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Noise pollution and the environment

Motion for a resolution
presented by Mr Huss and others

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members who have signed it

Noise pollution includes noise from various sources with consequences ranging from passing annoyance to serious repercussions on ecosystems and people's quality of life.

There are many causes of noise pollution: mobile mechanical sources (in particular motor vehicles and aircraft); intermittent mechanical sources (machines, factories, etc); works, building sites and other sites, whether temporary or lasting (quarries); public events and demonstrations (which may be one-off or, occasionally, ongoing); parties, fireworks, festivals, concerts and sports stadia; animal sources (dogs barking, farms, animal shelters, etc); neighbours (poor sound insulation in buildings, lawnmowers, children, alarms going off for no reason); personal stereos and mobile telephones on public transport, and so on.

Noise pollution has a variety of consequences for ecosystems and animal species, ranging from depopulation resulting from migration to increased mortality. Noise is often an ecological barrier which, although intangible, creates areas that are unsuited to the lifestyles of numerous species or are simply not conducive to their moving about and/or reproducing. For example, studies carried out along motorways in Britain have shown that songbirds are gradually dying out over a band some two to four kilometres wide.

Noise pollution seems to be stabilising in the rich countries, but it is growing fast in developing countries. It is a factor that disturbs species and affects at least 70% of urban green spaces and private gardens, as well as the natural areas bordering main roads.

Many countries already have legislation restricting noise to a level which may vary according to the time of day. Special noise abatement measures may be taken (for example, restrictions on the noise level permitted during concerts). International pictograms (the "Quiet - Hospital" sign was a precursor) are beginning to appear.

The Assembly invites the governments of Council of Europe member states to endeavour to agree on a common approach to combating the harmful effects of noise pollution on the environment and people's quality of life, in particular by:

- determining noise pollution levels by means of standard evaluation methods;
- informing the public about noise pollution and its effects on the environment;
- adopting action plans to prevent and, where necessary, reduce noise pollution, particularly in cities, along main roads and near major airports.

Signed (see overleaf)

*Signed*¹:

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¹ SOC: Socialist Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democratic Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: not registered in a group