Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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Climate and migration

Motion for a resolution
tabled by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons

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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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The Earth is heating up… We have just had the mildest winter on record since readings were first taken at the end of the 19th century. There are more and more extreme climate events. Record temperature readings have recently been taken on the Antarctic ice pack, the biggest terrestrial reserve of freshwater. If it melts, sea levels would rise by dozens of metres.

As global warming continues, and the nature of the threats become clear, the consequences are also known: chiefly coastal areas and deltas becoming flooded, many islands purely and simply disappearing, an increase in the number of areas hit by drought and desertification.

And the inhabitants of the regions where life will become unviable will be the direct victims of these transformations of their living environment. They will be driven to migrate to find food and another place to live, in their own country or elsewhere. Millions upon millions of people will be forced to migrate.

Generally speaking, climate change is shifting the distribution of world populations and shifts within the borders of European countries are responses to slow-onset climate phenomena. Some also believe that environmental phenomena will spark conflicts, as populations are concentrated in previously sparsely populated areas, giving rise to competition for access to resources.

Detailed analysis of the repercussions of climate change for migratory phenomena is indispensable. The Parliamentary Assembly should study the relationship between climate change and migration, with a view to arriving at recommendations for mitigating the fall-out and planning ahead for the political and practical developments that will accompany that change.