policy or strategy to address the prevention, mitigation, and/or response to climate change-related disasters, and does it include older persons?

The responsibilities of the Disaster and Emergency Management Directorate (AFAD), which is affiliated to the Ministry of Interior, were determined by a presidential decree issued in 2018.¹ AFAD was designated as the institution responsible for the effective maintenance of services at the national level in cases of disasters and emergencies. Risk mitigation, post-disaster emergency response and recovery activities, and coordination of humanitarian aid are also among the duties of AFAD. Therefore, AFAD is the authorized institution for the development and implementation of policies related to disasters and emergencies. Although the authorities of AFAD were recently updated, Turkey's first legislation related to disasters and emergencies was established in 1940.

¹ <https://en.afad.gov.tr/about-us>



The major 1939 earthquake in Erzincan in eastern Turkey revealed the necessity of emergency action and disaster planning. Therefore, aid for the people affected by the Erzincan earthquake was planned by law for the first time in 1940 with Law No. 3773.² After all the disasters in the later years, regulations were prepared, legislation was established, and plans were made for the settlement and disaster protection of the cities. Thus, Turkey Disaster Response Plan (TAMP) was prepared in 2014. TAMP was updated in 2018 and 2022 and put into effect with the presidential decrees.³

Both AFAD strategic plan and TAMP contain the steps to be taken in Turkey against disasters and emergencies at local and national levels. In these documents, the strategic steps and solution partners are identified for all kinds of disasters such as floods, forest fires, industrial fires, chemical and biological disasters, epidemics, nuclear accidents, droughts and earthquakes. Indeed, the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, Ministry of National Defense, Ministry of Interior and the Presidency are listed as direct support solution partners.

Other than these two main strategic plans at the national level, there are approximately 130 official documents concerning disasters and emergencies, including presidential decrees, regulations and circulars. Although some of the official documents contain references to the authorities of AFAD, the presidential decrees generally contain a legal arrangement that is reactive and that organizes aid. However, none of these official documents at national and local levels defines a strategy to address the needs of vulnerable groups in cases of disasters and emergencies. In all legal documents, it is assumed that the people affected by disasters are a homogeneous group.

² For history, please see

https://www.afad.gov.tr/kurumlar/afad.gov.tr/e_Kutuphane/Planlar/AFAD_2019_2023_STRATEJIK_PLAN.pdf

³ To access TAMP documents, please see

https://www.afad.gov.tr/kurumlar/afad.gov.tr/e_Kutuphane/Planlar/TAMP.pdf



It is observed that an approach that calculates the possible risks as the result of impact analyses for disasters and establishes prevention mechanisms is not preferred in the process of establishing all these legal arrangements and policies. In Turkey, the state has assumed a reactive position after disasters and developed the laws and policies that regulate aid. This indicates that the state did not fulfill its duty to protect the right to life. Because, with regards to international human rights law, defining the disaster risks and making the arrangements aimed at measures are considered among the fundamental duties of the state. The state should have acted proactively and taken measures to protect the right to life by making legal arrangements also for the disasters in the context of the climate crisis. Within this scope, the obligation of the states to protect the right to life of their citizens against environmental hazards was also resolved in the final judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in Öner Yıldız v. Turkey case.⁴ Therefore, the state's failure to take measures, although it knows that there is a threat to life in climate crisis-induced disasters, amounts to a violation of its obligation to protect the right to life.

Although the threats and dangers are known, no strategy was developed for the older persons and their needs were not identified in any of the official documents at the national level concerning emergencies and disasters. For example, the 2019-2023 AFAD Strategic Plan⁵, Turkey Disaster Response Plan (TAMP)⁶, Turkey Disaster Risk Reduction Plan (TARAP⁷) and National Earthquake Strategy and Action Plan (UDSEP)⁸ do not contain any foresight for older persons.

In addition to the official documents that constitute the legal framework at the national level concerning emergencies and disasters, the needs of older persons were not identified in the action plans that are directly related to the impacts of the climate crisis, either. However, in a document prepared in 2011 in the scope of the United Nations Joint Programme for Enhancing

⁴ For the final judgment of ECHR, please see [https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/fre#%7B%22itemid%22:\[%22001-67614%22\]%7D](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/fre#%7B%22itemid%22:[%22001-67614%22]%7D)

⁵ <https://www.afad.gov.tr/afad-baskanligi-stratejik-plani>

⁶ https://www.afad.gov.tr/kurumlar/afad.gov.tr/e_Kutuphane/Planlar/TAMP.pdf

⁷ https://www.afad.gov.tr/kurumlar/afad.gov.tr/e_Kutuphane/Planlar/28032022-TARAP-kitap_V6.pdf

⁸ <https://www.afad.gov.tr/udsep-2023>



the Capacity of Turkey to Adapt to Climate Change, it is stated that older persons will also be affected by the climate change adaptation strategies.⁹ The need for carrying out studies to raise awareness of older persons about climate change was highlighted. Although this fundamental principle about older persons was shared in this document, none of the action plans prepared afterward contained any foresight concerning older persons.

The documents titled the National Action Plan for Combating Desertification¹⁰, the Action Plan for Rehabilitating Mining Sites¹¹, the National Action Plan for Combating Floods¹², the Green Belt Planting Action Plan for Dam Basins¹³, and the Republic of Turkey Climate Change Strategy 2010-2023¹⁴ and the Republic of Turkey Climate Change Action Plan¹⁵ of the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, and the Green Deal Action Plan¹⁶, which the Ministry of Trade declared to be in harmony with the development goals of the century, also do not contain any information and foresight about older persons.

The older persons are not addressed in any national plan, policy or strategy aimed at the prevention and mitigation of and/or response to climate change-induced disasters. No action is defined in any of Turkey's emergency action plans, regarding the measures, responses or recovery activities to be carried out for older persons before, during or after disasters.

Yet, older persons have difficulties in their access to clean air, water and food due to climate crisis-induced disasters. Because of the destructive development model implemented by Turkey in the last 20 years, the agricultural lands, forest areas and river banks are destroyed due to mineral exploration activities and establishment of thermal and hydroelectric power plants. Especially the destruction of agricultural lands profoundly affects sustainable food

⁹ The older persons are also pointed out on Page 54 of the relevant document

https://webdosya.csb.gov.tr/db/destek/editordosya/Iklim_Degisikligi_Uyum_Stratejisi_ve_Eylem_Plani.pdf

¹⁰ http://www.sp.gov.tr/upload/xSPTemelBelge/files/q2ls0+Collesme_ile_Mucadele_Ulusal_Stratejisi_2015-2023_.pdf

¹¹ <https://cem.csb.gov.tr/maden-sahalari-rehabilitasyon-eylem-plani-taslagi-i-103587>

¹² <https://cem.csb.gov.tr/ulusal-sel-ile-mucadele-eylem-plani-i-103588>

¹³ <https://cem.csb.gov.tr/ulusal-sel-ile-mucadele-eylem-plani-i-103588>

¹⁴ <https://www.gmka.gov.tr/dokumanlar/yayinlar/Turkiye-Iklim-Degisikligi-Stratejisi.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://webdosya.csb.gov.tr/db/iklim/banner/banner591.pdf>

¹⁶ <https://ticaret.gov.tr/data/60f1200013b876eb28421b23/MUTABAKAT%20YEŞİL.pdf>



production. The damages to forest areas and riparian ecosystems negatively affect the safe access to clean air and water, especially for the older persons living in rural and urban areas at the risk of poverty. Indeed, forest areas and riparian ecosystems are quite necessary for emission reduction and an effective struggle against the climate crisis. It is estimated that forests and riparian ecosystems in Turkey have an annual reduction potential of approximately one hundred million tonnes.

In its Turkey report¹⁷ submitted in 2020 in the scope of the call of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Senex: Association for Aging Studies evaluated how mineral exploration activities and thermal and hydroelectric power plants negatively affect forest areas, riparian ecosystems and biodiversity. In this report, which was titled *The Impact of Climate Change on the Rights of Older Persons*, Senex provided examples of the struggles of older persons in rural areas against activities that cause the loss of forest areas, riparian ecosystems and agricultural lands. It was observed that older persons were stigmatized as "dangerous people" or "against the state" due to their resistance against the damage to nature and dispossession. The displacement of older persons seeking legal remedies and their loss of livelihoods make them precarious, and their stigmatization as "a menace to national security" marginalizes them.

When multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination are considered, it is obvious that climate crisis-induced disasters are one of the major factors preventing the realization of the rights of older persons. Yet, there is no action plan or strategic document that links the rights of older persons and ageism with climate crisis-induced disasters, and the failure of the civil society and academia in Turkey to generate information on this subject is noteworthy.

¹⁷ Arun, Ö., Arun, B.K., Kocabıyık, S. (2021). *The Impact Of Climate Change On The Rights Of Older Persons In Turkey*. Association for Aging Studies Publication.

<https://api.senex.org.tr/upload/Publication/8f391cb2273840e4bc0375a4d756dfca.pdf>



2. Access to information: How do you raise awareness about existing measures in relation to prevention, mitigation, and response to climate-change related disasters in the public? How is information about access to essential services (e.g. access to shelters, food security, healthcare, legal assistance, social services) made accessible and available for older persons?

Awareness programmes

AFAD plans awareness training courses for all social segments concerning disasters and emergencies in Turkey. In this context, 2021 was declared as the 'Disaster Training Year' by AFAD. In order to raise the awareness of and train the entire society, disaster preparedness was planned through tools such as posters and public service announcements, and information activities were carried out about the actions to be taken during and after disasters. For example, <https://www.hazirol.gov.tr> website presents the information prepared for this purpose to the public. However, none of these awareness and training activities contained any information about the rights of older persons and climate crisis-induced disasters. In the training and information inventory presented to the public, older persons were mentioned only with the warning "disaster victims in need of special care such as older persons, babies, disabled should be assisted" when listing the actions to be taken after floods.¹⁸

When it comes to climate crisis-induced disasters and the rights of older persons, there is no training programme or awareness activity for older persons in the scope of environmental training, either. The Turkish Environment Agency (TÜÇA), which is affiliated to the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change and is one of the institutions responsible at the national level, aims to raise public sensitivity and awareness in the frame of "zero waste" approach, and to protect and improve the environment and green zones.¹⁹ However, TÜÇA, which was established in 2020, does not have any programme or awareness activity that links the climate crisis with the rights of older persons.

¹⁸ Please see <https://www.hazirol.gov.tr/tr/41990/SEL>

¹⁹ Please see <https://www.tuca.gov.tr/sayfa/misyonumuz-vizyonumuz>



Access to quality information

Information concerning access to basic services after disasters is presented in digital media. For example, all the information provided after the major earthquakes in Turkey on February 6, 2023, was presented on digital platforms. Information concerning access to health services, staple food, water and hygiene, and to tent cities for shelter, was provided through digital platforms and phone applications. However, the access of older persons to the information provided on digital media is rather limited.

The recent studies carried out by Binark, Arun, Özsoy, Kandemir and Şahinkaya established the fact that older persons constitute the most deprived segments in Turkey due to digital inequalities²⁰. In Turkey, older persons do not have the digital tools that they can use to access quality information in cases of emergency. The digital capitals of especially the older women are at very low levels. Older persons - the segments such as older women, illiterate older persons, disabled older persons, and patients with dementia/Alzheimer's disease - who do not have information and communication technologies (ICT) are not able to access quality information in Turkey during emergencies, disasters and epidemics.

Indeed, in the monitoring research carried out by Senex, it was found out that older persons who wanted to access the tent cities established after the February 6th earthquakes were not suggested suitable solutions. It is also observed that older persons could not exercise their right to health and could not access treatment options and medication after the February 6th earthquakes. Furthermore, as the result of Senex's studies, it is obvious that vulnerable older persons could not access the online assistance provided by civil society and volunteers, either.

²⁰ To access the studies;

Binark, M., Arun, Ö., Özsoy, D., Kandemir, B., Şahinkaya, G. (2022). Information Seeking and Information Evaluation of Older Adults in the Covid-19 Pandemic: Tübitak Sobag Project No: 120k613. Association for Aging Studies Publication. <https://api.senex.org.tr/Upload/Publication/271c0d396b30414f958abf1f40102a2d.pdf>

Arun, Ö., Binark, M., Taylan, D. Ö., Kandemir, B., Şahinkaya, G., (2022). Social Class, Digital Capital and Practices for Staying Connected of Older People During the COVID-19 Pandemic. İstanbul Üniversitesi Sociology Journal, Advanced online publication <https://cdn.istanbul.edu.tr/file/JTA6CLJ8T5/E703A356D3A249C699CC38123AB76BC6>



In Turkey, older women and older men living at the risk of poverty have rather limited ICT ownership. How may it be possible to enable older persons, especially older women, who do not possess digital instruments and thus cannot improve their competence in using digital instruments, to exercise their rights? Firstly, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), which provide digital literacy training for other generations, must also provide such training widely for older persons. In this regard, the problem of ICT ownership must be solved first. Tablet computers to be lent to older persons must be made available at the provincial and district public libraries across Turkey. MoNE must actively make available the support points, which it reported that it installed at 1420 different points in the scope of the Education Informatics Network (EBA) to allow children to continue their education remotely during the Covid-19 epidemic, available also to older persons who do not have internet access at their homes. In this way, older persons who do not have ICT can gain competence to exercise their digital rights.

Another initiative to enable older persons to enjoy their digital rights can be made widespread with the cooperation of local governments, the private sector and civil society. In this scope, the Digital Competence Training²¹ programme developed by the experts of Senex: Association for Aging Studies is one of the good examples. In this example, the tablet computers purchased by the private sector were donated to Antalya Muratpaşa Municipality for use during digital competency training courses. During the online and face-to-face training programme developed by Senex experts as 5 modules, the tablet computers were lent to older persons. During the 6-week training courses, older persons had tablet computers and completed their training on Information Communication Technologies, Content Development, Digital Services, Access to Quality Information and Digital Security in order to gain digital competence²². Throughout 2022, a total of 50 older women in 6 different terms were trained and graduated from the programme with the Digital Competence Training

²¹ About Digital Competence Training program, please see <http://www.senex.org.tr/tr/Blog/dijitalyetkinlik-program-basliyor/36>

²² For information about Digital Competence Training courses, please see <http://www.senex.org.tr/tr/Blog/yasl-kadnlar-icin-dijital-yetkinlik-egitimlerinin-3-donemi-devam-ediyor/47>



courses offered under Antalya cityLAB with the cooperation of Senex, Muratpaşa Municipality and the private sector.

3. Participation: Are there measures in place to ensure the full and meaningful participation of older persons in addressing climate change-related disasters?

The baby boom generation is defined as the generation to leave the first carbon footprint. Indeed, in the report that Senex submitted to the UN at the end of 2020, it was emphasized that older persons were among the important members of the society that created the climate crisis, but that they would also support the steps to be taken to ensure climate justice²³.

Older persons indeed state in recent surveys that Turkey's most urgent problem is the climate crisis and disasters induced by it²⁴. For example, in a recent research conducted in 34 countries in 2022, Turkey was in the leading ranks among the countries that reported the climate crisis was experienced severely. 74% of people living in Turkey reported that they felt the effects of the climate crisis severely. According to the detailed analysis of the results for Turkey, the majority of the older persons (58%) defined the climate crisis as an urgent problem. This ratio was 20% among the people between 16-24. According to these data, in an all-generations-wise comparison, older persons in Turkey constitute the largest social segment that recognizes the climate crisis as the most urgent global problem. Thus, the active engagement of older persons in decision-making processes is critical. Yet, it is observed neither the central nor the local governments can provide for the participation of older persons in decision-making processes.

The central and local governments cannot provide for the participation of older persons in social life during times of emergency and disaster in Turkey. The most dramatic examples of this were experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic. In Turkey, in the scope of Covid-19

²³ Please see Arun, Ö., Arun, B.K., Kocabıyık, S. (2021). *The Impact Of Climate Change On The Rights Of Older Persons In Turkey*. Association for Aging Studies Publication.

<https://api.senex.org.tr/upload/Publication/8f391cb2273840e4bc0375a4d756dfca.pdf>

²⁴ To access the research, please see <https://www.weforum.org/press/2022/09/world-bracing-for-severe-effects-of-climate-change-new-survey-finds/>



measures, older persons were prohibited from going out as of March 21, 2020, in an unlimited, uncontrolled and indefinite manner. Globally, this prohibition on older persons was implemented only in Turkey based on chronological age. During the curfew, older persons could not access clean air, clean water, and sufficient food; they could not enjoy health and education services; and their freedom of travel and access to justice were obstructed. All these rights violations were presented in detail in the research conducted by Senex: Association for Aging Studies²⁵. Furthermore, the practices that prevent older persons' full and equal participation in society in access to employment, education, health and care services and financial products were identified in the research *Social Inclusion of Older People in Turkey*²⁶, which was submitted by Senex for discussion at the 13th meeting of the UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing held in New York on April 3-6, 2023. Accordingly, it is understood that older persons are prevented from participating in decision-making processes on their behalf in Turkey due to legal age limits, not being considered as active citizens and ageism. Consequently, in Turkey, older persons can not fully and meaningfully participate in the planning processes of struggles against climate change-induced disasters, either.

4. Intersectionality: How do climate change-related disasters affect specific groups of older persons in all their diversity (including older women, older LGBTI persons, older persons belonging to national, religious, and linguistic minorities and older indigenous people, refugees and internally displaced persons, older persons with disabilities, older persons based in urban and rural areas, among others).

In order to combat inequalities effectively, the services are being transferred to the digital space in Turkey. However, older persons have difficulties in accessing online services and information since they are parties to digital inequalities. Older persons, who cannot access to quality information in cases of emergencies and before, during or after disasters, are affected

²⁵ Please see Arun, Ö., (2021). Rights Violations and Discriminatory Practices Against Older Persons During the Covid-19 Pandemic. Association for Aging Studies Publication

<https://api.senex.org.tr/upload/Publication/1b13bc6335c442c393be1b4f4485bf83.pdf>

²⁶ Please see Arun, Ö. and Karademir Arun, B., (2023). *Social Inclusion of Older People in Turkey*. Association for Aging Studies Publication

<https://api.senex.org.tr/Upload/Publication/3dd8e5b665224e6ebbc68b3f8628e535.pdf>



more also by climate crisis-induced disasters. Our research suggests that lonely older persons, orphan older persons, widowed older women, disabled older persons, migrant older persons, older LGBTI+ persons, older persons from ethnic minorities and different faith groups, older persons with dementia/Alzheimer's disease and older women caring for family members are more affected by the climate crisis since they are not able to exercise their digital rights. The inequalities, which become visible with the intersection of social class and gender, are further deepened with the effects of the climate crisis.

One of the most important challenges in ensuring climate justice is the failure to provide participation in decision-making mechanisms. The invisibility in public spheres of illiterate older women or older women from ethnic minorities who were not allowed to educate also negatively affects the exercise of their human rights. One of the most important reasons for the failure of older persons, especially older women, to make their authentic voices heard in public spheres is the failure of central and local governments to develop rights-based services. For example, a total of 1 million (exactly 1 032 972) older persons were living in the 11 provinces affected by the major earthquakes in Turkey on February 6, 2023. In every province in the earthquake zone, the population of older women was higher.

It is still not known how many older women and older men were rescued from the rubble after the earthquake. It is not known how many older women were injured and needed health care services.

It is not known how the older women without identities, who we identified in the earthquake zone, accessed health care services.

It is not known what happened to older persons with dementia/Alzheimer's disease in the earthquake zone.

It is not known how many of the 1 million older persons in the earthquake zone became homeless or were displaced.

It is not known how the visually and hearing impaired older persons in the earthquake zone were communicated with.

It is not known how illiterate older women in the earthquake zone could access services.



We are not able to access to reliable information concerning where older persons are and under which conditions they are living. The fact that authorized institutions in Turkey do not have current and reliable data on the needs of older persons leads to older persons being more affected by climate crisis-induced disasters.

5. Data: Is disaggregated data available at national and local level about the impact of climate change-related disasters on older persons? Is data available on the response to climate change-related disasters, in particular with regard to older persons?

Disaster Management and Decision Support System (AYDES)²⁷ was developed by AFAD for effective disaster and emergency management. However, AYDES data does not contain climate change-induced disasters under a separate heading. Yet, some events that may be related to climate change according to the disaster data presented by AYDES in 2022 can be listed as follows: landslide (9%), fire (8%), flood (5%), forest fire (3%), extreme snow, blizzard, precipitation (3%). However, the impacts of these disasters on older persons at national and local levels in the context of the climate crisis are not included. None of the disaster categories presented by AYDES contains information on older persons who were harmed.

It is stated that studies are carried out by AFAD to produce data about disasters. It was announced that Turkey Disaster Data Bank (TABB) was formed by AFAD for disaster mitigation, preparedness against damages and providing information to civil society, local administrations and universities²⁸. It was reported that data analyses concerning disasters could be carried out and audio-visual sources would be made available to the public in the TABB system. However, no data was produced in the TABB system up until today. Even the website (<https://tabb.afad.gov.tr>), on which the TABB system was reported to operate, is not active. Therefore, the institutions affiliated to the central government do not provide any data at national and local levels on either emergencies or climate crisis-induced disasters.

²⁷ For AYDES website, please see <https://aydes.gov.tr/>

²⁸ For TABB information, please see <https://www.afad.gov.tr/tabb-turkiye-afet-bilgi-bankasi>



In the last year in Turkey, climate directorates are being established under local governments and also studies are being conducted in the context of the impacts of the climate crisis. However, since local governments also do not provide for the full and meaningful participation of older persons in decision-making mechanisms in the prevention, mitigation and/or response to climate change-induced disasters, no information is available regarding older persons' access to safe shelter, clean water, food and hygiene, health services, social services and legal assistance. For this reason, neither the institutions affiliated to the central government nor local governments can reach comprehensive refined data on the impact of climate crisis-induced disasters on older persons.

However, Senex: Association for Aging Studies is able to produce data on the climate crisis-induced disasters in its monitoring research. According to the current data of Senex Monitoring: Monitoring Violence and Violation of Rights against Older People, older persons suffered rights violations due to violence, abuse, negligence and ageism during or after the disaster in 39 climate crisis-induced cases that occurred in the first three months of 2023²⁹. It was observed that the right to life, the right to shelter, the right to environmental safety and the right to access to clean air, food, water and hygiene, which are secured by international conventions, were violated in these rights violations cases against older people. In one of these rights violation cases, the tent where an older woman and her daughter, who lost their house in the earthquakes on February 6th and who were trying to survive in a temporary shelter zone, were staying, was damaged due to floods as a result of excessive rainfall. The older woman and her daughter were forced to take shelter in old train cars at the railway station. Other older persons, who lost their tents like them due to these climate crisis-induced disasters, are also trying to survive in old train cars.

²⁹ For Senex Monitoring research reports, please see <https://monitoring.senex.org.tr/en/publications.aspx>



senex

ASSOCIATION FOR
AGING STUDIES

6. Examples of good practices for addressing the needs of older persons in preventing, mitigating and responding to climate change-related disasters.

Senex: Association for Aging Studies carries out joint activities with Antalya Muratpařa Municipality to address the needs of older persons in the process of the climate crisis-induced disaster risk mitigation and effective response. Under Antalya cityLAB and with the partnership of Senex, Muratpařa Municipality and IKEA Turkey, it is aimed to strengthen the participation of older persons in local governance concerning sustainability, right to the city and climate justice. In line with this objective, the Environmental Working Group consisting of 3 older women and 3 older men was formed under the Older Persons' Assembly of Muratpařa Municipality and expert support was provided by Senex. In this way, older members of both the Older Persons' Assembly and the Environmental Working Group can express their views on decisions concerning themselves in Muratpařa Municipality, or they are consulted in decision-making processes.