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PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY– UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE – UNION POUR LA MEDITERRANEE

الجمعية البرلمانية للاتحاد من اجل المتوسط

RECOMMENDATION

of the Committee on Energy, Environment and Water

on

- 1. Measures to Counter the Consequences of Global Warming on the Mediterranean**
- 2. An Action Plan for the Severely Polluted Mediterranean**

Presented by the Committee Chair

Stefan Schennach (Austria)

Measures to Counter the Consequences of Global Warming on the Mediterranean

The Committee on Environment, Energy and Water

- Referring to Articles 2, 3 and 4 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC), decisions 1/CP.16, 2/CP.18, 1/CP.19 and 1/CP.20 of the Conference of the Parties;
- Welcoming the draft decisions FCCC/CP/2015/13 and 15 on the call on the Parties that have not yet done so and to the operating entities of the financial mechanism and any other organizations in a position to do so to contribute urgently and in advance of the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties (November 2016) to achieving the objective as set out in the Art.2 of the Convention;
- Also welcoming the draft decision FCCC/CP/2015/17 that notes the requirement of much greater emission reduction efforts than the intended nationally determined contributions in order to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1,5°C above pre-industrial levels;
- Acknowledging that the Mediterranean Sea, one of the most international waters, bordering nineteen countries and harbouring more than 100.000 species, is a vital source of food and income;
- Emphasizing that the Mediterranean coast is highly vulnerable to sea level rise from global warming due to the elevation of its coastal vegetation and decisions to prevent the loss of sediment and wetland is an urgent issue;
- Stressing that the recovery of the Mediterranean seabed from pollution would take more than a century due to its geography and that the increasing sediment and wetland deficit affects the ecosystem functioning as well as food production;
- Noting the ongoing actions and studies of the Eco-Towns Network, Horizon 2020, MedPAN, Let's Do It Mediterranean! (LDIM), which have been permanent members of the Committee since the Zagreb meeting in 2014, towards a green economy and a clean environment in the Mediterranean Region;
- Having regard that the objective of Agency REMPEC is to contribute to preventing and reducing pollution from ships, to strengthen the capacities of the Mediterranean Countries to protect marine environment from ship pollution, to assist the coastal States in cases of emergency or incidents;
- Having regard that European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) is charged with the prevention of and response to sea pollution, with ship monitoring and identification, with control inspections of ships in EU ports, with control of national systems of vessel traffic monitoring, with rendering collection and treatment of waste in EU ports, and with supporting maritime security and investigations in accident events

1. Reiterates its call on the Member States to cooperate and foster comprehensive action for the purpose of reducing the consequences of global warming in full compliance with FCCC decisions;
2. Encourages the federal governments and local authorities to establish “waste recycling centres”, thus to be role-models for the public and private sectors;
3. Urges the governmental and local authorities to promote thermal and non-thermal technologies to convert waste into energy;
4. Calls on the local and governmental authorities to promote and improve investments in waste water management;
5. Reiterates, in the context of climate change, the necessity of policy changes and the adoption of legal frameworks towards environmentally compatible infrastructures and measures to promote investment in, production of, and consumption of renewable energy;
6. Emphasises accelerating the adoption of policies towards energy efficiency by way of countering obstacles to investments in the renewable energy sector, especially taking into account falling fossil fuel prices;
7. Calls on Member States to support the initiatives of the Eco-Towns Network, Horizon 2020, MedPAN, Let’s Do It Mediterranean! (LDIM) by way of providing financial resources and taking other necessary measures to support their studies.

An Action Plan for the Severely Polluted Mediterranean

The Committee on Environment, Energy and Water

- Owing to its already precarious water replenishment and renewal possibilities, the Mediterranean Sea is subject to massive environmental pressure from man-made sources, which may in the short run overwhelm its ecosystem with irreversible aftermath on the economies and on the security and stability of all coastal states;
- This pressure stems from a series of causes, of which the following are particularly noteworthy:
 - a) maritime transportation of pollutants and hazardous materials, most notably 400 million tonnes of hydrocarbons (25% of global trade), carried by over 300 daily tanker transits whose routine discharges, barring the serious threat of potential accidents, further aggravate a situation in which the Mediterranean has the world’s largest volume of hydrocarbons (30mlg per cubic metre of seawater compared with the global average of 5-7mlg per cubic metre);
 - b) fresh water courses emptying into the sea, laden with chemical and bacterial municipal, industrial, agricultural and livestock waste;
 - c) direct and often untreated discharges from large urban and industrial sites;
 - d) dumping at sea of non-biodegradable material (e.g. plastic);

- This pressure is certainly bound to increase:
 - a) as a result of the socio-economic development of many areas, either coastal or any way connected to the sea;
 - b) specifically in relation to transport, as a result of the recent doubling of the Suez Canal;
 - c) in terms of the presence of hydrocarbons, as a consequence of numerous new drilling concessions or extensions of existing ones, issued by many states in relation to the territorial seabed;
 - d) in terms of biodiversity, as a consequence of genetic mutations and the mutation of native species following the doubling of the Suez Canal,
 - e) in terms of the integrity and value of the seabed's and fish spawning grounds, as a result of the use of explosives for prospection and exploration of hydrocarbons

- This pressure might be fatally aggravated in case of drilling accidents, thus leading to the rapid disappearance of every form of biodiversity in the Mediterranean and the consequent shutdown of such important economic activities as fishing and tourism;
- The Protocols for implementing the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution (Barcelona Convention), adopted as part of the Plan of Action for the Mediterranean by 22 coastal states in 1976 as amended in 1995 and renamed Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean have not been fully ratified by all the parliaments of the signatory States as yet;
- The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean must in fact be deemed effective and binding on all governments since 2004 following the ratification of the first six signatory states;
- The Convention and its implementing protocols make provisions for the adoption of coordinated monitoring and action by signatory states, in order to prevent and solve environmental emergencies in the Mediterranean;
- The Convention envisages the establishment and actual completion of international protected marine areas for which the United Nations post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda has set the goal of extending the world's total protected marine and coastal areas by at least 10 per cent by 2020;

Commits UfM Member States and their Governments

8. to ensure that all signatory states of the Barcelona Convention, its amendments and implementing protocols, immediately ratify such instruments, thereby taking on their obligations;

9. to take steps in order to ensure that all coastal states and all states belonging to the Mediterranean area accede to the Convention in order to complete the international legal system created by the Plan for the Mediterranean;

10. to regulate the discharge of rivers into the sea without reducing their outflow rate and to meet the minimum agreed requirements regulating the treatment of water and municipal and industrial waste;

11. to bring into operational effect the national and international marine and coastal areas, and to promote the establishment of new such areas consistently with the provisions of the United Nations post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda;
 12. to design a common, shared and binding Environmental Impact Assessment model for the issuing of concessions for offshore hydrocarbon prospection, exploration and exploitation, and in the wind energy sector, so as to ensure protection of the maritime environment as a whole, and in particular prohibit the installation of wind turbines near protected marine and coastal areas, in order to comply with the principles of liability, accountability and the provision of guarantees and payment of compensation for any environmental damage caused by the use of such concessions;
 13. to enforce polluter pays agreements also with the owners of the cargo rather than merely with the carrier of hydrocarbons, as is the case today. This would encourage all companies to use specialised carriers with state-of-the-art equipment, rather than unseaworthy vessels;
 14. under the leadership of Egypt and the Suez Canal Authority, to promote and support an Agency to monitor, prevent and mitigate the impact on the Mediterranean marine ecosystem from the doubling of the Suez Canal;
 15. to draft through the UfM, a “Mediterranean Code”, to be adopted by all countries in the broader Mediterranean basin, in order to protect and enhance the marine resource in the interest of the peoples around it and their future generations;
 16. and also commits the signatory states to the Barcelona Convention to fully implement all the provisions of the Convention and its Protocols, including:
 - a) the establishment and activation of a joint operational agency to monitor sea traffic compliance with environmental rules, to provide prompt response in the event of emergencies, to impose penalties on bad practices through the existing agencies: REMPEC (Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea) and EMSA (European Maritime Safety Agency);
 - b) to equip their main ports with facilities to wash the holds of merchant ships and to ensure that all waste water and bilge water is properly treated, so as to put an end to the bad practice of washing out the bilges and discharging bilge water at sea while sailing.
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2015-2016 Activity Report

The Committee on Energy, Environment and Water held meetings in Vienna on 19 October 2015 and in Tangier on 28 May 2016.

During the meeting in Vienna the discussion focused on:

- The refugee tragedy and its challenges for local authorities
- Increasing environmental challenges for the Mediterranean
- International cooperation in the field of energy and sustainability
- Improving access to sustainable energy

The meeting was followed by an excursion on 20 October 2015 including a visit to a Higher Technical Institute with a special programme for renewables, a district cooling centre as well as the “Wind2Hydrogen” project.