



Declassified¹

AS/Soc (2023) PV08add2

22 January 2024

Asocpv08add2_2023

Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

Minutes

of the public hearing on “Mainstreaming the human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment with the Reykjavík process” held on 6 December 2023

In connection with the preparation of the report on “Mainstreaming the human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment with the Reykjavík process” by **Mr Simon Moutquin** (Belgium, SOC), the committee held a public hearing with **Mr Helge Seland**, Permanent Representative of Norway to the Council of Europe and Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers’ Rapporteur Group on Human Rights (GR-H).

Mr Alain Milon, First Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, opened the meeting and gave the rapporteur the floor.

Mr Moutquin reiterated the Parliamentary Assembly’s commitment to the outcomes of the Fourth Council of Europe Summit in Reykjavik and, in particular, the proposal to launch the Reykjavík process and possibly set up a new intergovernmental committee on environment and human rights (Reykjavík Committee). He referred to the longstanding co-operation between the two bodies, which had led to the abolition of the death penalty and the launch of the Istanbul Convention. The Assembly had been calling for recognition of the right to a healthy environment for decades.

With his report, he was proposing a vision for the future committee based primarily on the work of the Network of Contact Parliamentarians for a Healthy Environment set up in January 2022. The Reykjavík Committee would be a powerful instrument capable of meeting the challenge of the triple global crisis by taking up the method initiated by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) when it was established. Its tasks could initially be arranged around three pillars. The Reykjavík Committee could collect examples of good practice on a country-by-country basis and raise their profile; make practical recommendations to States; and, lastly, establish co-operation with civil society and young people on environmental rights.

The good practices would highlight the practical implementation of the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment in Council of Europe member States, as well as policies and measures to reduce pollution and environmental degradation. Such practices would be identified at round tables. The general recommendations should provide concrete solutions to the issue of how to realise the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment on a continental scale and should suggest measures to be implemented by public authorities. In addition to being a forum for exchanges between national authorities, the Reykjavík Committee would welcome the views of civil society, young people and children. The Assembly and the Network were willing to provide input for the Committee of Ministers’ work so that the new committee could get off the ground quickly.

The First Vice-Chairperson thanked Mr Moutquin for his introduction and gave the guest speaker the floor.

Mr Seland welcomed the co-operation between the two instities. He explained that the GR-H had the task of implementing the Reykjavík process in line with the policy guidelines laid down by the Heads of State and Government at the Fourth Summit. To this end, the environment was to become a visible priority of the Organisation. The work on following up the process had just begun. The monitoring mechanisms for the nature-based legal instruments would be integrated in DG I as from 1 January 2024. The establishment of the

¹ The minutes were approved and declassified by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development at its meeting on 22 January 2024.

new committee had not been provided for in the new budget adopted recently, and he had doubts about the value added by the Council of Europe in connection with the climate crisis.

Mr Milon handed over the chair to Ms Olena Khomenko, Second Vice-Chairperson, who thanked Mr Seland for his contribution and gave members the floor.

Mr Moutquin, responding to the last comments, said that the Assembly had spent hours and hours listening to experts in connection with the Network's work. If the guardian of human rights in Europe was not able to talk about the environment, who would? The Assembly had practical proposals for following the path mapped out by the Summit. Young people should also be included in the work. There was a risk of the Council of Europe getting lost in carrying forward the process if a timetable with deadlines was not provided as soon as possible.

Ms Tanguy explained that it was necessary to go further and take stronger action so that the right to a healthy environment became a reality. The protection of biodiversity had to be included in the priorities of the Reykjavík Committee so as to stabilise the Bern Convention. With regard to the work of the Network, she called for greater environmental solidarity so as to raise awareness among civil society and young people about the need to protect biodiversity.

Ms Khomenko agreed with Mr Moutquin and said that the devastation of nature was a major threat for Ukrainians. Ecocide was mentioned in the Rome Statute. The emergence of environmental refugees also had to be taken into account. The Russians had an obligation to provide compensation for the destruction of nature in Ukraine. Concrete results had to be achieved through the Reykjavík process.

Mr Seland pointed out that the work of the Drafting Group on Human Rights and Environment (CDDH-ENV) of the Steering Committee for Human Rights and of the Committee of Experts on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law (PC-ENV) of the Council of Europe was separate from the Reykjavík Process and that the results should be submitted to the Committee of Ministers between the summer and the end of 2024. In reply to Ms Tanguy, he said that he did not believe that the Council of Europe was an organisation focused on the environment. In his view, it was a political decision that had to be taken.

In conclusion, **Mr Moutquin** agreed with the guest speaker that it was a political rather than a legal issue. He noted that Norway was reluctant to accept the requests by the Assembly, which had been adopted unanimously. It was in the interest of the two bodies to work together. For the time being, the Reykjavík process was still short of cement to bind all the work together. He thanked the ambassador but said that if the Council of Europe wanted to remain credible, it would have to address the climate crisis.

In conclusion, **Mr Seland** proposed that Assembly representatives be invited to a future meeting of the GR-H.

The Vice-Chairperson thanked Ambassador Seland and closed the meeting.

List of presence / Liste de présence

(The names of members who took part in the meeting are in bold / Les noms des membres ayant pris part à la réunion sont en caractères gras)

Members / Membres	Country / Pays	Alternates / Remplaçant(e)s
Ms Jorida Tabaku	Albania / Albanie	Zz...
Ms Bernadeta Coma	Andorra / Andorre	Ms Susanna Vela
Mr Armen Gevorgyan	Armenia / Arménie	Ms Hripsime Grigoryan
Mr Franz Leonhard Essl	Austria / Autriche	Ms Agnes Sirkka Prammer
Mr Stefan Schennach	Austria / Autriche	Ms Doris Bures
Ms Nigar Arpadarai	Azerbaijan / Azerbaïdjan	Ms Parvin Karimzada
Ms Sevinj Fataliyeva	Azerbaijan / Azerbaïdjan	Ms Konul Nurullayeva
Mr Bob De Brabandere	Belgium / Belgique	Ms Els Van Hoof
M. Simon Moutquin	Belgium / Belgique	Mme Latifa Gahouchi
Ms Darijana Filipović	Bosnia and Herzegovina / Bosnie-Herzégovine	Mr Šemsudin Dedić
Mr Ivan Ivanov	Bulgaria / Bulgarie	Zz...
Ms Denitsa Sacheva	Bulgaria / Bulgarie	Mr Vasil Pandov
Ms Zdravka Bušić	Croatia / Croatie	Ms Ivana Kekin
Ms Christiana Erotokritou	Cyprus / Chypre	Mr Constantinos Efstathiou
Mr Aleš Juchelka	Czech Republic / République tchèque	Mr Ondřej Šimetka
Ms Michaela Šebelová	Czech Republic / République tchèque	Mr Jiří Strýček
Ms Camilla Fabricius	Denmark / Danemark	Ms Karin Liltorp
Ms Hanah Lahe	Estonia / Estonie	Zz...
Ms Minna Reijonen	Finland / Finlande	Ms Mira Nieminen
M. Alain Milon	France	M. Alain Cadec
Mme Isabelle Santiago	France	Mme Mireille Clapot
Mme Anne Stambach-Terreoir	France	Mme Liliana Tanguy
Mme Aude Luquet	France	Mme Nathalie Serre
Ms Eka Sepashvili	Georgia / Géorgie	Zz.....
Ms Heike Engelhardt	Germany / Allemagne	Ms Franziska Kersten
Mr Andrej Hunko	Germany / Allemagne	Ms Catarina Dos Santos-Wintz
Mr Christian Petry	Germany / Allemagne	Ms Martina Stamm-Fibich
Mr Harald Weyel	Germany / Allemagne	Ms Katrin Staffler
Mr Georgios Stamatis	Greece / Grèce	Mr Alexis Tsipras
Ms Anna Efthymiou	Greece / Grèce	Ms Maria Syrengela

Ms Mónika Bartos	Hungary / <i>Hongrie</i>	Mme Katalin Csöbör
Ms Boglárka Illés	Hungary / <i>Hongrie</i>	Ms Zita Gurmai
Mr Bjarni Jónsson	Iceland / <i>Islande</i>	Ms Jódís Skúladóttir
Mr Joseph O'Reilly	Ireland / <i>Irlande</i>	Ms Reada Cronin
Ms Elena Bonetti	Italy / <i>Italie</i>	Mr Roberto Rosso
Ms Aurora Floridia	Italy / <i>Italie</i>	Mr Giuseppe De Cristofaro
Mr Alessandro Giglio Vigna	Italy / <i>Italie</i>	Mr Graziano Pizzimenti
Mr Stefano Maullu	Italy / <i>Italie</i>	Mr Francesco Zaffini
M. Andris Bērziņš	Latvia / <i>Lettonie</i>	Mr Edmunds Cepurītis
Ms Franziska Hoop	Liechtenstein	Mr Peter Frick
Mr Kęstutis Masiulis	Lithuania / <i>Lituanie</i>	Ms Rasa Budbergytė
M. Max Hengel	Luxembourg	M. Paul Galles
Ms Romilda Zarb	Malta / <i>Malte</i>	Mr Joseph Beppe Fenech Adami
Mr Ion Groza	Republic of Moldova / <i>République de Moldova</i>	Ms Reghina Ȃpostolova
Mme Christine Pasquier-Ciulla	Monaco	Mme Béatrice Fresko-Rolfo
Mr Miloš Konatar	Montenegro / <i>Monténégro</i>	Zz...
Ms Carla Moonen	Netherlands / <i>Pays-Bas</i>	Ms Saskia Kluit
Mr Theo Bovens	Netherlands / <i>Pays-Bas</i>	Zz...
Ms Artina Qazimi	North Macedonia / <i>Macédoine du Nord</i>	Mr Vlado Misajlovski
Ms Lisa Marie Ness Klungland	Norway / <i>Norvège</i>	Ms Linda Hofstad Helleland
Ms Danuta Jazłowiecka	Poland / <i>Pologne</i>	Mr Tomasz Latos
Mr Bolesław Piecha	Poland / <i>Pologne</i>	Ms Marta Kubiak
Mr Andrzej Szejna	Poland / <i>Pologne</i>	Ms Mirosława Nykiel
Mr Nuno Carvalho	Portugal	Ms Mónica Quintela
Mr Pedro Cegonho	Portugal	Ms Jamila Madeira
Mr Andi-Lucian Cristea	Romania / <i>Roumanie</i>	M. Ion Prioteasa
Ms Alina-Ștefania Gorghiu	Romania / <i>Roumanie</i>	Mr Cristian-Augustin Niculescu-Țăgârlaș
Ms Diana Stoica	Romania / <i>Roumanie</i>	Ms Daniela Oteșanu
Ms Marica Montemaggi	San Marino / <i>Saint-Marin</i>	Mr Marco Nicolini
Ms Tatjana Pašić	Serbia / <i>Serbie</i>	Ms Jelena Milošević
Ms Dunja Simonović Bratić	Serbia / <i>Serbie</i>	Mr Uglješa Marković
Mme Anna Záborská	Slovak Republic / <i>République Slovaque</i>	Mr Juraj Šeliga
Mr Dean Premik	Slovenia / <i>Slovénie</i>	Ms Iva Dimic
Ms María Fernández	Spain / <i>Espagne</i>	Mr José Latorre

Ms Susana Sumelzo	Spain / <i>Espagne</i>	Ms Belén Hoyo
Ms Carmen Leyte	Spain / <i>Espagne</i>	Ms Luz Martinez Seijo
Mr Mattias Jonsson	Sweden / <i>Suède</i>	Ms Yasmine Bladelius
Ms Beatrice Timgren	Sweden / <i>Suède</i>	Ms Borianna Åberg
Ms Sibel Arslan	Switzerland / <i>Suisse</i>	M. Pierre-Alain Fridez
M. Jean-Pierre Grin	Switzerland / <i>Suisse</i>	Mme Ada Marra
Mr Murat Cahid Cingi	Türkiye	Mr Mustafa Canbey
Mr Sevan Sivacioğlu	Türkiye	Ms Sena Nur Çelik
Ms Gökçe Gökçen	Türkiye	Mr Namık Tan
Ms Semra Çağlar Gökalp	Türkiye	Mr Berdan Öztürk
Mr Artem Dubnov	Ukraine	Ms Lesia Ziburanna
Ms Olena Khomenko	Ukraine	Ms Larysa Bilozir
Ms Yuliia Ovchynnykova	Ukraine	Mr Andrii Lopushanskyi
Mr Geraint Davies	United Kingdom / <i>Royaume-Uni</i>	Ms Kate Osamor
Ms Sally-Ann Hart	United Kingdom / <i>Royaume-Uni</i>	Mr Richard Bacon
Baroness Doreen E. Massey	United Kingdom / <i>Royaume-Uni</i>	Ms Ruth Jones
Mr David Morris	United Kingdom / <i>Royaume-Uni</i>	Ms Sheryll Murray

Partners for Democracy / Partenaires pour la Démocratie

Mr / M. Allal Amraoui, Morocco / Maroc

Mr / M. Hassan Arif, Morocco / Maroc

Other persons present / Autres personnes présentes

Ms / Mme Teresa Gerns Jiménez-Villarejo, Policy Officer, FAFCE (Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe) / *Chargée politique, FAFCE (Fédération des associations familiales catholiques en Europe)*

Secretariat of Delegation or of Political Group / Secrétariat de Délégation ou de Groupe politique

Mr / M. Enis Kervan, Kosovo*

Mr / M. Faton Hamiti, Kosovo*

Ms / Mme Hatice Biyikli Ozansoy, Türkiye

Mr / M. Armağan Candan, Turkish Cypriot Community* / communauté chypriote turque*

Mr / M. Oğuzhan Hasipoğlu, Turkish Cypriot Community* / communauté chypriote turque*

(*) All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo / Toute référence au Kosovo, que ce soit à son territoire, à ses institutions ou à sa population, doit se comprendre en pleine conformité avec la Résolution 1244 du Conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies et sans préjuger du statut du Kosovo.

(*) Turkish Cypriot community In accordance with Resolution 1376 (2004) / Conformément à la Résolution 1376 (2004)