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## Mainstreaming the human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment with the Reykjavík process

**Reply to Recommendation<sup>1</sup>:** Recommendation 2272 (2024)  
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully examined Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 2272 \(2024\)](#) “Mainstreaming the human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment with the Reykjavík process”, which it has forwarded to the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) and the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC) for information and possible comments. The recommendation was also brought to the attention of the Ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment (GME). The Committee of Ministers is actively working towards fulfilling the commitments made at the Council of Europe’s 4<sup>th</sup> Summit (Reykjavík, 16-17 May 2023) regarding the environment, notably to strengthen work on the human rights aspects of the environment based on the political recognition of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right and the “Reykjavík process”.

2. With regard to the recommendations set out in paragraph 4, the Committee informs the Assembly that the task of drawing up a draft Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment and Action Plan has been entrusted to the GME. The draft strategy and action plan have been prepared and have been examined by the Committee of Ministers in April 2025 with a view to the adoption of the Strategy at the 134<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Session in Luxembourg. The Deputies will then take it into account, together with the action plan, when considering and deciding the next Programme and Budget of the Council of Europe.

3. The Committee informs the Assembly that it recently took note of the Study on the need for and feasibility of a further instrument or instruments in the field of human rights and the environment, prepared by the CDDH in close collaboration with representatives of the Assembly as well as other Council of Europe bodies, international organisations and numerous civil society organisations. It agreed to come back to it in the context of the preparation of decisions for the Ministerial Session in May 2025. It instructed the Secretariat to conduct further analysis regarding the nature, content and implications of the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment with a view to further informing whether the right should be the subject of a new instrument and if so, the most appropriate form of the instrument.

4. The draft Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law has recently been transmitted to the Parliamentary Assembly for an opinion. The Committee of Ministers intends to adopt the new convention at its Ministerial Session in Luxembourg in May 2025 and open it for signature subsequently in the autumn. The draft convention establishes as a “particularly serious offence” conduct akin to “ecocide” (causing destruction or irreversible, widespread and substantial damage, or long-lasting, widespread and substantial damage to an ecosystem of considerable size or environmental value, or to a habitat within a protected site, or to the quality of air, soil or water) (Section 7, Article 31). It also sets up a monitoring mechanism to ensure the Convention’s proper implementation and effectiveness (Chapter VIII, Article 46).

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1. Adopted at the 1524<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies (2 April 2025).



5. As concerns the remaining recommendations on the role and work of any possible future intergovernmental committee on environment and a rapporteur group on environmental affairs, these issues are being considered as part of the preparatory work of the above-mentioned Ministerial Session and they will be borne in mind, as appropriate, particularly in the context of the preparation of the next Programme and Budget.