

Opening of the Exhibition  
“The Climate and Biodiversity Tour”

24 June 2025, Strasbourg (France),

Speech by Theodoros Rousopoulos  
President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

---

Dear colleagues, dear friends,

Let me begin with a story from right here in Alsace.

Not long ago, the white stork – the region’s iconic bird – had nearly vanished. Only a handful of pairs were left. But thanks to the care and commitment of local communities, they returned. Today, you can see them nesting on rooftops across Strasbourg.

This is more than a story about birds. It’s a story about responsibility – and hope. That when we act, even what seems lost can return.

Friends,

The climate crisis is not just an environmental emergency. It is also a democratic test. Because when science is ignored, when facts are twisted, people suffer – and thus, democracy suffers. Disinformation spreads faster than truth. Citizens feel confused, debate weakens, and trust erodes.

But this exhibition is here to do the opposite: to reconnect us with truth, with knowledge, with responsibility.

Through the work of scientists and educators, this exhibition brings the reality of climate change and biodiversity loss into view – and shows what we can do, individually and collectively, to respond.

I'm proud that our Assembly has declared the right to a healthy environment a fundamental right – not in theory, but in the lives of children breathing clean air, of families protected from polluted water, of communities shielded from floods and fires. And with our Parliamentary Network for a Healthy Environment, we are turning that right into action.

But real change begins not only in conference rooms – it begins in classrooms too. In local councils, in homes, and yes, even in exhibitions like this one. Each of us can be part of the solution. Not just with grand gestures, but with choices, with curiosity, with courage.

I warmly thank the scientists and partners who brought this exhibition to life. You help us build a bridge between knowledge and policy – between evidence and empathy.

So, dear friends: walk through this exhibition not just with your eyes open, but with your minds and hearts open too. Ask questions. Learn something new. Be inspired to act. Because the future is not written. We are writing it – here, together.

Thank you.