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## **Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development**

### **Network of Contact Parliamentarians for a healthy environment**

## **A safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment: a universal human right**

### **Statement by the PACE Network of Contact Parliamentarians for a Healthy Environment**

1. Marking Earth Day on 22 April, and on the #RoadToReykjavik, in the run-up to the Council of Europe's Summit of Heads of State and Government on 16-17 May, the Network of Contact Parliamentarians for a Healthy Environment calls on the leaders of the 46 member States to place the protection of the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment high on their agenda.
2. Amidst all the challenges facing Europe and the world, we cannot afford to put aside or delay the bold measures needed to combat the effects of climate change, pollution and the loss of biodiversity which are threatening our planet and directly affect human health, dignity and life. The right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment must be recognized and protected through national legislation, international law, trade treaties and ambitious policies, coupled with determined political will and leadership. For it is part and parcel of our common commitment to democracy, human rights and the rule of law.
3. As our Assembly pointed out in its [Recommendation 2245](#) (2023) on the Reykjavik Summit, Heads of State and Government should take the lead, on behalf of the Council of Europe, in recognising the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment while supporting the drafting of a legally binding framework to guarantee it. This right must become a part of the Council of Europe's core mandate: Among others, a committee to act as a platform to share information, promote best practice and provide legal advice should be created. 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.
4. Governments should seize this unique opportunity to respond, at the highest political level, to pressing and widespread public demands to tackle the climate crisis and guarantee effective protection of the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.