Parliamentary Assembly
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Recommendation 2273 (2024)[1]

Towards Council of Europe strategies for healthy seas and oceans to counter the climate crisis

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its Resolution 2546 (2024) "Towards Council of Europe strategies for healthy seas and oceans to counter the climate crisis" and underscores the strategic goal to make the link between human rights and the environment a visible priority of the Council of Europe through the Reykjavik Process. The Council of Europe has undertaken to come up with its own response to the triple planetary crisis of pollution, loss of biodiversity and climate change by initiating the Reykjavik Process at the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government and recognising, at political level, the right to a healthy, clean and sustainable environment. A healthy environment can never be possible without healthy seas and oceans. The Council of Europe must contribute to networking between like-minded partners and provide a forum for civil society and young people.

2. The Assembly welcomes the intention to strengthen the tools of the Council of Europe for environmental protection as part of the Reykjavik Process, ensuring their sustainability through the provision of stable resources. The member States should consolidate the Council of Europe's capacity in this field and underpin it with adequate long-term funding in the follow-up to decisions of the Reykjavik Summit. The Council of Europe should join forces with other international organisations, notably the European Union, in the realisation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and, in particular, SDG 14, which is aimed at conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas and marine resources in order to respond in a holistic manner to a host of direct and indirect threats, including plastic and other marine pollution, ocean warming, eutrophication, acidification and the collapse of fisheries and biodiversity.

3. The Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

3.1. take into account the need to ensure comprehensive, efficient and effective protection of oceans and seas when preparing strategic documents (such as the strategy on the environment and its related action plan) and in other relevant work such as co-operation and technical assistance activities, including with neighbouring countries;

3.2. in the development of the Council of Europe's work on the environment, keep to the forefront the human rights perspective, including the right to a healthy environment, taking into account the needs of all the different stakeholders in society, including future generations;

3.3. take advantage of the Council of Europe's observer status with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to raise public awareness of the human rights perspective;

3.4. ensure close co-operation with civil society actors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working to protect the seas and save lives at sea and relevant international organisations such as the IMO.

1. *Assembly debate* on 18 April 2024 (12th sitting) (see Doc. 15956, report of Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Ms Yuliia Ovchynnykova). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 18 April 2024 (12th sitting).