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Protecting lakes as natural and cultural heritage and as a strategic resource for people in the face of the triple planetary crisis

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Ms Aurora FLORIDIA and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

Lakes are a shared natural heritage and a strategic resource for regions and communities. In Europe, they hold 20% of the continent's freshwater supply. Lakes are also crucial in promoting sustainable tourism, facilitating cultural exchange, and supporting regional development. For instance, Lake Sevan in Armenia provides 80% of the country's freshwater and symbolises the Armenian cultural identity.

Additionally, lakes are vital reservoirs of ecosystems and biodiversity, crucial for climate change mitigation and planetary health.

However, many lakes are increasingly threatened by pollution, rising water temperature, biodiversity loss, untreated wastewater, and unsustainable resource use. These issues harm water quality, ecosystems, and tourism, posing environmental, health, social, and economic risks.

Concerns over vulnerable water ecosystems have prompted some countries to recognise important areas, such as Colombia's Atrato River and the Spanish Mar Menor, as autonomous legal entities with their own rights.

Protection of lakes falls directly within the scope of the Council of Europe's legal framework, notably the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (ETS No. 104, Bern Convention), which obliges States to conserve wild flora, fauna and their natural habitats, and the Council of Europe Landscape Convention (ETS No. 176), which promotes the protection of landscape through its sustainable management and planning. Hence, strengthening the protection of lakes aligns with commitments made by member States under these conventions.

The Parliamentary Assembly should reaffirm the Council of Europe's ecological stewardship by valuing lakes as both natural and cultural heritage for European communities. It must recognise the urgent need to safeguard their natural balance and act to protect their integrity as strategic resources for people from the accelerating triple planetary crisis.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

FLORIDIA Aurora, Italy, SOC
BALDURSDÓTTIR Kolbrún Áslaugar, Iceland, SOC
BANKOĞLU Aysu, Türkiye, SOC
ECCLES Cat, United Kingdom, SOC
ESTRELA Edite, Portugal, SOC
FRESKO-ROLFO Béatrice, Monaco, ALDE
GEDVILAS Martynas, Lithuania, SOC
GEVORGYAN Armen, Armenia, ECPA
GRÉAUME Michelle, France, UEL
KOSTADINOVSKA-STOJCHEVSKA Bisera, North Macedonia, SOC
LACROIX Christophe, Belgium, SOC
LATORRE José, Spain, SOC
MAMIJANYAN Hayk, Armenia, EPP/CD
MARTINEZ SEIJO Luz, Spain, SOC
MIKKONEN Anna-Kristiina, Finland, SOC
MOLINA Fabian, Switzerland, SOC
NOWICKA Wanda, Poland, SOC
OSAMOR Kate, United Kingdom, SOC
PÁLMASSON Sigurður Helgi, Iceland, SOC
PAPANDREOU George, Greece, SOC
PRAMMER Agnes Sirkka, Austria, SOC
RAČAN Ivan, Croatia, SOC
STAMATIS Georgios, Greece, EPP/CD
VELA Susanna, Andorra, SOC

1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
ECPA: European Conservatives, Patriots and Affiliates
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left