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## **ASSESSING THE IMPACTS OF TOURISM ON FORESTS: MASS TOURISM AND POLICY IN TURKEY**

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### **Abstract**

It is well known that badly managed tourism leads to serious environmental and socio-cultural problems throughout the world if not managed responsibly. Mass tourism is accepted as “the construction of large-scale tourism facilities and infrastructures on natural and cultural resources, leading to a depletion, fragmentation or degradation of the environmental resource base with other environmental-social problems” in the scope of this study. Worldwide, a significant proportion of natural lands and forests have been used for the construction of mass tourist facilities. Similar to many parts of the world, natural resource depletion-land use change characterised by deforestation or forest fragmentation, environmental degradation and pollution-related problems are major environmental impacts of mass tourism development on forests in Turkey. This study examines the impacts of mass tourism development on forests and focuses on deforestation and forest fragmentation as the most critical impacts with specific reference to Turkey and Belek, a popular destination in the Mediterranean region. The study also handles the conceptual framework of mass tourism and forest-tourism relations in terms of forest policy.

*Key words:* deforestation, forest, tourism, Turkish tourism

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