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Anchoring the right to a healthy environment: need for enhanced action by the Council of Europe

Motion for a resolution

tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

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

The Parliamentary Assembly has repeatedly highlighted the close link between public health and the state of the environment, notably by reaffirming “a fundamental right of citizens to live in a healthy environment” and “a duty of society as a whole and each individual in particular to pass on a healthy and viable environment to future generations” ([Recommendation 1885 \(2009\)](#)). Whilst environmental degradation escalates, the scientific evidence is mounting of its detrimental effects on the health of Europeans, in particular children.

By endorsing the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 as a roadmap to 2030, the world has committed to embracing a more balanced sustainable development model and “green” rights. Whilst the Council of Europe’s major legal instruments and jurisprudence indirectly recognise the obligation and responsibility of member States to defend the right to life against environmental harms, the explicit recognition of the right to a healthy environment is lacking as a basis for more resolute action at both European and national levels.

Given growing public pressure and political will to ensure European leadership in championing fundamental rights with a “green” perspective, the Assembly should follow up on its earlier recommendations, support the recent proposals by the Commissioner for Human Rights and build the case for more ambitious action by the Council of Europe in this field, including, as appropriate, the drafting of an Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights and/or other standard-setting activity.

