



Doc. 16066

15 October 2024

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

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 2273 (2024)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully examined Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 2273 \(2024\)](#) "Towards Council of Europe strategies for healthy seas and oceans to counter the climate crisis" and has forwarded it to the Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats ("Bern Convention") for information and possible comments. At the outset, the Committee refers to the [Reykjavík Declaration](#) in which member States underlined the urgency of taking co-ordinated action to protect the environment by countering the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity.
2. The Committee shares the Assembly's view that the preservation of the biodiversity of seas and oceans is one of the objectives of the Bern Convention and that this convention provides a good basis on which to contribute to better protection of the seas and oceans around Europe. It notes that the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention conducts a large variety of activities in the field of preservation of the biodiversity of seas and oceans, in close co-operation with relevant international organisations and civil society actors.
3. As regards paragraph 3.1 of the recommendation, the Committee informs the Assembly of its decision of 10 July 2024 (see [CM/Del/Dec\(2024\)1504/4.1](#)) setting up the Ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment ("GME") and adopting its terms of reference. The Committee has instructed the GME to prepare a draft Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment and a related action plan for its implementation, in accordance with the [Reykjavík Declaration](#). The Committee takes note of the Assembly's recommendation to take account of the need to ensure comprehensive, efficient and effective protection of oceans and seas when preparing these documents.
4. Regarding the Assembly's recommendation to prioritise the human rights perspective in the development of the Council of Europe's work on the environment (paragraph 3.2), the Committee refers to the [Reykjavík Declaration's](#) acknowledgment that human rights and the environment are intertwined and that a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is integral to the full enjoyment of human rights by present and future generations.
5. In respect of the recommendation in paragraph 3.4 to ensure close co-operation with civil society actors, non-governmental organisations and relevant international organisations, the Committee assures the Assembly that this is done systematically in standard-setting, monitoring and co-operation work, as reflected, *inter alia*, in the work of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention, and the terms of reference of the ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment.

1. Adopted at the 1509th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies by (9 October 2024).

