



Committee on Energy, Environment and Water

The Committee on Energy, Environment and Water of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean:

1. Recognises the citizens' call to protect and restore biodiversity, the landscape and oceans, eliminate pollution, and to foster knowledge, awareness, education, and dialogues on environment, climate change, energy use, and sustainability¹.
2. Encourages coordinated action on the matters of the Committee by all states by building partnerships and alliances with states, institutions, research institutes and economic actors in the Mediterranean region as a way to improve knowledge, fair trade and quality of life.
3. Underlines that the global community must endeavour to continuously promote further mitigation efforts, as duly emphasised by the IPCC recently in COP27 in Sharm El Sheikh, and recognises the severe impact that climate change is having on the Mediterranean area. Calls on the parliaments and countries in the region to continue to cooperate, implement ambitious climate policies and keep up the efforts to raise awareness so that the world's biggest polluters also take on more ambitious targets regarding emissions reduction.
4. Recognises the serious challenges regarding water management, particularly in the Mediterranean area, which is highly affected by desertification, and highlights that desalination projects should be seen as an important solution, complementary to other existing water management solutions, that can be used to help tackle desertification and climate change effects.

¹ Conference on the Future of Europe – Report on the Final Outcome, May 2022, Proposal 2 (1, 4, 5) p. 44, Proposal 6 (6) p. 48.

5. Highlights the importance of access to potable water for the well-being of populations and the risks associated with climate change in what concerns water quality and availability. Notes the importance of improving the water management and distribution infrastructure, as potable water losses remain a critical problem throughout the region and invites parliaments and member states to revisit this issue with the utmost urgency.

6. Highlights the importance of reforestation as part of the solution to combat climate change and biodiversity loss, while being a nature-based solution to capture and store carbon, prevent heat islands and prevent atypical expansions of desert ecosystems. Stresses the particular importance of these actions within the context of the Mediterranean, as planting trees and deploying green infrastructure help to cool urban areas and mitigate the impact of natural disasters.

7. Stresses the importance of promoting nature-based solutions and recognises that cost-effective adaptation to climate change can solely be achieved by protecting and restoring ecosystems. Notes that having a greater number of biodiverse ecosystems leads to higher resilience to climate change and provides more effective forms of disaster reduction and prevention.

8. Highlights the trend of more people living in cities, as recognised by the United Nations, and the important effects of climate change on urban areas. Stresses the role of parliaments and local authorities in designing and implementing climate mitigation and adaptation policies for urban areas.

9. Underlines the importance of furthering the current investment in research, development and innovation in clean technologies to better address mitigation and adaptation problems. Calls on member states to invest in the technologies needed to achieve climate neutrality, achieve energy security and modernise industry, such as renewable energies, carbon removals, alternative fuels and sustainable and energy-efficient building materials. Underlines the importance of using data to develop digital tools to prevent and respond to extreme climate events.

10. Recalls that, worldwide, as well as in the Mediterranean region, food systems need urgent and significant transformation to become sustainable and that they are responsible for significant gas emissions. Therefore, asks decision-makers and stakeholders to redesign agricultural practices in order to reduce the large amounts of natural resources consumed. Adds that current practices result in biodiversity loss and negative health impacts (due to both under- and over-nutrition) and stresses the need to allow fair economic returns and livelihoods for all actors, particularly for primary producers.

11. Underlines the importance of, on the one hand, working towards food security for all, particularly bearing in mind the current geopolitical tensions and conflicts, while improving sustainability standards on the other. The transition of the food system towards sustainability is a societal task, and its success will depend on systemic behavioural changes and on the responsibilities of all actors in the food system. Therefore, invites member states and parliaments to present and implement strategies aimed at guaranteeing that food production chains comply with current environmental standards, promoting the conservation of land and supporting farmers in implementing farming practices that make efficient use of water resources and preserve land.

12. Emphasises the importance of accelerating the energy transition by improving energy efficiency and the current renewables capacity, promoting a fair transition in order to support states, economies and populations that are, by now, more dependent on fossil fuels.

13. Recognises the problems concerning the high energy prices that stem from the war in Ukraine and their contribution to the inflation felt worldwide, which must motivate decision-makers to invest in renewables, shifting away from fossil fuels and improving their strategic energy autonomy. Calls once again on member states to cooperate in order to strengthen energy connections, promoting renewable energies and highlighting the Mediterranean region's potential in renewable energies, particularly regarding hydrogen and solar energy, for a swift energy transition.

14. Highlights that the energy poverty faced by a large share of the population in the Mediterranean area can have severe implications on health, well-being, social inclusion and quality of life. Member states should cooperate to address this issue, not only to improve the population's quality of life but also to be more energy efficient and, hence, have significant energy savings and protect the climate.

15. Underlines the importance of member states accelerating the transition towards regenerative economic models that allow decoupling economic growth from resource use. Considers this transition an essential stepping stone towards keeping resource consumption within planetary boundaries and, therefore, striving to reduce the consumption footprint and significantly boost the circular material use rate in the coming decade.

16. Stresses the importance of urban and regional planning cooperation to improve the circular economy and the relevance of involving all stakeholders to successfully implement waste management models that allow circular industrial processes, promote individual responsibility, broadly reduce the environmental footprint and promote circular economy as the norm.

17. Recognises that biodiversity loss and climate change pose a significant risk to public health and well-being, and priority should be given to protecting the oceans and biodiversity. Calls on member states to show ambition to reverse biodiversity loss.

18. Notes that biodiversity is suffering with human economic activity due to the release of nutrients, chemical pesticides, pharmaceuticals, hazardous chemicals, and urban and industrial waste water, and member states must update and enforce the current legislation to protect biodiversity. Underlines the importance of capacity building and invites member states to share best practices, knowledge and tools for biodiversity preservation.

19. Calls on parliaments and member states to be ambitious regarding environmental and climate legislation and policies, improving transparency practices and engaging with civil society, allowing participation in decision-making processes regarding projects, plans and programmes affecting the environment and plans and programmes relating to the environment. Calls on all countries of the Mediterranean region to ratify the Aarhus Convention.