

Recommendation 2251 (2023)¹

Political strategies to prevent, prepare for and face the consequences of natural disasters

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its [Resolution 2493 \(2023\)](#) “Political strategies to prevent, prepare for and face the consequences of natural disasters”. It deplores the destruction, suffering and insecurity that every natural disaster brings. Due to the human causes of the climate crisis, these disasters are set to become a chronic threat, with serious repercussions on human well-being, including high human and economic costs.
2. Natural disasters have a significant impact on most human rights, such as the rights to life and physical integrity; rights related to basic needs; security of property; economic, social and cultural rights; and civil and political rights. Any natural disaster has a profound effect on society and in particular its resilience, namely its ability to overcome risks, conflicts and political change. The consequences of the earthquake in Türkiye and Syria will be felt for decades to come, including with regard to migratory flows.
3. In the midst of the profound epochal and paradigm shift that we are experiencing, the Council of Europe remains the guardian of the rule of law in Europe and a bulwark against threats to human rights and democracy, including against the effects of the Anthropocene era. The Assembly underlines the need to learn from each disaster in order to improve the continent’s climate resilience. Referring to [Recommendation 2214 \(2021\)](#) “The climate crisis and the rule of law”, it stresses the role of the rule of law in strengthening the capacity of institutions to play their role with due regard for the separation of powers and when faced with adversity.
4. In its [Recommendation 2211 \(2021\)](#) “Anchoring the right to a healthy environment: need for enhanced action by the Council of Europe”, the Assembly called on Europe to protect the right to a “safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment”. In view of the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe to be held in Reykjavik (Iceland), which will set the Organisation’s strategy in the 21st century, including in relation to the climate crisis, the Assembly firmly reiterates this call and asks the Committee of Ministers to:
 - 4.1. draw up an additional protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5) on the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, based on the terminology used by the United Nations and on the text appended to [Recommendation 2211 \(2021\)](#);
 - 4.2. draw up an additional protocol to the European Social Charter (ETS No. 35) and the European Social Charter (revised) (ETS No. 163) on the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment;
 - 4.3. finalise the feasibility study for a “Five Ps” convention on environmental threats and technological hazards threatening human health, dignity and life;
 - 4.4. revise Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)3 on human rights and business, with a view to strengthening corporate environmental responsibility for the adequate protection of the human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

1. *Assembly debate* on 26 April 2023 (12th sitting) (see [Doc. 15738](#) and [addendum](#) report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Mr Simon Moutquin). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 26 April 2023 (12th sitting).



5. Recalling the ground-breaking role played by the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement), the Assembly emphasises the value of the agreement in preparing standards: its approach founded on human rights and democratic participation and its regional dimension are still appropriate today, as they ensure that no one is isolated or without assistance.

6. The Assembly regrets the general lack of investment by member States in Council of Europe instruments focusing on nature, landscape and major hazards, and the inexorable disengagement over the past twenty years. It therefore invites the Committee of Ministers to consider these instruments part of the core mandate of the Organisation and accordingly to incorporate funding for their activities in the ordinary budget of the Council of Europe, while at the same time ensuring that its work benefits all member States. It calls on the Committee of Ministers to put the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment at the top of the agenda of the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe.

7. The Assembly congratulates the European Commission on the speed and efficiency of the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism activated a few hours after the earthquake on 6 February 2023 and on the organisation of the donors' conference on 20 March 2023. In the light of the experience gathered on the ground and as proof of sincere co-operation with international humanitarian organisations, it invites the European Commission to consider introducing co-operation without intermediaries, including for funding, so as to facilitate such organisations' deployment in the emergency phase of extreme events.

8. The Assembly wishes that, beyond the 4th Summit, the Council of Europe, with its working method based on human rights, co-operation between peers and democratic participation, will remain a leading forum for discussing solutions based on taking into account nature, landscape and major hazards. It calls on the Committee of Ministers to step up co-operation with the United Nations in setting standards for the prevention, forecasting and monitoring of extreme events and to co-ordinate its work with that of the European Union. Such co-operation should promote the sharing of good practice and strengthen solidarity between peers, whether professionals or volunteers, in the fight against extreme events. It should aim to improve the management of natural hazards and further empower those directly affected by disasters to help themselves.