



*Committee on Energy, Environment and Water*

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

1. Recognises the citizens' call to protect conserve and restore biodiversity, the landscape and oceans, eliminate pollution, and to foster knowledge, awareness, education, and dialogues on environment, climate change, resource and energy use and efficiency, and sustainability<sup>1</sup> within planetary boundaries.
2. Encourages coordinated action on the Committee's matters 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 increase mitigation efforts, to stay in line with the Paris Agreement's 1.5 degree target, as duly emphasised by the United Nations (UN) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recently at the UN 27<sup>th</sup> Climate Change Conference (COP27) in Sharm El Sheikh and in the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and recognises the severe impact that climate change is having on the Mediterranean area. Calls on the region's parliaments and countries 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 and responsibilities 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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.

5. Highlights the importance of access to drinking water for the well-being of populations and the risks associated with climate change concerning water quality and availability. Notes the importance of improving the water management and distribution infrastructure, as drinking 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 afforestation, reforestation and ecosystem restoration as part of the solution to combat climate change and biodiversity loss, as 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 Mediterranean context, 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, above all, can especially 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. Stresses, in this context, the importance of greening cities to reduce the rise in temperature, and the adverse effects of its increase on urban life.

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, while maintaining ecosystem services in good condition, in the technologies needed to achieve climate neutrality, achieve energy security and modernise

industry, such as renewable energy, alternative fuels and sustainable and energy-efficient building materials. Stresses the importance of using data to develop digital tools to prevent and respond to extreme climate events.

10. Recalls that, worldwide and in the Mediterranean region, food systems need urgent and significant transformation to become sustainable, to follow a regenerative agriculture path, and that they are responsible for significant greenhouse gas emissions, soil erosion and biodiversity loss. 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 undernutrition and overnutrition) and stresses the need to allow fair economic returns and livelihoods for all actors, particularly primary producers. Recognises that the current use of pesticides is unsustainable with proven negative impacts on human health and biodiversity.

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, primarily Russia's war against Ukraine, while improving sustainability standards on the other hand. The transition of the food system towards sustainability is a societal task, and its success will depend on systemic behavioural changes and 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 land conservation and supporting farmers in implementing farming practices that make efficient use of water resources and preserve land.

12. Emphasises the importance of accelerating energy transition by improving energy efficiency and existing renewable and low-carbon energy capacity, as well as by facilitating energy interconnections between Mediterranean countries and the current renewable capacity, especially in solar energy, promoting a fair and environmentally friendly transition in order to support states, economies and populations that are nowadays more dependent on fossil fuels.

13. Condemns the ongoing unjustifiable and unprovoked war of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. Recognises the problems concerning high energy prices that stem from the war in Ukraine and their contribution to the inflation experienced worldwide, which

must drive decision-makers to invest in renewable energy, 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 environmentally friendly renewable energy and highlighting the Mediterranean region's potential in renewable energy, particularly regarding hydrogen and solar energy, for a swift energy transition.

14. Highlights that the energy poverty faced by a large portion 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 and help provide better access to energy but also to be more energy efficient and, hence, have significant energy savings and protect the climate and biodiversity.

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 a circular economy as the norm.

16. a. Reminds that by 2050 our consumption needs to be fully within planetary boundaries; stresses that this would only be achieved if the European Union together with the overconsuming nations multiply their efforts in actions in favour of the environment, such as climate and biodiversity, and energy efficiency and transition, increase the resource efficiency by tenfold while respecting the non-toxicity and "do no significant harm" principle.

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. Welcomes the historic adoption, at the COP15 on biodiversity, of the Kunming-Montreal agreement which aims to

protect 30% of land and oceans by 2030, to restore 30% of ecosystems by 2030, and cut the risks associated with the use of pesticides by half. Calls on the Member States to do everything to rapidly achieve these objectives.

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 wastewater, and member states must update and enforce their current legislation to protect biodiversity in the most appropriate way. Underlines the importance of capacity-building and invites member states to share best practices, knowledge and tools for biodiversity preservation. Welcomes the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted at the UN Biodiversity Conference (GBF COP15).

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 and related to the environment. Calls on all countries of the Mediterranean region to ratify the Aarhus Convention.