

Parliamentary Assembly-Union for the Mediterranean Committee of Energy, Environment and Water

Recommendations

on

Water, Energy and Infrastructure: the Impact of Refugees on the host countries

and

Pollution in the Mediterranean

The Committee of Energy, Environment and Water in the Parliamentary Assembly Union for the Mediterranean considers that:

1. 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 an irreversible aftermath on the economies, 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, 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;
- b)** Fresh water courses emptying into the sea, laden with chemical (including medicinal and antibiotic) 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, namely plastic, which represents almost 75% of all marine litter (it is estimated that in the Mediterranean there are 250 billion of plastic fragments);

2. It further notes the water pollution and its scarcity around the Mediterranean;

3. Considers that renewable energy projects assist in creating a clean environment;

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4. Notes that large numbers of refugees in host countries result in pressure on infrastructure facilities such as energy, water, education and health services;
5. Emphasizes that consideration must be given to the projects that serve the refugees in host countries, for example water and renewable energy;
6. Considers that energy and environment are two interwoven topics in the global agenda - thus of the UfM - and at the same time have great potential solutions to sustainable growth, social and economic development of the region. The connection of these topics should be further emphasized both for the improvement of steps taken and during the consideration of future environment-friendly infrastructural projects and actions;
7. Notes that 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. It is further noted that:
- 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.

Recognizing the above, the Committee:

1. Calls on member states to cooperate on and support a comprehensive action plan aimed at reducing the impact of refugees on infrastructure;
2. Encourages governments to set up urgent projects for the purpose of solving water problems and promoting water management investments, including participation in water desalination projects using renewable energy in refugee host countries, and to

encourage the establishment of water desalination units and water distribution networks, and to protect against water loss in the Mediterranean countries;

3. Suggests a concept of partnership between the public and private sectors for finance and investment in renewable and water desalination domains, whilst safeguarding its character as a public good of general interest;
4. Invites the institutions of the Union for the Mediterranean to provide the required support for the refugees in the Mediterranean countries and to assist in bearing the additional burdens shouldered by the host countries. The committee urges the authorities as well as local and national institutions to cooperate with refugee host countries through means of political, technical and financial support;
5. Encourages the Mediterranean countries to set up a strategy and a coordination plan for energy on both national and regional levels in order to meet the Mediterranean region objectives, including climate change and to provide opportunities of different technologies to produce renewable energy from wind energy in concerned countries;
6. Encourages the fostering of co-operation with the other committees, such as the joint initiative (Position paper on "Tourism in the Mediterranean") with the Committee on Economy and Education, to raise the level of synergy established and to embed an outcome-oriented agenda;
7. In the framework of the outcomes of the UfM Ministerial Conference on Water of 27 April 2017, recommends to review the commitment to national and regional water policy frameworks, and to reinforce scientific studies for the protection of water and marine environment with a view to improving and maintaining the source of income and life in the region. To this end, invites to promote support to the PRIMA program, and develop dialogue with the stakeholders especially through members of the committee - if any - from the states participating in the programme.

The Committee also recommends:

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- 8.** To adopt measures to counteract the increase in marine litter, especially plastic waste, through policies aimed at reducing litter and promoting the use of biodegradable material; incentives to the elimination of already existing marine litter; the use of marine litter to reinforce dune systems; the tracking of marine litter in order to identify its origin and to pursue the global sharing of clean-up costs; the inclusion of marine litter elimination as a compensation measure for land affected by infrastructure works, e.g. gas pipelines;
- To promote public awareness of the damage caused by marine litter and dissemination of good practices such as the use of natural fiber clothes, which do not release microplastic into the sea during washing; the reduction of disposable objects, i.e. plastic bags; the identification of sites where marine litter builds up in the coasts and on the sea-beds;
- To apply as a general rule the precautionary principle, which requires suspending any actions in the absence of specific knowledge on the impact of potentially hazardous measures on environmental integrity;
- 9.** 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 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;
- 10.** To ensure that all signatory states of the Barcelona Convention, its amendments and implementing protocols, immediately ratify such instruments, thereby taking on their obligations;
- 11.** To draft through the UfM, a “Mediterranean Code”, to be adopted by all countries in the broader Mediterranean basin, in order to protect and make sustainable use of the marine resources in the interest of the inhabitants around it and their future generations;



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

L'ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DE L'UNION POUR LA MEDITERRANEE

Parliamentary Assembly of the
Union For the Mediterranean

الجمعية البرلمانية للاتحاد من اجل المتوسط



The Hashemite Kingdom
Of Jordan

12. To continue to follow up on what has been achieved in the committee's previous action,
with plans such as:

- Med Pan
- Horizon 2020
- Let's Do it Mediterranean
- Eco Towns.