

AZ: Students were given an assignment to compose a short overview of the BBC News article of personal interest weekly. This is an example of an article with unknown for the student words underlined by him and his overview on the second page.

By Nicholas Walton
BBC News, Tirana

Albania does not at first sight seem to be fertile ground for environmental politics.

Rubbish bins on city streets and country roads overflow with refuse.

Plastic bags blow around the fields, catching on the branches of trees and on fences.

Dust, diesel and smog choke pedestrians braving the chaotic traffic of Tirana.

Albania is a very poor country, and many citizens seem to have too many other problems to worry about to concentrate on ecology.

Smouldering rubbish

But with fiercely contested mayoral and local elections due in February, environmental issues are firmly on the agenda.

"I think they have started to realise how important environmental issues are," explains Dzemal Mato, the executive director of Eco-Levisja, a grouping of NGOs.

"People feel it most when it affects them, much more than reading about it or hearing it on the news.

"In Tirana a lot of people now have allergies and cancers from the bad air. Polluted drinking water has caused disease outbreaks. The green gardens in our cities have disappeared, covered by buildings."

The environmental issues that Albanians view as important are local ones.

When the charismatic Mayor of Tirana, Edi Rama, took office, he started a campaign to paint buildings in bright colours and clean up the area around the Lana River.

In February's election for the capital's mayor, green spaces and air pollution are important issues.

So is the city's rubbish dump, just outside the capital. Fires underneath the rubbish send smoke over Tirana, making its smog even worse.

Many trace the environmental problems to the downfall of the oppressive communist regime of Enver Hoxha.

Deforestation

People did not have much then, argues Dzemal Mato, so although Albanians are still poor, they now generate a lot more rubbish than the infrastructure was built to cope with.

Under Hoxha's rule, Albanians all had to take part in communal activities.

After communism people turned against this, keeping their own private places spotless and caring far less about the public areas.

Albania's beautiful countryside has also suffered.

It is a country blessed by a mixture of towering mountain peaks, dense forests and a long coastline along the Adriatic and Ionian seas.

Since the end of communism around 30% of the forests have gone, and erosion is now a serious problem in many parts.

Clean-up 'vital'

But despite poverty and the scrabble to make ends meet, there are signs that changes are under way.



The environment is starting to become a political issue in Albania



Piles of rubbish are a common sight in Tirana

“ This is not only a problem of flowers or birds or plants, the environment can be a big cost economically ”

Dzemal Mato
Green campaigner

Short overview about ecological situation in Albania

Albania has many problems with pollution of the environment now. There is much rubbish in the streets of cities, towns and countryside. But Albania is quite poor country because people have many other problems more important for their. Early when was communism then people took part in communal activities and now they tidy up their own places more.

It is very important that government already realised this problem and began to decide it. Albania has many beautiful places. It is a big potential for the development of tourism. So decision this ecological problem have economical profit.

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