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Over 68,000 foreigners own property in Turkey



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A report released by the Turkish Land Registry Directorate (TKM) details that 68,419 foreigners own property in Turkey and that the total size of these properties encompasses 36,015,446 square meters.

The TKM has updated its database on real estate sales to foreigners in order to monitor sales in real time. The project, launched by the TKM to eliminate flaws and inconsistencies in statistics related to the sale of real estate to foreigners, has been completed, officials from the directorate have said.

Under this project, the records kept in 1,004 land registry directorates throughout the country were transferred into a database on electronic media. This database will ensure real-time monitoring of all real estate transactions with foreigners in the country. The TKM will also publish statistical data on foreign real estate ownership and a breakdown by province on its official Web site. These statistics will be accompanied by graphics and updated on a regular basis.

Top three countries

With 17,668 properties owned by foreigners, Antalya is currently the favorite destination for nationals of other countries who want to buy real estate in Turkey. Antalya is followed by Muğla (8,298), İstanbul (7,605), Aydın (5,010) and Bursa (4,899).

Foreign real estate owners come from 73 countries, owning 57,541 pieces of property. Holding ownership to 15,290 parcels, German citizens represent the biggest group in terms of real estate ownership and are followed by the Britons (12,948), the Greeks (10,094 -- of which 8,471 are owned by Greeks with Turkish origins). The real estate properties that belong to citizens of these three countries amount to 65.6 percent of total foreign real estate property ownership.

Meanwhile only one citizen each from the Czech Republic, China, Philippines, Libya, Liechtenstein, Niger, Peru, Slovakia, Slovenia, Tajikistan and Venezuela owns real estate in Turkey.

Syria not included

The TKM's statistics contain no data on real state owned by Syrians. Due to the fact that property owned by Syrians had been purchased before the annexation of Hatay in 1939 and since the Treasury has had authority over these properties since 1966, the TKM has delegated the duty of monitoring Syrian ownership of real estate in Turkey to the National Real Estate Directorate, a department under the Finance Ministry.

A TKM official pointed out that Syrian nationals are not allowed to buy real estate in Turkey due to a land-exchange deal between the two countries in the late 1930s. Even the exact number of properties owned by Syrian nationals before the land-exchange has yet to be counted. The government is currently going through hundreds of court decisions, land transfer transactions documents and land registry certificates to sort out which property belongs to whom. Since talks are still ongoing on the issue between the two countries, officials have refrained from announcing numbers, but the aggregate area of property owned by Syrian nationals in Turkey extends over an estimated 120 million square meters.

Minister: Everything is done under the law

In an interview with the Anatolia news agency, Public Works and Settlement Minister Faruz Nafiz Özak said the exact figures of property sale to foreign nationals would soon be publicly released on the website of the ministry, to which the TKM is annexed.

Özak argued that it is not easy for land registry officials to provide quick answers to questions about real estate sales to foreigners and that this applies to other countries as well.

"Despite the fact that real estate sales to foreigners have taken place since 1934 and many sales have been made since, this issue has become a top agenda item during our term in power. Some groups claim that our government has been promoting these sales. They have even made some far-reaching claims. If the late Ismet İnönü or the late [Bülent] Ecevit or Celal Bayar or Cemal Gürsel or Kenan Evren could make such sales, then it implies that there is a law allowing such sales. Who can make illegal sales in Turkey?" he asked.

Emphasizing that some people falsely claim that military and security areas, strategic locations and areas containing natural resources are being sold to foreigners, Özak explained that laws exist which prohibit such sales.

He further stated that real estate sales to foreigners were realized worldwide on a reciprocal basis, with Turkish nationals owning a large number of properties worldwide. "This issue should not be exaggerated," he said, responding to criticism from nationalists that a large amount of Turkish land is being sold to foreigners.

Breakdown of immovables owned by foreigners in Turkey by provinces (12 November 2007)

Provinces	No of Immovables	Area (Square Meter)	Foreigners
Adana	272	476,527	210
Adıyaman	2	129	2
Afyon	121	527,787	55
Aksaray	56	188,393	36
Amasya	23	19,178	18

Ankara	1,022	1,231,904	799
Antalya	17,688	3,572,290	24,282
Artvin	11	4,156	3
Aydın	5,010	2,914,405	6,995
Balıkesir	742	520,915	716
Bartın	26	20,637	21
Batman	4	146	3
Bayburt	27	129,944	2
Bilecik	6	5,938	4
Bingöl	7	8,617	3
Bolu	29	10,689	16
Burdur	96	131,710	39
Bursa	4,899	1,480,820	5,291
Çanakkale	126	272,702	76
Çankırı	16	21,161	7
Çorum	68	291,301	30
Denizli	149	314,368	64
Diyarbakır	177	738,924	78
Düzce	24	37,910	21
Edirne	76	211,912	62
Elazığ	81	173,105	44
Erzurum	59	105,798	9
Eskişehir	120	146,529	86
Gaziantep	84	307,527	62
Giresun	83	108,798	50
Gümüşhane	1	113	1
Hatay	719	2,538,841	574
Isparta	60	122,609	39
İstanbul	7,605	2,416,952	8,526
İzmir	3,897	2,272,225	4,014
Kahramanmaraş	84	690,272	67
Karabük	40	8,283	17
Karaman	54	209,729	44
Kars	9	141,085	4
Kastamonu	6	2,034	6
Kayseri	421	874,271	268
Kırıkkale	31	13,829	20
Kırklareli	26	97,573	25
Kırşehir	199	1,024,174	74
Kocaeli	346	308,019	334
Konya	279	533,406	218
Kütahya	18	49,150	15
Malatya	172	544,152	71

Manisa	519	633,173	421
Mardin	123	633,774	44
Mersin	778	536,182	811
Muğla	8,298	4,344,151	11,638
Nevşehir	347	876,930	204
Niğde	48	47,360	12
Ordu	126	80,866	69
Osmaniye	3	1,599	3
Rize	12	2,598	6
Sakarya	267	334,115	230
Samsun	219	322,801	128
Sinop	123	163,602	78
Sivas	127	200,233	74
Tekirdağ	176	403,318	142
Tokat	14	4,073	8
Trabzon	178	100,763	128
Tunceli	128	77,893	79
Uşak	139	553,396	47
Van	1	313	1
Yalova	682	189,180	791
Yozgat	111	654,163	60
Zonguldak	51	34,024	44
Total	57,541	36,015,446	68,419

Breakdown of immovables owned by foreigners in Turkey by countries (12 November 2007)

Countries	No of Immovables	Area (Square Meter)	Foreigners
Germany	15,290	16,151,303	14,659
US	832	418,291	824
Argentina	20	7,434	11
Albania	37	1,534	76
Australia	182	347,944	190
Austria	1,969	3,217,204	1,404
Azerbaijan	41	23,316	44
Bahrain	5	3,192	7
Belgium	895	458,931	1,081
United Arab Emirates	4	70,717	4
Bosnia-Herzegovina	33	7,454	34
Brazil	47	270,985	17
Bulgaria	69	30,708	90
Czech Republic	1	2	1
China	1	88	1
Denmark	3,090	838,748	4,080
El Salvador	2	411	2

Estonia	13	1,030	14
Philippines	1	61	2
Finland	279	66,881	364
France	776	789,380	855
Guatemala	2	331	2
South Africa	5	5,622	8
Georgia	13	1,805	13
Croatia	10	679	14
Netherlands	2,939	1,466,372	3,789
UK	12,948	4,851,215	18,593
Iraq	46	13,464	51
Iran	168	195,483	232
Ireland	3,179	667,532	4,387
Spain	92	65,202	96
Israel	100	18,487	72
Sweden	492	156,040	562
Switzerland	169	154,715	130
Italy	643	193,734	781
Japan	41	4,927	42
Canada	93	29,883	85
Kazakhstan	13	1,000	13
Kyrgyzstan	6	283	7
KKTC	748	535,753	748
Korea (South)	32	3,189	28
Kuwait	12	13,987	11
Latvia	5	1,370	5
Libya	1	12	1
Liechtenstein	1	43	1
Lithuania	18	1,335	19
Lebanon	122	915,200	103
Luxembourg	11	8,336	11
Hungary	11	1,975	14
Macedonia	88	5,006	76
Mexico	4	254	2
Egypt	113	239,177	78
Moldova	14	1,658	13
Niger	1	137	1
Norway	1,866	232,866	2,647
Uzbekistan	8679	9	
Pakistan	10	807	9
Peru	1	144	1
Poland	17	5,108	17
Portugal	5	803	6

Romania	10	1,587	11
Russia	378	310,069	366
Serbia-Monte Negro	150	62,053	202
Slovakia	1	590	8
Slovenia	1	44	2
Saudi Arabia	53	187,402	68
Tajikistan	1	11	1
Turkmenistan	2	295	2
Ukraine	48	20,720	43
Jordan	36	17,789	12
Venezuela	1	67	1
New Zealand	25	3,255	25
Greece*	10,094	2,911,337	1,120

**8,741 belong to the Greeks with Turkish origins.*