

**MARUF 2025**  
**"On the Shore of All Possibilities"**  
**International urban forum organised**  
**by Marmara Municipalities Union (1-3 October 2025)**

**Panel discussion co-organised with the Congress on**  
**"Local Resilience and Crisis Preparedness: Addressing**  
**Environmental and Climate Challenges"**

**Istanbul, 1 October 2025**

**Speaking points for Mr Anthony Buchanan, UK (L, ILDG),**  
**Congress of Local and Regional Authorities' co-rapporteur on**  
**coastal erosion**

**Introduction (4 minutes)**

- I come from a country that is exposed to rising threat of environmental crisis: Scotland, indeed the whole of the UK, is an island whose many coastal communities must be prepared for the storms, sea-level rises, and unpredictable weather patterns that are already taking place and are set to get worse. A consequence of these is of course coastal erosion which is now threatening communities and infrastructure along vulnerable shorelines.
- The combined effects of natural forces and human activity demand urgent strategies from all levels of governance to protect coasts and ensure long-term resilience.

- This is an issue with which I am engaged, as a co-rapporteur for the Congress report in preparation on coastal erosion.
- The report is in the making: together with an expert we met key French stakeholders in Paris in June and will visit a French coast early November for a study visit that supports the preparation of the report.
- This report, due for adoption next year, will focus on the role of local and regional authorities who are on the front line of the coastal erosion challenge and best placed to deliver tailored, place-based solutions—working, of course, in coordination with national governments to ensure planning, funding, and policy are aligned.
- While the nature of erosion differs from country to country—shaped by geography, governance, and socioeconomic realities—the challenge is shared. From small island states to low-lying coastal zones and densely populated deltas, all face the urgent task of developing effective, long-term responses. The details may vary, but the urgency does not.
- Coastal erosion is a growing and often underestimated challenge—a “slow-burn” problem with long-term consequences. Today, we can predict with increasing certainty the combined impacts of atmospheric warming and sea-level rise. These forces will reshape our coasts, communities, and regions at an accelerating pace. Across Europe, annual economic losses from coastal erosion are projected to reach as much as €42 billion by 2100.
- Various solutions are possible. These range from protecting and restoring natural coastal barriers (beaches, dunes, saltmarshes) to developing climate-resilient infrastructure, using both nature-based and engineered approaches.

Proactive, anticipatory planning is essential, particularly in areas where the landscape is changing dramatically or where the risk of displacement is high.

- We must acknowledge **disparities in resilience and vulnerability across regions**, particularly between urban and rural areas or overseas territories. Solutions must therefore be just and inclusive, in line with the various competences of sub-national governments and supported by appropriate funding mechanisms, national and international.

### **Points for the discussion**

- **Innovations in governance** are equally important. Land-use planning must account for future risks—avoiding new developments in vulnerable areas and creating space for the coast to adapt. Some regions are already transforming existing developments into buffer parks or relocating housing to climate-resilient zones. Success in these efforts depends on the authority of different levels of government and the coherence of their coordination.
- We see **how different municipalities and regions are responding** to coastal erosion: in Ireland's Maharees, community-led initiatives have strengthened local resilience. In Cap l'Orient, Presqu'île de Gâvres in France regular monitoring of coastal erosion has been conducted since 1999 and mitigation measures have been designed for the entire coastal area of the local town. In Scotland, regional investment in natural coastal defences has proven more cost-effective and sustainable than hard engineering solutions. Such examples show that empowering local actors can lead to innovative, scalable solutions.
- **To respond effectively**, our political timescales, governance systems, and decision-making processes must adapt. Coastal change demands multilevel,

coordinated governance, proactive adaptation strategies, and a stronger commitment to nature-based solutions.

- Looking ahead, the Congress report will provide **not only theoretical insights but also practical guidance**. It should offer responses that can be adopted and adapted, helping coastal communities and regions facing coastal erosion challenges.
- In Europe, we have a clear locus for engagement. The recent European Court of Human Rights judgment in Verein KlimaSeniorinnen Schweiz and Others v. Switzerland recognised the substantial threat climate change poses to human rights. This landmark ruling reinforces the responsibility of public authorities – including sub-national ones – to take meaningful action. Instruments such as the European Landscape Convention, celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, also support this framework.