



Recommendation 851 (1979)¹

Environment policy in Europe in 1977-78

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having noted the report of its Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities on environment policy in Europe in 1977-78 ([Doc. 4267](#)) ;
2. Bearing in mind that a meeting of experts is to take place in Valletta in February 1979 to examine possibilities and means of economic, scientific and cultural co-operation in the Mediterranean region as part of the follow-up to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe ;
3. Welcoming the work done by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in order to safeguard the environment, control long-distance atmospheric pollution across frontiers, and develop non-polluting techniques ;
4. Appreciating the extent and expediency of the measures taken by the member states' governments for the better protection of the environment ;
5. Aware that the existence of a satisfactory rural and urban environment is indispensable to the preservation, restoration and improvement of the quality of life ;
6. Concerned at the constant danger arising from the increase in marine transportation of oil products in super-tankers, too often sailing under flags of convenience ;
7. Aware of the serious problems caused by transfrontier air pollution on human health and ecosystems ;
8. Anxious that the exploitation of natural resources and energy sources should be the subject of reflection and consultation, account being taken of the need to safeguard the environment, in order to prevent increasing wastage which would jeopardise the livelihood of future generations ;
9. Bearing in mind that effective and responsible environment policies cannot be pursued regardless of economic and social considerations, especially at times of crisis ;
10. Recalling the policy measures set out in [Resolution 592 \(1975\)](#) on the economic consequences of the limits to growth and in particular the emphasis placed on the "polluter-pays" principle as being an effective environmental safeguard in the context of present European economic systems ;
11. Wishing to organise and foster international co-operation on the environment, transcending the natural or political frontiers of the member states of the Council of Europe and extending to world level ;
12. Emphasising once again the need for the concertation of national environment policies at the European level with a view to harmonising and co-ordinating efforts for the prevention and control of pollution, for the protection of the natural environment and for research ;
13. Concerned by the level of pollution reached in the Mediterranean ;
14. Recalling the proposals made in its [Recommendation 800 \(1977\)](#), on the environment policy in Europe,

1. Assembly debate on 30 January 1979 (21st Sitting) (see [Doc. 4267](#), report of the Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities). Text adopted by the Assembly on 30 January 1979 (21st Sitting).



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15. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :
- a. bring to a conclusion, in the shortest possible time, the draft European convention for the protection of international watercourses against pollution, which has been in the hands of the ad hoc committee of experts since 1974 ;
 - b. see that the European Convention for the Conservation of Wildlife and Natural Habitats is rapidly finalised ;
 - c. give these two conventions an open character allowing for accession by non-member states ;
 - d. examine the means of establishing more effective co-operation between all international organisations dealing with environmental problems at the European level, in order to promote a consistent European policy in this field ;
 - e. invite the governments of member states :
 1. to co-ordinate all environment activities within national administrative departments, in order, among other things, to facilitate international co-operation ;
 2. to sign and ratify the existing international conventions for the protection of the environment ;
 3. to join their efforts to conclude rapidly a European convention on the prevention of transfrontier air pollution;
 4. to draw up plans for the protection of the environment in frontier regions in conjunction with neighbouring states ; the Scandinavian convention, signed in February 1974, between Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark could serve as an example ;
 - f. appeal urgently to the governments of member states on the Mediterranean seaboard :
 1. to ratify, if they have not already done so, the Barcelona convention for the protection of the Mediterranean sea against pollution and its two protocols ;
 2. to sign and ratify, if they have not already done so, the 1976 Monaco agreement concerning the protection of water of the Mediterranean shores;
 3. to give their support to the Oil Combating Centre at Valletta (Malta) ;
 - g. invite the European Space Agency to arrange, in conjunction with the national and international bodies concerned, for the use of satellites for the monitoring and protection of the natural environment ;
 - h. foster a policy of protection of migratory birds, in conjunction with the appropriate international organisations at the regional and world levels ;
 - i. envisage drawing up an international code and suitable measures for the prevention and control of oil pollution, in particular including provisions such as to :
 1. radically reform arrangements for maritime assistance in international law ;
 2. lay down rules governing the international status of ships' captains ;
 3. strengthen the technical safety standards applicable to vessels carrying dangerous substances and to "off-shore" platforms ;
 4. improve the provisions of conventions and agreements governing crew qualifications and the welfare standards by which crews are protected.