



Declassified¹
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Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

Parliamentary Network for a healthy environment

Minutes

of the joint meeting with Women@PACE on the theme:
“Climate, health and equality: women on the front line – facts & solutions”

held in Strasbourg during the 2nd part-session 2026

Wednesday 22 April 2026, from 1 pm to 2 pm

Ms Aurora Florida (Italy, SOC), Chairperson of the Parliamentary Network for a healthy environment and member of the Women@PACE Bureau, **opened** the meeting. She warmly welcomed participants and introduced **Ms Anne Mahrer**, Co-President of KlimaSeniorinnen Schweiz (Senior Women for Climate Protection Switzerland) and **Ms Hannah Prins**, Lawyer and Climate Activist. The event provided the framework for consultation on the preparation of her forthcoming report on “Climate and gender equality: strengthening the protection of women’s rights in the face of climate disruption” and facilitated discussion among members on experience, obstacles, and solutions.

Ms Anne Mahrer, Co-President of KlimaSeniorinnen Schweiz

Ms Mahrer expressed gratitude for the invitation and outlined the journey of KlimaSeniorinnen Schweiz, highlighting the landmark judgment delivered by the European Court of Human Rights on 9 April 2024 concerning the protection of rights in the face of climate change. She traced her own involvement in political activism since the 1970s and 1980s, underlining the critical intersection between the pursuit of gender equality and environmental protection, both historically and presently. She cited notable successes of citizen mobilisation in Switzerland, including actions against nuclear power and the continual influence of women’s votes on environmental policy. She warned, however, of the fragility of progress in these areas.

Ms Mahrer provided an account of her engagement in public life and commented on the limitations she had observed in environmental and climate protection efforts, particularly in the face of lobbying and parliamentary inertia. For her, judicial avenues became a necessary recourse, leading to the formation of KlimaSeniorinnen Schweiz—a group primarily composed of elderly women, implicating their particular vulnerability to climate consequences such as heatwaves. She lamented the initial reluctance of Swiss authorities to address the substance of their legal claims and described how the European Court’s positive ruling brought both intense political resistance and international recognition.

She summarised the requirements imposed by the Court. She reiterated that the Court’s judgment affirmed the right to effective State protection against the harmful effects of climate change on life, health and quality of life. Commending the forthcoming Assembly report on climate and gender equality, she called for its large adoption and for subsequent concrete action across Council of Europe member states. She concluded by affirming that age provides no barrier to significant action or achievement in the field of climate justice.

Ms Hannah Prins, Lawyer and Climate Activist

¹ The minutes were approved and declassified by the Parliamentary Network for a healthy environment at its meeting on 5 June 2026 in Athens, Greece.

Ms Prins thanked for the opportunity to address the meeting, drawing attention to the urgent realities of the climate crisis. She narrated incidents from her activism in the Netherlands, including peaceful demonstrations against fossil fuel subsidies, and referenced the use of force against climate scientists and activists. She highlighted the scale of fossil fuel subsidies globally and framed urgent and direct action as a necessary response to governmental and corporate inaction.

She illustrated the health implications of industrial pollution and outlined the emergence of criminal legal proceedings against corporations for environmental harm. She argued for the tightening of legal frameworks to hold polluters accountable and noted the rapid development of climate litigation, citing multiple high-profile cases.

Advocating for legislative alignment with scientific evidence and popular will, **Ms Prins** addressed the disproportionate participation of women in climate movements and discussed cultural stereotypes and barriers to greener lifestyle choices. She challenged policymakers to enact laws that promote sustainability and gender equality, stating that solutions to the crisis are well known but that responsibility rests with legislators to implement them.

Ms Prins concluded by referencing significant local policy changes underway, such as advertising bans on fossil fuels and meat in Amsterdam, as signs of shifting societal norms. She urged policymakers to take public demonstrations and judicial decisions into account, underscoring the closing window for action on climate, and the fact that they have the power to change the world.

Ms Aurora Floridia, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Network for a healthy environment

Ms Floridia began her presentation by explaining that her motivation stemmed from both personal experience and wider realities in her region, as well as prominent cases and civil society mobilisation which highlighted a governance gap regarding climate change's health impacts on women. She stated that health in Europe was increasingly dependent on environmental factors such as air quality, clean water, chemical pollution, and climate stability. Women, girls, children, the elderly, and low-income households were identified as being most exposed to these environmental threats, with a clear scientific consensus that women and girls were particularly at risk.

Europe was warming at twice the global average, with visible impacts in Mediterranean regions including increased wildfires and droughts. This was documented in climate reports such as the Lancet Countdown. **Ms Floridia** provided examples of countries like Malta adapting rapidly by reusing wastewater for agriculture.

She discussed rising energy poverty and heat vulnerability, affecting 7-9% of the EU population, with elderly women living alone being particularly impacted due to lower incomes, precarious housing, and high caregiving burdens. She pointed out the paradox that, whilst public messages urged elderly people not to go outside in heatwaves, many were unable to keep their homes cool.

She further noted that climate change had significant impacts on young women, especially on reproductive and maternal health, linking high temperatures and pollution to increased risks of preterm births and pregnancy complications. Mental health was another key dimension, with women and girls experiencing higher levels of climate anxiety and post-disaster trauma, particularly when environmental risks overlapped with social vulnerability. Women, she affirmed, are often responsible for caregiving and managing households in the aftermath of climate events, while also bearing the consequences of reduced income, damaged homes, and limited access to services.

She highlighted the governance gap: women were underrepresented in climate and health decision-making, resulting in less effective policies. She expressed a keen interest in identifying existing good practices or policies from countries that are further advanced in this regard. Concrete action was needed, including strengthening women's participation in governance, integrating gender perspectives in policies, addressing energy poverty with a gender lens, and promoting gender-responsive climate finance.

She urged recognition and implementation of an autonomous right to a healthy environment, referencing Article 11 of the European Social Charter and the Reykjavik Declaration as fundamental bases. She encouraged parliamentarians to join the Parliamentary Network for a healthy environment and support ongoing work at the Council of Europe. She concluded by underlining the critical importance of deepening the examination of the impacts of climate change on women's health.

Discussion

Ms Tiblom expressed appreciation for the presentations but raised concerns regarding the tactics of protest, particularly the use of road blockades. She noted incidents in Sweden that impeded public services and questioned whether this could be considered a helpful method. She proposed promoting the uptake of electric vehicles as a pragmatic solution, referencing advances observed in Beijing and called for regulatory changes to facilitate access to affordable electric vehicles in Europe.

Mr Ermischer, President of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe, voiced support for the formal recognition of the right to a healthy environment as a fundamental human right through an additional protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights and advocated for expeditious ratification of the new convention on environmental protection by criminal law. Concern was expressed regarding the diminishing political will to address climate challenges, the undermining of judicial independence following Court rulings, and the urgent need for a more constructive response by policymakers.

Ms Eder-Gitschthaler commended the efforts of both invited speakers, especially Ms Mahrer, describing her as a role model for older women and inquiring about the scale of engagement within KlimaSeniorinnen Schweiz.

Responding to Ms Tiblom, **Ms Prins** stated that peaceful protest, including road blockades, had been upheld by judicial authorities and that steps were always taken to avoid disruption to emergency services. On electric vehicles, she urged a broader transition encompassing public transport, cycling, and walking, noting ethical concerns regarding sourcing of materials. She also commented on how criminal prosecutions for environmental damage have evolved, citing recent advances in attribution science that support such cases.

Ms Mahrer reflected further on the motivations for civil disobedience, asserting that non-violent direct actions were an expression of the desperation felt by the youth in the face of political inaction. She cited examples of creative protest in Switzerland and noted the burnout and disillusionment experienced by youth and women activists. On the question of electric vehicles, she cautioned against uncritical expansion and highlighted concerns regarding the provenance and consequences of raw material extraction.

Ms Fabricius emphasised the need to increase funding for research on women's diseases, citing statistics illustrating the disproportionate allocation towards such research globally. She underlined the significance of access to nature, clean water, and scientific investment for women's health, referencing studies linking proximity to nature in childhood with reduced depression in later life.

Mr Papandreou raised the concept of energy democracy, acknowledging women's potential role in facilitating a just transition. He drew attention to challenges arising when new energy models favour concentrated corporate interests over local communities. Affirming his support for peaceful protest, he asked the speakers how greater participation by women and youth in political decision-making could be encouraged, particularly in the face of strong opposition from vested interests.

Ms Ferčíková Konečná reported similar activism inspired by Ms Mahrer, highlighting ongoing strategic litigation and challenges posed by political leadership hostile to climate policy, including a Minister stating that the climate crisis is over. **Ms Ferčíková Konečná** noted the impact of global disinformation campaigns and urged guidance on countering such resistance as well as on addressing energy dependence.

Ms Nowicka suggested to consider the development of an award or similar initiative to recognise outstanding contributions by women in the field of environment and health. Efforts should be made on engaging young people more effectively in related projects.

Ms Prins stressed the importance of perseverance in advocacy, likening activism to a marathon, and highlighted the necessity for more diverse role models in politics. She suggested that effective policy should respond to tangible public needs, noting that pragmatic local actions could generate environmental benefits.

Ms Mahrer reassured participants of the continuing dynamism of feminist movements in Switzerland but noted ongoing underrepresentation of women and unresolved challenges in political institutions.

Ms Floridia closed the meeting by urging all delegations to join the Parliamentary Network for a Healthy Environment and to remain engaged with ongoing Council of Europe initiatives.

List of participants / Liste des participants**Chairperson / Présidente** : Ms / Mme Aurora Floridia, Italy / Italie, SOC**Vice-Chairperson / Vice-Présidente** : Ms / Mme Liliana Tanguy, France, ALDE / ADLE**Member States / États Membres**

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Andorra / Andorre				
Armenia / Arménie	Mr/M.	Armen Gevorgyan		
Austria / Autriche	Ms/Mme	Claudia Arpa		
	Ms/Mme	Agnes Sirkka Prammer		
Belgium / Belgique	Ms/Mme	Anne Lambelin		
	Mr/M.	Andries Gryffroy		
Bosnia and Herzegovina / Bosnie-Herzégovine	Mr/M.	Saša Magazinović		
Bulgaria / Bulgarie				
Croatia / Croatie	Ms/Mme	Zdravka Bušić		
Cyprus / Chypre				
Czech Republic / République tchèque				
Denmark / Danemark				
Estonia / Estonie				
Finland / Finlande	Ms/Mme	Minna Reijonen		
France	Ms/Mme	Liliana Tanguy		
	Mr/M.	Alain Milon		
Georgia / Géorgie				

Germany / <i>Allemagne</i>	Mr/M.	Malte Kaufmann		
	Mr/M.	Julian Joswig		
Greece / <i>Grèce</i>	Mr/M.	George Papandreou	Mr/M.	Georgios Stamatis
Hungary / <i>Hongrie</i>				
Iceland / <i>Islande</i>				
Ireland / <i>Irlande</i>	Mr/M.	Garret Ahearn	Mr/M.	Ronan Mullen
Italy / <i>Italie</i>	Mr/M.	Stefano Maullu		
	Ms/Mme	Aurora Floridia		
Latvia / <i>Lettonie</i>				
Liechtenstein				
Lithuania / <i>Lituanie</i>	Mr/M.	Arminas Lydeka		
Luxembourg	Mr/M.	Paul Galles		
Malta / <i>Malte</i>				
Republic of Moldova / <i>République de</i>				
Monaco				
Montenegro / <i>Monténégro</i>	Mr/M.	Miloš Konatar		
Netherlands / <i>Pays-Bas</i>	Ms/Mme	Saskia Kluit		
	Ms /Mme	Carla Moonen		
North Macedonia / <i>Macédoine du Nord</i>	Ms/Mme	Bisera Kostadinovska-Stojchevska		
Norway / <i>Norvège</i>				
Poland / <i>Pologne</i>	Ms/Mme	Danuta Jazłowiecka		
Portugal				
Romania / <i>Roumanie</i>	Ms/Mme	Maria-Gabriela Horga		

	Ms/Mme	Mirela-Elena Adomnicai		
San Marino / <i>Saint-Marin</i>				
Serbia / <i>Serbie</i>				
Slovak Republic / <i>République slovaque</i>				
Slovenia / <i>Slovénie</i>	Mr/M.	Dean Premik		
Spain / <i>Espagne</i>	Ms/Mme	Luz Martínez Seijo		
	Ms/Mme	Belén Hoyo		
Sweden / <i>Suède</i>				
Switzerland / <i>Suisse</i>	Ms/Mme	Sibel Arslan		
Türkiye	Mr/M.	Sevan Sivacioğlu		
Ukraine	Ms/Mme	Yuliia Ovchynnykova		
United Kingdom / <i>Royaume-Uni</i>	Ms/Mme	Baroness Thérèse Coffey		

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Jordan / <i>Jordanie</i>		
Kyrgyzstan / <i>Kirghizstan</i>		
Morocco / <i>Maroc</i>	Mr/M.	Allal Amraoui
Palestine		

PACE Committees Concerned / Commissions de l'APCE concernées

Political Affairs and Democracy / <i>Questions pol et Démocratie</i>	Ms/Mme	Sena Nur Çelik Kanat
Legal Affairs and Human Rights / <i>Questions juridiques et des DH</i>	Ms/Mme	Wanda Nowicka

Migration, International Protection and Economic Co-operation / <i>Migration, protection internationale et coopération économique</i>	Ms/Mme	Meryem Göka
Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development / <i>Questions sociales, santé et développement durable</i>	Ms/Mme	Victoria Tiblom
Culture, Science, Education and Media / <i>Culture, science, education et media</i>	Mr/M.	Andries Gryffroy
Equality and Non-discrimination / <i>Egalité et non-discrimination</i>	Ms/Mme	Edite Estrela
	Mr/M.	Vik Solveig

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Ex-Officio Member / Membre d'office	Ms/Mme	Petra Bayr
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Thematic Spokesperson on Environment and Climate Change/ <i>Porte-Parole</i> <i>thématique sur l'environnement</i> <i>et le changement climatique</i>	Ms/Mme	Meropi-Spyridoula Ydraiou
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