AIRBUS IS SUNK OFF TURKEY TO BECOME ARTIFICIAL REEF

News / Events / Festivals



Turkish authorities have sunk an A300 Airbus jet off the Aegean coast with the aim of attracting more diving tourists to the region.

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The plane was put to the bottom of the sea off the resort of Ku?adas?, in Aydin province, 50 miles south of Izmir.

The sinking of the plane, which is 54 metres (177ft) long and has a wingspan of 44 metres, is aimed at promoting artificial reef diving, which is hugely popular with experienced divers. Once sunk, the plane acts like a reef, becoming a magnet for underwater flora and fauna.

The 36-year-old aircraft was bought by Aydin municipality from a private aviation company for 270,000 Turkish lira (£64,000).

Turkey is looking for new ways to promote its tourism industry, which is expected to suffer a battering this year due after several deadly attacks.

Hundreds of people watched the two-and-a-half hour sinking on nearby boats, cheering and blasting their foghorns as the nose of the plane finally went down, video images showed. Aydin's mayor, Özlem Çerçio?lu, said: "Our goal is to make Ku?adas? a centre of diving tourism. Our goal is to protect the underwater life. And with these goals in mind, we have witnessed one of the biggest wrecks in the world."

She added: "Our main target to diversify tourism in Ku?adas? and have a 12-month season."

Three small planes have been sunk off Turkish resorts of recent years in the hope of promoting dive tourism but this is the first time Turkey has sent such a large aircraft to the bottom of the sea.

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