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AD HOC MULTIDISCIPLINARY GROUP ON THE ENVIRONMENT (GME)

Extracts from relevant Council of Europe documents and decisions

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REYKJAVÍK DECLARATION

Reykjavík Declaration “United around our values”, including Appendix V “The Council of Europe and the environment”

Adopted by the Heads of State and Governments of the Council of Europe on the occasion of the 4th Summit held in Reykjavik Iceland, on 16-17 May 2023

“The Council of Europe has played a pioneering global role in developing standards in emerging and new policy areas and we underline our collective determination to address current and future challenges.

We underline the urgency of additional efforts to protect the environment, as well as to counter the impact of the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. We therefore commit to strengthening our work on the human rights aspects of the environment and initiate the Reykjavík process of focusing and strengthening the work of the Council of Europe in this field, as laid out in Appendix V “The Council of Europe and the environment”.”

Appendix V: The Council of Europe and the environment

We, the Heads of State and Government, underline the urgency of taking co-ordinated action to protect the environment by countering the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity. We affirm that human rights and the environment are intertwined and that a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is integral to the full enjoyment of human rights by present and future generations.

We underscore the role that the Council of Europe may play as an Organisation working not only in the area of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, but with a long-standing and widely acknowledged track record in protecting the environment, environmentally friendly landscape management and public health. It has both the tools and the structures to address human rights and the environment, in the spirit of co-operation and by sharing experience and promising practice.

We note that the right to a healthy environment is enshrined in various ways in several constitutions of the Council of Europe member States and the increased recognition of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment in, inter alia, international instruments, regional human rights instruments, national constitutions, legislation and policies.

We recall the extensive case law and practice on environment and human rights developed by the European Court of Human Rights and the European Committee of Social Rights. We appreciate the ongoing work of the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the Commissioner for Human Rights, the youth sector and other parts of the Council of Europe to strengthen the protection of human rights linked to the protection of the environment.

We consider the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the “Bern Convention”) a unique international instrument aimed at aligning national standards and practices in conserving wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats at pan-European level and beyond, providing the necessary tools to strengthen intergovernmental co-operation and giving an opportunity to civil society to engage with governments and bring to their attention concerns about threats to biodiversity and natural habitats and their detrimental consequences.

We recall that the Council of Europe Landscape Convention – the first international treaty devoted exclusively to all dimensions of the landscape – specifies that the landscape has an important public interest role in the cultural, ecological, environmental and social fields and is

a key element of individual and social well-being, and that landscape protection, management and planning entail rights and responsibilities for everyone.

We recognise the importance of access to information, access to public participation in decision-making processes and access to justice in environmental matters, as set out in the Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents (the “Tromsø Convention”).

We recognise and support the vital role of civil society and other stakeholders, including national human rights institutions, regional institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights, youth, indigenous peoples, religious leaders and communities, as well as cities, regions and other sub-national authorities and local communities, in the protection of the environment.

We consider that strengthened Council of Europe action in this field will contribute to progress towards the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals.

Together we commit to:

i. strengthening our work at the Council of Europe 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, in line with United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/300 “The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment“, and by pursuing the implementation of Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)20 on human rights and the protection of the environment;

ii. reflecting on the nature, content and implications of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and, on that basis, actively considering recognising at the national level this right as a human right that is important for the enjoyment of human rights and is related to other rights and existing international law;

iii. encouraging the Council of Europe Development Bank to focus on the social dimensions of climate change and environmental degradation, and to help member States achieve a fair and inclusive transition that leaves no one behind by funding projects in its key sectors of activity, in line with its strategic framework;

iv. concluding as soon as possible the Council of Europe’s ongoing work on a convention superseding and replacing the Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law and on the consideration of the need for and feasibility of a new instrument or instruments in the field of human rights and the environment;

v. initiating the “Reykjavík process” of strengthening the work of the Council of Europe in this field, with the aim of making the environment a visible priority for the Organisation. The process will focus and streamline the Organisation’s activities, with a view to promoting co-operation among member States. We will identify the challenges raised by the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity for human rights and contribute to the development of common responses thereto, while facilitating the participation of youth in these discussions. We will do this by enhancing and co-ordinating the existing Council of Europe activities related to the environment and we encourage the establishment of a new intergovernmental committee on environment and human rights (“Reykjavík Committee”).

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

[CM/Rec\(2022\)20](#) (27 September 2022) *Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on human rights and the protection of the environment*

“Recommends that the governments of the member States:

1. reflect on the nature, content and implications of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and, on that basis, actively consider recognising at the national level this right as a human right that is important for the enjoyment of human rights and is related to other rights and existing international law;
2. review their national legislation and practice in order to ensure that they are consistent with the recommendations, principles and guidance set out in the appendix to this recommendation;
3. ensure that this recommendation is translated into the official language(s) of their respective countries and ensure, by appropriate means and action, a wide dissemination of this recommendation among the competent authorities and stakeholders;
4. examine, within the Committee of Ministers, the implementation of this recommendation no later than five years after its adoption.”

[CM/Del/Dec\(2023\)1471/1.6](#) (5 July 2023) *Ministers’ Deputies Decisions. “4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe - Follow-up”*

“The Deputies, (...) invited their competent rapporteur groups to examine the implementation of the Reykjavík Declaration, in accordance with the indications that appear in [CM/Del/Dec\(2023\)1471/1.6-app](#), with a view to reporting back to them for the first time by their 1478th meeting (18 October 2023) at the latest, and subsequently on a regular basis so as to enable the Deputies to prepare a comprehensive report on the implementation of the Reykjavík Declaration to be submitted to the 133rd Session of the Committee of Ministers (Strasbourg, May 2024)”

[CM/Del/Dec\(2023\)1471/1.6-app](#) (5 July 2023) *Ministers’ Deputies Decisions. “Follow-up to the Reykjavík Declaration: role of rapporteur groups”*

[CM/Del/Dec\(2023\)1481/11.1](#) 1481st (Budget) meeting, 21-23 November 2023 - *Decisions adopted:*

“11. to present a mid-term review by 15 August 2025, as reflected in [DD\(2021\)283-rev2](#), to ensure the Organisation’s strategic direction and to support, and improve as necessary, its implementation, notably through reinvesting efficiency savings in key strategic priorities and emerging challenges and rationalising activities as appropriate, as well as ensuring the links with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. In this context, invited the Secretary General to include an evaluation by the Directorate of Internal Oversight to assess the degree to which the Reykjavík Declaration has been implemented, and which were the key factors influencing the implementation; and instructed their Rapporteur Group on Programme, Budget and Administration (GR-PBA) to keep under review the prioritisation of the Programme and Budget with a view to feeding into the preparation of the adjusted Programme and Budget for 2026-2027;”
[...]

16. welcomed the efforts undertaken towards a greener Council of Europe and invited the Secretary General to submit, in the first quarter of 2024, a road map towards an even more sustainable reduction of the carbon footprint, including through a potential carbon offsetting as need be of Council of Europe activities across the board

and to propose quantifiable targets in this regard, and their possible financial implications, to be discussed no later than the end of 2024;”

[CM\(2024\)75-final](#) - 133rd Session of the Committee of Ministers (Strasbourg, 16-17 May 2024) – Report on follow-up to the Reykjavík Declaration – “Reykjavík – one year on”

“23. The Reykjavík Declaration committed to making a clean, healthy and sustainable environment for present and future generations a visible priority for the Organisation, and work has accelerated in this direction. The Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats translated its Vision towards 2030 into a concrete Strategic Plan aiming at halting the decline of biodiversity, recovering wildlife and habitats, improving the lives of people and contributing to the health of the planet. Activities under the Council of Europe Landscape Convention were able to restart at the beginning of 2024. A study on the need for and feasibility of a further instrument or instruments to address human rights and the environment is expected to be transmitted to the Committee of Ministers in 2024. Work is progressing on the preparation of a Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law, which should be completed by the end of 2024. A 24-month pilot regional project “Human Rights and Sustainable Environment in south-East Europe” started in March 2024. The Secretary General has set up a new Directorate on Social Rights, Health and Environment and a new Council of Europe Department “Reykjavík process and environment” has been created, along with an Intersecretariat Task Force on the Environment. The latter has prepared elements for a Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment and related action plan, which could be developed by an intergovernmental multidisciplinary group on environment.”

[CM/Del/Dec\(2024\)133/2b](#) – 133rd Session of the Committee of Ministers (Strasbourg, 17 May 2024) - 2. United around our values – b. Implementation of the Reykjavík Declaration

“The Committee of Ministers welcomed the annual report of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe “Our Rights, Our Future” (SG(2024)1). It endorsed the report “Reykjavík – one year on”, as it appears in document CM(2024)75, and, with a view to the continued implementation of the Reykjavík Declaration, adopted the following decisions: [...]”

“28. welcomed the strengthening of work related to human rights and the environment across the Council of Europe and encouraged in particular the completion as soon as possible of a study on the need for and feasibility of a further instrument or instruments in the field of human rights and the environment and of the draft Council of Europe Convention on Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law;

29. with a view to implementing the Reykjavík process, invited its Deputies to set up an ad hoc intergovernmental multidisciplinary group to prepare a Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment and a related action plan;

30. strongly encouraged member States to implement its Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)20 on human rights and the protection of the environment and invited its Deputies to continue working on the implementation of Appendix V to the Reykjavík Declaration;”

[CM/Del/Dec\(2024\)1500/1.6](#) 133rd Session of the Committee of Ministers (Strasbourg, 16-17 May 2024) – Follow-up

“b. Implementation of the Reykjavík Declaration

2. with a view to setting up an ad hoc intergovernmental multidisciplinary group to prepare a Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment and a related action plan as

soon as possible, invited the Secretary General to prepare the draft terms of reference of such a group for examination by their Rapporteur Group on Human Rights (GR-H);
3. invited their Thematic Co-ordinator on Information Policy (TC-INF) to prepare a Council of Europe Transparency Framework to serve as a guiding document, outlining the Committee of Ministers' commitment to transparency and accountability and invited her to continue to evaluate possible avenues for improving the transparency of the activities of the Committee of Ministers and its documentation;"

[CM\(2024\)14-add2](#) (14 february 2024) *"Draft declaration on preserving social cohesion in the transition to a green economy."*

"At the 4th Summit, the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe committed to strengthening the Organisation's work on the human rights aspects of the environment as acknowledged by the Committee of Ministers in its Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2022\)20](#) on human rights and the protection of the environment, and in line with the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/76/300 on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment."

"The Committee of Ministers (...) recalls that, at the 4th Summit, the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe encouraged the Council of Europe Development Bank to focus, when funding projects, on the social consequences of climate change and environmental degradation, a message that is applicable to other financial institutions"

STEERING COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (CDDH)

[CM\(2024\)6](#) - *Abridged report of the 99th meeting of the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) (28 November – 1 December 2023).*

“As regards the other items on its agenda, the CDDH:

(...) exchanged views on the results of the 8th meeting of the Drafting Group on human rights and the environment (CDDH-ENV), notably on the state of progress of the draft CDDH Report on the need for and feasibility of a further instrument or instruments on human rights and the environment; considered that the draft report prepared by the CDDH-ENV should examine all options, without excluding any of them, and remain neutral in its conclusions on those options;”

[Abridged Report](#) of the 100th meeting of the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH), (25 June – 28 June 2024)

“Items for decision by the Committee of Ministers

The CDDH adopted the following text and decided to transmit it to the Committee of Ministers for its consideration:

- CDDH Comments on Parliamentary Assembly Recommendations [2272 \(2024\)](#) “Mainstreaming the human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment with the Reykjavik process”, [2275 \(2024\)](#) “Ending the detention of ‘socially maladjusted’ persons”, and [2276 \(2024\)](#) “Children in the world of work: eradicating harmful child labour”.

The CDDH adopted the following text and decided to transmit it to the Committee of Ministers for information:

- Progress Report on the preparation of a CDDH Study on the need for and feasibility of a further instrument or instruments in the field of human rights and the environment.

The CDDH requested the Committee of Ministers to extend the deadline for completion of its Study on the need for and feasibility of a further instrument or instruments in the field of human rights and the environment to 31 December 2024.”

“Items for information of the Committee of Ministers

As regards the other items on its agenda, the CDDH:

- exchanged views on the results of the 9th and 10th meetings of the Drafting Group on human rights and environment (CDDH-ENV), notably on its preparation of a draft CDDH report on the need for and feasibility of a further instrument or instruments on human rights and the environment; on this basis, considered that the CDDH-ENV had fulfilled its mandate;
- decided that the text prepared by the CDDH-ENV would become a reference document for the ongoing work of the CDDH on this issue;
- exchanged views with Professor Helen KELLER of the University of Zürich on the recent rulings of the European Court of Human Rights in three cases concerning the effects of climate change;
- gave guidance to the Secretariat on the preparation of a draft CDDH Study on the need for and feasibility of a further instrument or instruments in the field of human rights and the environment, to be examined by the CDDH at its 101st meeting in November 2024;
- exchanged views with Rafael BENITEZ, Director of Social Rights, Health and Environment, notably on follow-up to Appendix V on the Council of Europe and the environment to the Reykjavik Declaration adopted at the Fourth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe;”

PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

[The Reykjavik Summit: PACE follow-up \(coe.int\)](#) (general)

[Network of Contact Parliamentarians for a healthy environment \(coe.int\)](#) (includes links to adopted Resolutions and Recommendations related to the environment and information on network activities)

Anchoring the right to a healthy environment: need for enhanced action by the Council of Europe – [Recommendation 2211 \(2021\)](#) (29 September 2021)

“1. [...] The Assembly is highly concerned by the speed and extent of environmental degradation, the loss of biodiversity and the climate crisis that directly affect human health, dignity and life. It considers that it is high time for the Council of Europe to show ambition and strategic vision for the future by facing up to this major transformative challenge to human rights and securing their enhanced protection in the era of systemic environmental threats to present and future generations.

2. The Assembly notes that harmful environmental impacts are increasingly affecting the enjoyment of first- and second-generation human rights by individuals and society at large, damaging the shared values that the Council of Europe is called upon to defend. Those impacts are being recognised through environmental litigation at national level across Europe and beyond; they constitute a compelling case for consolidating and updating the Council of Europe’s legal arsenal, and linking national action with the commitments made under the relevant international treaties, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement.

3. To this end, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

3.1 draw up an additional protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5, hereafter “the Convention”) on the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, based on the terminology used by the United Nations and drawing on the text reproduced below, which is an integral part of this recommendation. The inclusion of this right in the Convention would establish the clear responsibility of member States to maintain a good state of the environment that is compatible with life in dignity and in good health and the full enjoyment of other fundamental rights; this would also support much more effective protection of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment at national level, including for generations to come;

3.2 draw up an additional protocol to the European Social Charter (ETS Nos. 35 and 163, hereafter “the Charter”) on the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment; the inclusion of this right in the Charter would make it possible to recognise the interrelationship between the protection of social rights and environmental protection; it would also enable non-governmental organisations to lodge collective complaints on environmental issues;

3.3 launch the preparation of a feasibility study for a “Five Ps” convention on environmental threats and technological hazards threatening human health, dignity and life; the drawing up of such a convention would afford an opportunity to incorporate therein the principles of prevention, precaution and non-regression, which are necessary if humanity’s right to a healthy environment is to be properly protected; the convention could also include a supranational monitoring mechanism modelled on independent expert committees such as the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) and the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO);

3.4 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.”

Anchoring the right to a healthy environment: need for enhanced action by the Council of Europe – [Reply to Recommendation / Doc. 15623](#) (Adopted at the 1444th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies (27 September 2022). 2022 - Fourth part-session)

“1. [...] The Committee fully shares the Assembly’s concerns about the speed and extent of environmental degradation, the loss of biodiversity and the climate crisis that directly affect human health, dignity and life.

2. In this context, it recalls its recent reply to Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2214 (2021) “The climate crisis and the rule of law”, in which it presented some of the pioneering work already carried out by the Council of Europe in this area, including the 1979 Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention), the 1993 Convention on Civil Liability for Damage resulting from Activities Dangerous to the Environment, and the 1998 Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law. It also indicated its ongoing work, notably the preparation of a Committee of Ministers’ Recommendation on human rights and the protection of the environment, as well as a study on the feasibility and appropriateness of modernising the above-mentioned Convention on the Protection of Environment through Criminal Law or of preparing a new instrument. These deliverables will be examined by the Committee of Ministers in the coming months.

3. Regarding the Assembly’s recommendation to draw up an additional protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights (paragraph 3.1), the Committee recalls its previous replies to Assembly Recommendations 1614 (2003) “Environment and human rights” and 1885 (2009) “Drafting an additional protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights concerning the right to a healthy environment”. It reiterates that the Convention system already indirectly contributes to the protection of the environment through certain convention rights and their interpretation by the European Court of Human Rights in its case law, thereby offering protection in relation to environmental issues. The “Manual on human rights and the environment – Principles emerging from the case law of the European Court of Human Rights and the conclusions and decisions of the European Committee of Social Rights”, which was updated in June 2021, clearly demonstrates the interconnection between the environment and the obligations of member States under the European Convention on Human Rights.

4. Nevertheless, the Committee informs the Assembly that it has instructed the CDDH to look into possible further work in this area, including the preparation of a study on the need for and feasibility of a further instrument or instruments on human rights and the environment, bearing in mind the Assembly’s recommendation (including in relation to paragraph 3.3). Discussions have already been initiated and the Committee will take the appropriate decisions on further action to be taken once it has examined the outcome of this work.

5. As concerns the drawing up of an additional protocol to the European Social Charter (paragraph 3.2), the European Committee for Social Rights (ECSR) has addressed certain aspects of environmental protection through its monitoring procedures, in particular within the scope of application of Article 11 on the right to protection of health. As interpreted by the ECSR, this requires States to take measures designed to remove the causes of ill health resulting from environmental threats such as pollution. The Committee welcomes the fact that the ECSR has already recognised some aspects of environmental protection through its evolutive jurisprudence and interpretation of the European Social Charter. It further notes that the ECSR supports the Assembly’s recommendation to draw up an additional protocol to the European

Social Charter on the “right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment”, and in this respect, the Committee also draws attention to the relevance of the work of its Ad hoc Working Party on improving the European Social Charter system (GT-CHARTE), which will be called on, in the second phase of its work, to examine longer term substantive and procedural issues related to the Charter.

6. With regard to the Assembly’s call to revise Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)3 on human rights and business (paragraph 3.4), the Committee informs the Assembly that the CDDH has recently finalised a report on the implementation of this recommendation, covering questions of how businesses conduct environmental and human rights due diligence and how victims of human rights and environmental adverse impacts access remedies. The CDDH will pursue its compliance examination in the framework of its mandate during the next quadrennium, and should it become clear that issues of corporate environmental responsibility require strengthening, the Committee could envisage a possible revision of this recommendation.”

Mainstreaming the human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment with the Reykjavik process – [Resolution 2545 \(2024\)](#) (18 April 2024)

“1. The Parliamentary Assembly recalls that the challenge of climate change constitutes a major existential emergency for humankind and that this emergency is mainly due to the lack of structural and long-lasting action.

2. The Assembly notes with dismay that the Council of Europe is now the only regional human rights system which has not yet formally recognised the right to a healthy environment.

3. For decades, however, the Assembly has been calling on the Council of Europe member States to take this step. In particular, it reaffirms its Recommendation 2211 (2021) “Anchoring the right to a healthy environment: need for enhanced action by the Council of Europe”, which was adopted unanimously.

4. The Assembly notes that at the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, held in Reykjavik on 16 and 17 May 2023, the Heads of State and Government recognised the urgency of additional efforts to protect the environment and to counter the impact of the “triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity” and its effects on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. An Inter-Secretariat Task Force on the Environment was established in January 2024 and has carried out a stocktaking survey of existing activities, planned activities and proposals for new activities. It also proposed elements for the development of a first Council of Europe strategy on the environment.

[...]

6. Mindful of the importance of this strategic moment, almost one year on from the 4th Summit and three years after Recommendation 2211 (2021), the Assembly wishes to update its expectations and contribute to the implementation of the Reykjavik Process through concrete and realistic proposals.

[...]

8. The Assembly underlines the need for the future strategy to have a clear goal in terms of setting standards at European level and encourages decision makers to focus on drawing up a legally binding instrument, within the Council of Europe, recognising an autonomous right to a healthy environment.

[...]

10. The Assembly welcomes the fact that almost all Council of Europe member States recognise the right to a healthy environment in one form or another in their national legislation and that some systems have already adopted an ecocentric view of this right.

[...]

14. In the light of these considerations, the Assembly calls on the Council of Europe member States to:

14.1 continue to reflect continuously at national level on the nature, content and implications of the right to a healthy environment so that, in the near future, this right will be recognised in law as an autonomous human right in each member State;

14.2 step up their efforts to promote, in all governance bodies, the legitimacy and added value of the Council of Europe playing a leading role in drawing up a legally binding instrument recognising an autonomous right to a healthy environment; [...]"

Mainstreaming the human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment with the Reykjavik process – [Recommendation 2272 \(2024\)](#) (18 April 2024)

"1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its Resolution 2545 (2024) "Mainstreaming the human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment with the Reykjavik Process".

2. The Assembly maintains that the recognition of the right to a healthy environment must be based on a human rights-centred approach. In this regard, it reaffirms its Recommendation 2211 (2021) "Anchoring the right to a healthy environment: need for enhanced action by the Council of Europe", in which it proposed complementary tools to achieve this.

3. The Assembly notes that the Council of Europe provides a conventional ecosystem covering many aspects of the right to a healthy environment. It sees this as an opportunity to capitalise on existing standards.

4. In this context, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

4.1 actively support the work of the Inter-Secretariat Task Force on the Environment established following the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, and carefully consider its proposals when drawing up a strategy and an action plan;

4.2 give utmost priority to the creation of an ad hoc intergovernmental committee, as envisaged in Reykjavik, to organise, co-ordinate and steer the implementation of the strategy and the action plan;

4.3 devote the normative part of the strategy to the formal recognition of the right to a healthy environment at the level of the Council of Europe, by drafting a binding legal instrument as soon as possible;

4.4 in so doing, focus on the rapid implementation of Recommendation 2211 (2021), including devising an autonomous, specific and inclusive instrument covering substantive rights and procedural matters relating to the environment that capitalises fully on the standards which have already been drawn up;

4.5 ensure that the draft convention superseding and replacing the Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law (ETS No. 172), currently being prepared within the Council of Europe, incorporates the notion of ecocide as a criminal offence and establishes an effective monitoring mechanism;

4.6 give the ad hoc intergovernmental committee a multidisciplinary role, enabling it to act as an interface between the Council of Europe and civil society in its broadest sense, and to carry out activities aimed at environmental monitoring and governance as soon as it has been set up;

4.7 highlight the committee's added value in dealings with the Organisation's other bodies with which effective and focused partnerships may be established, to drive forward change in environmental monitoring and governance;

4.8 set up a rapporteur group on environmental affairs at Committee of Ministers level to ensure unity and co-ordination in decision making."

Safeguarding human rights for future generations – [Resolution 2565 \(2024\)](#) (28 June 2024)

“1. The Parliamentary Assembly emphasises that a sustainable world not only means meeting the needs of the present generation: it must also guarantee that future generations can likewise meet their needs. This is nothing less than respecting intergenerational equity and is all the more an absolute imperative in the face of the climate change challenge of today.

2. Protecting the planet for future generations also means repairing the environmental damage already caused.

3. The Assembly stresses moreover that while the climate crisis has rightly been identified as the biggest existential emergency facing humankind, we must not overlook other significant risks to the rights of future generations, such as growing socio-economic inequalities, public health emergencies, wars and conflicts, and rapid technological advances.

[...]

5. The Assembly notes that numerous constitutional texts now contain references to future generations and that the notions of future generations and intergenerational equity are ever more frequently used before national and international courts in environmental litigation.

[...]

8. In the light of these considerations, the Assembly invites Council of Europe member States to seize and build upon this strategic moment in the Organisation's life, and to strongly promote both at national level and in international forums:

8.1 their political will to uphold, protect and develop the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights – both at the individual and the collective level – of our future generations, based on the fundamental principle of equality and non-discrimination found in human rights law;

8.2 their political will to advance rapidly and with determination on the existing environmental standards and practices, from a less anthropocentric perspective and taking into account recent legal developments in environmental matters, in particular the case law of the European Court of Human Rights in climate cases;

8.3 the swift signature and ratification of the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence, Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, encouraging them to maximise the potential of recognising the full applicability of the principles and obligations set forth therein (Chapters II to VI) to activities of private actors.”

CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

[Recommendation 484 \(2022\)](#) (28 October 2022) – *A fundamental right to the environment: a matter for local and regional authorities – Towards a green reading of the European Charter of Local Self-Government*

[CM/Cong\(2023\)Rec484-final](#) (18 October 2023) – *a reply adopted by the CM to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe Recommendation 484 (2022) “A fundamental right to the environment: a matter for local and regional authorities – towards a green reading of the European Charter of Local Self-government”*

[Local and regional responses to natural disasters and climate hazards: from risk preparedness to resilience](#) (28 March 2024) – *Report CG(2024)46-17*

“[...], the Congress invites local and regional authorities to follow a comprehensive approach in addressing natural disasters and climate hazards. In its recommendation it calls upon governments of member States to support local and regional governments facing crises in any possible way from adequate funding mechanisms to exchanges of good practice, data collection and training programmes.”