

North Macedonia has environmental problems typical of the region, including air and water pollution—especially around Skopje—and disappearing forests. Of particular concern is air pollution from metallurgical plants.

Major polluters of surface and ground waters are households' and industrial sewage systems, while in agricultural areas polluters are livestock waste from farms and farming industry (milk and meat industry, slaughterhouses, etc.). Waters are directly discharged without any treatment. Zinc, lead and cadmium are recorded in Vardar River, downstream from smelter facilities. Cadmium was found in several other rivers, to concentrations above the norm, as well as phosphorus and nitrates.

Chemical industry, leather production, food production and metallurgic industry are all severe polluters of the water, among them most dangerous being copper mine and metal resurfacing factory.

Existing data on air pollution and gas emissions are incoherent and fragmented. However, due to decline of industrial production from early 1990s, the emission of pollutants has decreased by 50%, according to the State Agency for statistics, and has not rise significantly ever since. Industry is, nevertheless, major air polluter, with significant environmental pressure originating from metallurgic sector.

Thermal power plants provide North Macedonia with 80% of its energy demands, while rest is being covered from hydro-electric plants production.

About 50% of the state territory is agricultural land. Use of pesticides and reports on its proportions are scarce, although existing reports show that pesticide use significantly dropped since mid 1980s over ten years (from 2,700 tons to 659t). Overall conclusion is that all air, water and soil are severely contaminated, when even protected lake Ohrid suffers from eutrophication, due to waste water inflow.

Climate change:

Reports on climate change consequences show expectations of general temperature rise, mostly in summer periods, with intensive decrease of precipitation in all seasons except winter. Ohrid and Prespa lake regions are expected to have mildest response to global changes of the climate, while alpine regions (high mountains' altitudes) are expected to have a dramatic response. North Macedonian high mountain ranges, therefore would suffer the same consequences as other mountain regions of the world, i.e. snow and ice melting and loss of alpine ecosystems biodiversity.



Environmental issues in North Macedonia

Source: naturverforbundet.no