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ENVIRONMENT-EUROPE: On Your Green Bike

By **Claudia Ciobanu**

Sofia, Jul 11 (IPS) - A group of young people from several European countries are taking a cycling tour from Bulgaria to Turkey to show the world that travelling and a good life are possible without much energy consumption.



The cyclists on their way to Turkey.
Credit: Joao Lopez/ Ecotopia

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Most of the actions are meant to draw attention to the way in which development takes place in the region.

While participants say they are met with curiosity and friendliness everywhere, the message they are trying to promote is not always equally welcomed.

"It is very tough to discuss with people, for example, that oil consumption needs to be reduced," says Ivan Gregov from Croatia. "Eastern Europe is a very consumerist society, and few are really ready to give up energy-intensive habits."

As a participant in an earlier edition of Biketour wrote in a blog, "the culture of global progress has already occupied Eastern European countries, but people still cannot see the counter-effects and costs which they will have to pay. The mistakes Western Europe made because of its ruthless development are now being copied by Eastern countries. We want to raise public awareness to change this way of development."

Still, the Biketour seems to be more about setting an example rather than preaching about how people should live. "Biketour aims to be a sustainable community," says a participant. "Think about the environmental impact of your daily choices. And don't be too fascist about the issues you happen to be specialised in because different people will consider different issues important." (END/2008)

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