

Recommendation 1502 (2001)¹

Interparliamentary co-operation in the Mediterranean and Black Sea basins

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Peace, democratic stability and sustainable development in the Mediterranean represent a major challenge for the European continent.
 2. In order to achieve these objectives, a number of conditions must first of all be met. Not only must progress be made in the economic sector, but it is also essential to encourage the implementation of consistent immigration policies so that immigration becomes a factor of development rather than a source of tension and intolerance. There must also be the right conditions for genuine local democracy. Lastly, serious efforts must be made to encourage resource management geared towards sustainable development.
 3. It is only through co-operation at all institutional levels – governmental, parliamentary and territorial – that the Mediterranean can become a vast region of peace and development.
 4. In this connection, the Assembly welcomes the European Union's commitment to inject new life into the Barcelona Process, so that this ambitious intergovernmental co-operation programme may achieve the objectives laid down, in particular the setting up of a free-trade area by 2010.
 5. It also notes with satisfaction the financial resources allocated by the European Union following the recent environmental damage sustained by certain regions in the Danube basin, and the decisions taken at the Nice Summit (December 2000) in the field of maritime safety.
 6. Moreover, the Assembly welcomes the work which has been done in this field by the Council of Europe over the last twenty years, in particular within the framework of the Conferences of Mediterranean Regions that the Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe have regularly devoted to the problems of the Mediterranean basin.
 7. The Assembly is deeply concerned about the cyanide and heavy metals contamination that occurred in Baia Mare in January 2000. The Assembly is convinced these accidents were caused by the following factors:
 - 7.1. firstly, a design fault in the tailings management facility (TMF);
 - 7.2. secondly, the acceptance of that design by the permitting authorities, and
 - 7.3. thirdly, inadequate monitoring and dam construction, operation and maintenance.
- Urgent measures should be taken in order to avoid such accidents in the future.
8. The Assembly is convinced that the extension of these conferences to include the Black Sea, decided upon after the 4th Conference, has enabled a large number of problems common to the countries on the shores of both basins and the expectations voiced by the Black Sea riparian states to be addressed.

1. Assembly debate on 26 January 2001 (8th Sitting) (see [Doc. 8921](#), report of the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities, rapporteur: Mr Toshev). Text adopted by the Assembly on 26 January 2001 (8th Sitting).



9. In this regard, the Assembly would like the intergovernmental co-operation developed under the Black Sea Economic Co-operation (BSEC) to be increased and to produce satisfactory results. Moreover, at parliamentary level, it would like to see closer relations with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation (Pabsec).

10. It also welcomes the fact that the 6th Conference was devoted entirely to interparliamentary co-operation, and more particularly, to co-operation between the Assembly and the committees in national parliaments dealing with sustainable development.

11. Such co-operation cannot but strengthen interparliamentary co-operation between the countries of the Mediterranean and Black Sea basins by creating the right conditions for ongoing dialogue and fruitful exchanges which can produce tangible results.

12. Moreover, such an initiative would help highlight and develop further the Parliamentary Assembly's links with national parliaments, bearing in mind that this is one of the main specific features of and as such represents great potential.

13. The Assembly endorses the Final Declaration unanimously adopted at the close of the 6th Conference held in Varna, Bulgaria, from 19 to 21 October 2000.

14. It welcomes the fact that the conference, while focusing primarily on interparliamentary co-operation, highlighted the achievements and potential of the work of other Council of Europe sectors in both intergovernmental co-operation and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe.

15. For its part, it is convinced that these two sectors can make a valuable contribution to the sustainable development of both basins and to certain specific problems facing many of these countries, such as water pollution, the management of natural disasters, or the protection of species.

16. It is, moreover, convinced of the importance for the region of comprehensive spatial development and an appropriate network of transport routes. In this connection, the Assembly expresses its regret at the delay in building pan-European corridor No. 8 linking the Adriatic to the Black Sea, and which is of more direct concern to Albania and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia".

17. Accordingly, the Parliamentary Assembly recommends that:

a. the Committee of Ministers:

1. make provision in the Intergovernmental Work Programme for:
 - a. activities aimed at assisting and/or encouraging riparian member states of both basins to sign, ratify and implement the Council of Europe conventions in the field of environmental protection such as the Lugano² (1993) and Strasbourg³ (1998) Conventions;
 - b. action programmes aimed at youth awareness-raising and education and at teacher training in this field ;
 - c. opening up the programme on "Education for democratic citizenship based on citizens' rights and responsibilities" to Mediterranean non-member countries;
2. examine – as part of the Council of Europe's contribution to the Stability Pact – the draft European charter for the Danube basin with a view to its becoming an instrument, which will work for sustainable development, peace, stability and co-operation in this region and a framework which will make it easier to implement action, regulations, agreements and conventions aimed at rehabilitating the ecosystem of the basin and protecting it from possible environmental accidents;
3. give priority to activities relating to regionalisation;
4. invite the governments of member states to:
 - a. sign, ratify and implement the Kyoto Protocol and the provisions under the Ospar Convention;

2. Convention on Civil Liability for Damage resulting from Activities Dangerous to the Environment (Lugano, 21 June 1993).

3. Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law (Strasbourg, 4 November 1998).

- b. support and promote teaching and training in environment management, by encouraging, inter alia, access to the possibilities offered by the new information technologies;
- b. national parliaments: i. invite the chairs of the relevant committees to organise regular debates on questions of common interest in the fields of the environment, regional/spatial planning, democratic stability and decentralised co-operation;
- c. Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE):
 - 1. pursue its activities in the field of local and regional self-government in the countries on the shores of the two basins, particularly those on the southern shores of the Mediterranean, along the lines of its current activities with the Kingdom of Morocco;
 - 2. help strengthen the role of local and regional authorities in the field of sustainable development, by fostering co-operation with bodies such as the Union of Black Sea Capitals.