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On

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Globalization»**

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Major threats to the plant diversity of Artvin (Turkey)

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Artvin is located within the Caucasus Hotspot classified as one of the most important 25 Threatened Terrestrial Ecological Regions in the World. Having 4 Important Plant Areas, 1 Biosphere Reserve Area, 2 National Parks, 3 Nature Conservation Areas, and 1 Natural Park, Artvin is also one of the most important areas in Turkey in terms of plant richness including 1308 vascular plant taxa of which 243 (158 endemics and 85 non-endemics according to IUCN risk categories) are classified as rare plant taxa. As for the rare plant species in the province of Artvin, out of the total 243 rare plant taxa found, 65, 66, and 112 were identified as threatened at the Global Scale, at the European Scale, and at the National Scale, respectively. In addition, it was determined that while 6 plant species are subject to the Bern Convention, 17 plant species are subject to the CITES Convention. However, recently, there have been several on-going investments and projects taking place both in Artvin. These

disturbances occurring in natural areas are greatly threatening the plant diversity of the region. Some of the investments and projects are (a) building large dams (b) constructing so many run-of-river type small hydropower plants, (c) building new roads, (d) mining activities within forested areas, (e) over-collection of flowers, bulbs and vegetative parts of rare and endemic plants, f) urbanization, g) expansion of structuring into the natural areas, h) improper logging in forest ecosystems and 9) overgrazing. Besides these disturbances, another major threat is considered to be the insect damage to the forest ecosystems of Artvin. Especially, the population of *Ips typographus*, *I. sexdentatus* and *Dendroctonus micans* are the most observed insect species in these forests and for the last few years the damage has started to reach an epidemic status killing tens of thousands of oriental spruce (*Picea orientalis*) species in the region. In this article, negative outcomes of the disturbances mentioned above on Artvin's plant diversity were analyzed. Endemic and rare plant species that are at high risk due to these projects were emphasized. Also, some recommendations were given in order to slow down the damage or introduce methods to protect some plant species under construction threat in the Valley.