



Resolution 1776 (2010)¹

Final version

Noise and light pollution

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly notes and deplors the fact that the continent of Europe is particularly affected, in environmental terms, by both noise and light nuisances.
2. It refers in this connection to the World Health Organization (WHO) Guidelines for community noise, which were intended to provide legislative guidance without binding effect in themselves, and European Union Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise, proposing a common approach by member states and requiring strategic noise mapping and introduction of action plans in the countries of the European Union.
3. The Assembly recalls that noise pollution may have many causes: mobile mechanical sources (chiefly motor vehicles and aircraft); fixed mechanical sources (machines, factories, etc.); one-off or ongoing operations and work sites (quarrying); public demonstrations and events (one-off or, less often, ongoing: celebrations, fireworks, festivals, concerts, places of musical entertainment and stadiums); animal sources (barking, noises from livestock farms, shelters, etc.); the neighbourhood (buildings with poor soundproofing, lawnmowers, children, accidentally triggered alarms); portable audio devices and mobile phones on public transport, etc.
4. Its effects can be serious, possibly disastrous for the environment overall, through disturbance of ecosystems (terrestrial as well as marine and aquatic), but also through the development of pathologies in mankind.
5. As to light pollution, the Assembly emphasises that the Starlight Declaration, signed by UNESCO in 1992, seeks chiefly to preserve an “unpolluted” night sky, and hopes that similar provision will be made in all national legislations.
6. Furthermore, light pollution affecting flora and fauna poses one of the worst threats to urban biodiversity, but above all has harmful effects on the human metabolism.
7. Moreover, the energy consumption caused by excessive lighting has indirect implications for the environment, for example pollution associated with the production and transmission of that energy.
8. The Assembly, bearing in mind the Stockholm Declaration of 1972, adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, which expressly acknowledged the link between protection of the environment and human rights, its [Recommendation 1863 \(2009\)](#) on environment and health: better prevention of environment-related health hazards and its [Recommendation 1885 \(2009\)](#) on drafting an

1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 12 November 2010 (see [Doc. 12179](#), report of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, rapporteur: Mr R. Huseynov). See also [Recommendation 1947 \(2010\)](#).*



additional protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights concerning the right to a healthy environment, invites member and non-member states to find a common approach for combating the harmful effects of noise and light pollution by taking measures aimed at:

- 8.1. introducing threshold values for noise and light into environmental medicine, imposing penalties for offenders and establishing maximum reference values for noise in connection with the WHO guidelines;
 - 8.2. creating permanent observatories for noise as tools for aiding decision making and public information, as well as regional observatories for light covering the entire territory;
 - 8.3. disseminating the findings of noise pollution observation in real time, as is often the case with air pollution or road traffic;
 - 8.4. developing plans for preventing and combating noise in all municipalities in the same ways as urban development plans and encouraging participative arrangements;
 - 8.5. taking account of noise “peaks” and event noise indicators to complement energy level indicators, to better reflect the nuisance levels expressed by communities;
 - 8.6. establishing a classification of rolling stock, along the lines of the International Civil Aviation Organization classification of aircraft, and further tightening constraints in relation to noise emissions;
 - 8.7. rationalising lighting in all municipalities by preparing plans with participation by scientists – particularly astronomers – and associations for the protection of the environment and the sky and defining maximum lighting levels for roadways and sky;
 - 8.8. controlling light spillage from all properties;
 - 8.9. standardising and simplifying noise and light pollution indicators as an indispensable means of understanding the respective issues by the general public;
 - 8.10. extending high environmental quality standards to noise and light;
 - 8.11. studying noise and light issues on school curricula and educating the public, especially young people who are particularly exposed to high-level noise in places of entertainment or from listening to excessively loud music through earphones.
9. The Assembly also invites member and non-member states to:
- 9.1. frame policies to reduce traffic and convert it to soft modes, by means of urban planning, taxation, vehicle technology, individual and collective behaviour, etc.;
 - 9.2. assist and support economically weak sectors (such as rail freight) that work towards noise abatement;
 - 9.3. promote co-ordinated noise/energy intervention in housing stock, based on suitable training of the trades concerned and collective projects covering districts or building complexes, ensuring that all regulations are rigorously enforced and that the threshold levels are respected, and take appropriate measures if these prove to be ineffective;
 - 9.4. involve acoustic technicians in all major development projects;
 - 9.5. make acoustics part of architects’ training;
 - 9.6. support efforts to achieve noise abatement in the transport sector, particularly regarding goods trains (by using long welded rails, and preferably by using disc brakes), resurfacing of roads and the development of soft transportation modes;
 - 9.7. abate or even eliminate light pollution from public lighting by using directional low-pressure sodium lamps and presence detectors, and exploiting natural light;
 - 9.8. integrate noise and light pollution problems into programmes geared to aiding research and technological development.