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

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A. Draft Resolution

1. Our planet is suffering the negative effects of the climate crisis which, according to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), is making certain “natural” disasters more frequent and their consequences more devastating. These disasters pose a permanent and predictable threat with serious repercussions on the well-being of humanity and the global economy. The worst affected are vulnerable groups such as women, who are, according to the United Nations, 14 times more likely to die than men as a result of such an event, as well as children, the elderly, and all others in vulnerable situations.
2. Türkiye has just experienced the worst natural disaster of the last 100 years in a Council of Europe member State. The Parliamentary Assembly expresses its solidarity with the Turkish and Syrian peoples, heavily hit by an earthquake which struck their countries on 6 February 2023. It sends its condolences to both countries and to the relatives of the more than 57 000 victims. It affirms its support for the millions of people affected, including the thousands injured as well as to the Syrian refugees in Türkiye. The terrible consequences of this exceptional event will be felt for decades to come. It is a stark reminder to us of the indomitable power of nature, in the face of which human beings have no choice but to try and prevent and prepare for such events, to deal with the consequences in an urgent manner, before preparing the reconstruction, by gathering all the population and not leaving the affected populations isolated and without assistance.
3. In circumstances of such magnitude and gravity, the Assembly reiterates the importance of providing financial and technical support to Türkiye and Syria. Assistance must not only address immediate, medium- and longer-term needs but also, and above all, be based on human rights. The Assembly welcomes the extraordinary outpouring of support from the member States and the

Amendment 3

Tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

In the draft resolution, paragraph 2, third sentence, replace the words “the more than 57 000 victims” with the following words:

“the likely 100 000 victims”

Sub-amendment 2 to amendment 3

Tabled by Ms Emine Nur GÜNAY, Ms Serap YAŞAR, Mr Mehmet Mehdi EKER, Mr Ahmet YILDIZ, Mr Ahmet Ünal ÇEVİKÖZ

In Amendment 3, replace the word “likely” with the following word:

“allegedly”

Sub-amendment 1 to amendment 3

Tabled by Ms Emine Nur GÜNAY, Mr Ahmet YILDIZ, Ms Serap YAŞAR, Mr Ahmet Ünal ÇEVİKÖZ, Ms Feleknas UCA

In Amendment 3, at the end, insert the following words:

“; according to official sources, there are for the time being more than 57 000 victims”.

Amendment 4

Tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

In the draft resolution, paragraph 2, fourth sentence, replace the words “to the Syrian refugees in Türkiye” with the following words:

“to the displaced Turks and Syrians”

European Union. It thanks the Council of Europe Development Bank for the speed with which it has moved to assist the Turkish authorities and for its support for earthquake-related projects in the country.

4. In anticipation of the donors' conference to address the needs of the earthquake-affected populations in central Türkiye and Syria, the Assembly calls for a broad awareness among stakeholders of major hazards and the handling of their consequences. This disaster is an historical event. It must make us put into question our work on prevention, preparation, consideration, and reconstruction after an extreme event. We must give a holistic response to natural risks, so that no one is forgotten, while taking into account the risks associated with the Anthropocene era. The Assembly regrets the general lack of investment by member States in Council of Europe instruments centred on nature, landscape, and major hazards, and also the inexorable withdrawal of States Parties.
5. International players specialising in extreme events having emerged since 2000, the Assembly calls for better co-operation between the United Nations, the European Union, and the Council of Europe to ensure greater complementarity when it comes to dealing with natural disasters. It reminds Council of Europe member States of the need to practise prevention by preparing national strategies for extreme events, including those linked to the Anthropocene. These strategies should involve, in a democratic manner, not only national but also regional and local authorities in order to be as responsive as possible to the needs of the populations affected by disasters, while at the same time drawing on multilateral and bilateral international co-operation, in particular between neighbouring countries. Mitigation of natural risks requires a right to awareness and reinforced information, particularly for vulnerable persons who must also prepare. The Assembly stresses the role of decentralisation policies in percolating these standards down to the local level of governance.
6. Drawing on the IPCC recommendations, the Assembly stresses the need for member States to include in their regulation, as soon as possible, measures to adapt to the climate change and offset the impact of the climate crisis, including with regard to extreme events. There is no room for fatalism when it comes to natural disasters: dealing with them is the responsibility of public authorities. These authorities must anticipate the risks so that they do not become threats to the human, social and economic rights of people living in Europe and elsewhere. The Assembly hopes that the standards regarding prevention, anticipation, response, and monitoring in this area will be shared more widely. It therefore calls for more robust checks and prosecution measures where necessary to combat corruption in the (re)construction sector and in the preparation for earthquakes and extreme events in general.
7. The Assembly notes the ground-breaking role played by EUR-OPA, the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement, and underlines the usefulness of this Council of Europe body in preparing standards. Its

Amendment 5

Tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

At the beginning of paragraph 4, replace the words "In anticipation of the donors' conference to address the needs of the earthquake-affected populations" with the following words:

"After the donors' conference and in anticipation of the reconstruction process, which will have to address the needs and the state of mental health of the earthquake-affected populations"

Amendment 1

Tabled by Ms Lesia VASYLENKO, Ms Yevheniia KRAVCHUK, Mr Serhii

approach based on human rights and democratic participation and its regional dimension, taking into account the needs of all groups of society, are still appropriate. The Assembly calls on member States to consider the need for European standards to respond not only to exceptional natural events, but also to events arising from the Anthropocene, including major technological hazards and the impact of war.

KALCHENKO, Mr Serhii SOBOLIEV, Mr Saša MAGAZINOVIĆ

In the draft resolution, after paragraph 7, insert the following paragraph:

The Assembly underlines the role of the private sector in ensuring resilience to natural disasters. In view of this, it calls on member States to fully implement and operationalise in national legislation the concept of corporate due diligence obligations as formulated in the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and in Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on human rights and business.

Amendment 2

Tabled by Ms Lesia VASYLENKO, Ms Yevheniia KRAVCHUK, Mr Serhii KALCHENKO, Mr Serhii SOBOLIEV, Mr Dmytro NATALUKHA

In the draft resolution, after paragraph 7, insert the following paragraph:

"The Assembly welcomes the 2016 Draft Articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters prepared by the International Law Commission and approved by the UN General Assembly. It underlines the relevance of their content, including the duty of States to cooperate with each other and with international organisations and the duty to reduce the risk of disasters, conduct risk assessments, collect and disseminate relevant information, install and operate early warning systems, as well as the duty of affected States to ensure provision of disaster relief assistance and to seek external assistance. The Assembly supports the framing of these principles as legal duties of States as well as the call of the General Assembly for the conclusion of a binding international treaty on the topic."

Amendment 6

Tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

In the draft resolution, after paragraph 7, insert the following paragraph:

"The Assembly therefore calls on Türkiye to: - continue the necessary efforts to preserve the pre-disaster social, economic and multicultural fabric during the reconstruction phase; - continue to facilitate the intervention of international humanitarian organisations operating on Syrian territory from Türkiye, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2672; - not renew the state of emergency at the end of the three months declared, and opt for a democratic approach to crisis management; - provide a forum for consultation between international humanitarian organisations and national

authorities in the event of disasters; - set up a forum for consultation between national, local and regional authorities in the 11 provinces to be rebuilt so as to strengthen local democracy and organise reconstruction more effectively, without any party-political bias; - reconsider the decision to withdraw from the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210, the "Istanbul Convention")."

Amendment 7

Tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

In the draft resolution, after paragraph 7, insert the following paragraph:

"The Assembly therefore calls on the other member States of the Council of Europe to: - show their support for Türkiye and Syria by providing urgent, medium- and long-term technical and financial assistance; - encourage visits by parliamentarians and representatives of national, regional and local authorities to the 11 devastated provinces in Türkiye to show support for residents, learn from the Turkish experience, step up twinnings between municipalities and strengthen cultural ties and exchanges between young Europeans."

8. The Assembly therefore calls on member States to:
- 8.1. show their support for the authorities of Türkiye and Syria in order to respond to the disaster that struck both countries on 6 February 2023 by providing urgent, medium- and long-term technical and financial assistance;

Amendment 8

Tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

In the draft resolution, replace paragraph 8.1 with the following paragraph:

"co-ordinate their efforts at the United Nations with a view to opening the three border crossings between Türkiye and Syria for the passage of humanitarian aid, as five years ago;"

- 8.2. spread awareness of the need to prevent, anticipate, take into account and monitor extreme events in order to ensure that the most vulnerable groups do not find themselves isolated and abandoned at a time when major hazards are increasing because of the Anthropocene;

Amendment 9

Tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

In the draft resolution, after paragraph 8.2, insert the following paragraph:

"take account of the role of international humanitarian organisations when preparing their national strategies for disaster risk reduction, so as to facilitate the deployment of such organisations in disaster regions;"

- 8.3. step up co-operation between peers, whether professionals or volunteers, at international level in order to make institutions more resilient;

- 8.4. take into account the distribution of roles between levels of governance in the fight against major hazards in order to build the capacity of local authorities, in direct contact with the population;
- 8.5. move away from a financial approach to disaster management, by allocating the necessary funds and combating corruption and bad governance which increase the vulnerability of those most at risk.
9. In the run-up to the 4th Council of Europe Summit and in view of the increased risk of extreme events in the context of the climate crisis, the Assembly calls on member States to put the right to a healthy environment at the top of the agenda. It asks them to start considering the added value provided by the nature-, landscape- and major hazard-centred solutions developed by the Council of Europe which use the human rights-based regional approach to protect vulnerable people and to reinforce the resilience of populations against all extreme events and their short-, middle-, and long-term consequences, including on migration. It calls on member States to use the benefit from the experience gained and to ensure the sustainability of these instruments before they disappear. It invites them to co-operate further on the creation of continental standards based on human rights and democratic participation, with a regional focus.

Amendment 10

Tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

In the draft resolution, before paragraph 9, insert the following paragraph:

"In the light of the shared values that bind all Council of Europe member States and the active commitment to Europe of the Turkish youth, the Assembly encourages the European Commission and the Turkish authorities to resume negotiations on suspending the visa requirement for Turkish nationals. In this context, it once more invites the Turkish authorities to review their overly broad interpretation of anti-terrorism legislation."

Amendment 11

Tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

In the draft resolution, paragraph 9, first sentence, replace the word "healthy" with the following words:

"safe, clean, healthy and sustainable"

B. Draft Recommendation

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its Resolution ... (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. Because of 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 broad impact on most human rights, such as the rights to life and physical integrity, rights related to basic necessities of life, security of property, economic, social, and cultural rights, and civil and political rights. Any natural disaster radically affects society and in particular its resilience, namely, its ability to overcome risks, conflicts, and political change. The consequences of the earthquake in Türkiye and in Syria will be felt for decades to come, including through migratory flows.
3. In the midst of this profound change of era and paradigm 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. 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 building 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 the Council of Europe in Reykjavík (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 Nos. 35 and 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.

5. Recalling the ground-breaking role played by EUR-OPA, the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement of the Council of Europe, 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 withdrawal of investment over the past 20 years. It therefore invites the Committee of Ministers to consider these activities as part of the core mandate of the Organisation and accordingly to incorporate funding for such activities in the ordinary budget of the Council of Europe, while at the same time ensuring that its work benefits all member States.
7. The Assembly wishes that, beyond the 4th summit, the Council of Europe will remain a forum at the forefront, with its working method based on human rights, co-operation between peers, and democratic participation, where solutions based on nature, landscape, and major hazards are discussed. The Assembly 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 to further empower those directly affected by disasters to help themselves.

Amendment 12

Tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

In the draft recommendation, at the end of paragraph 6, add the following sentence:

"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 the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe."

Amendment 13

Tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

In the draft recommendation, after paragraph 6, insert the following paragraph:

"The Assembly congratulates the European Commission on the speed and efficiency of the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism mobilised 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."