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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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# A legal status for "climate refugees"

**Motion for a resolution**
tabled by Ms Sahiba GAFAROVA and other members of the Assembly

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This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

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As many as 200 million people in the world may be the subject of environmentally-induced migration by 2050. Despite its widespread publication, however, this estimate is seen by many experts as over-simplistic, as it is based on the premise that all the people likely to be seriously affected by adverse climatic events or evolutions will be forced or will choose displacement, ignoring the fact that a direct, inevitable causality between climate change and migration has yet to be proved.

“Climate migration” is therefore a difficult concept to unravel, while it is becoming more and more obvious that the challenges of climate change and its probable consequences on human displacement require clear policies and action. Neither the definition, nor the possible designation of “climate migrants” have been agreed, but at the same time “ideas” of what climate migration means are already driving policy development at the global level, and for civil society actors the legal and humanitarian protection of “climate migrants” is already a declared cause.

The 1951 Geneva Convention does not make any provision for “climate refugees”, and one of the results of the above complexities is that no binding international text specifically addresses the case of people forced to migrate following natural catastrophes or environmental changes. The Parliamentary Assembly could examine whether persons displaced as a result of climate change are adequately protected under existing human rights treaties, with a view to ascertaining whether the amendment of existing texts or a new legal instrument would be appropriate and making recommendations to that end.

*Signed (see overleaf)*

*Signed*[1]*:*

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EC: European Conservatives Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group