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Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

Network of Contact Parliamentarians for a healthy environment

Work draft programme (2022-2023)

Prepared and revised by the Secretariat

I. Introductory remarks and mission statement

1. In its Resolution 2396 (2021), the Assembly notes that the United Nations (UN), in its studies and resolutions on human rights and the environment, mainly refers to the human rights obligations linked to the enjoyment of “a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment”

2. With the adoption of Resolution 2399 (2021) on the “Climate crisis and the rule of law”, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has equipped itself with a tool -the Parliamentarian Network- which calls for the broadening of the Human Rights Convention and the European Social Charter to strengthen the link between environment and the human rights.

3. The functioning of the Network is set out in its terms of reference, adopted on 1 December 2021 by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development.

4. The Network’s mission is “to inspire and follow the action taken by the national authorities to honour the strong commitments they have made vis-à-vis the climate crisis while fostering the mutual enrichment of ideas and setting up regular opportunities for parliamentarians in Europe and on other continents to pool their experience.”

5. In its conclusions,¹ the European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments clearly stated: “The link between human rights and the environment is evident to us all. We therefore welcome the Parliamentary Assembly’s intention to set up a parliamentary network in January 2022 to ensure the necessary political support and parliamentary input by representative democracy. This network will seek to inspire and follow the action taken by the national authorities to honour the strong commitments they have made vis-à-vis the climate crisis, while fostering the mutual enrichment of ideas and setting up regular opportunities for parliamentarians in Europe and on other continents to pool their experience. It will serve as an essential link to national parliaments, and we are looking forward to parliaments and interparliamentary Assemblies appointing contact parliamentarians next year. We also noted with interest the idea put forward by our Georgian colleague to link up environmental committees across our national parliaments. Let’s move forward together with young people, from policy to principle, and from responsibility to accountability.”

II. Composition of the Network

6. The terms of reference specify the composition of the Network as follows:

- In respect of the 47 member States of the Council of Europe: one member of parliament for each unicameral parliament, and one member of each Chamber for bicameral parliaments, appointed by the national parliament or chamber respectively.
- In respect of the parliaments with Observer or Partner for Democracy status with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe: one member of parliament for each

¹ Athens, 21-22 October 2021

unicameral parliament, and one member of each Chamber for bicameral parliaments, appointed by the national parliament or chamber respectively.

- One member each appointed by the European Parliament, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie.
- One member each appointed by the following Committees of the Parliamentary Assembly:
 - Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy
 - Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights
 - Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons
 - Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media
 - Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination
- One associate member appointed by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.
- The members of the Bureau of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, the chairpersons of political groups and the immediate past President of the Assembly, shall be ex officio members of the Network.

III. Operation of the Network

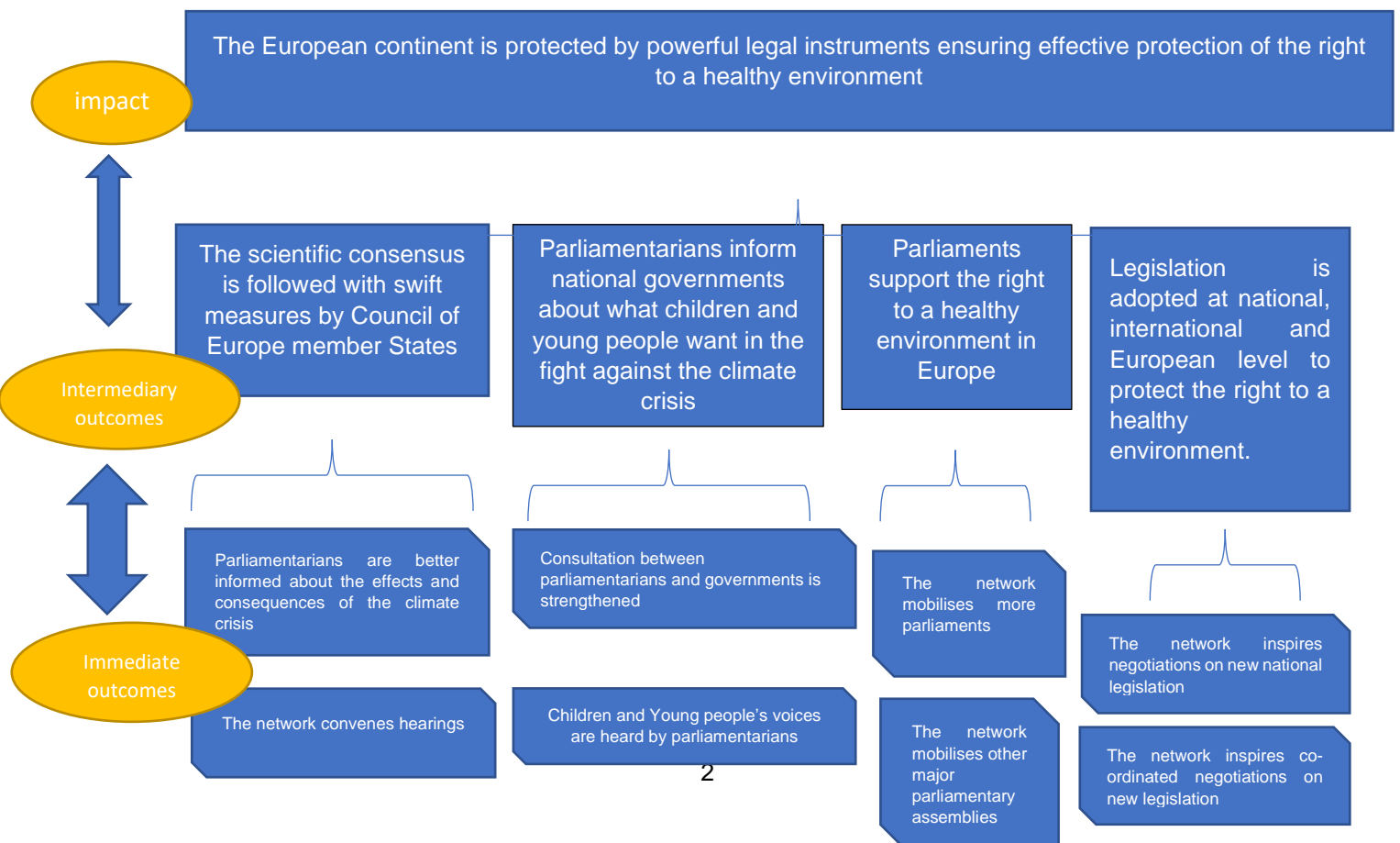
7. The Network has to elect its President at its April 2022 meeting for a two-year term as well as a Vice-President. Together, they constitute its Bureau, in the same way as a Sub-Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly.

8. The Network secretariat is provided by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

9. The Network of Contact Parliamentarians for a healthy environment will be launched on 27 January 2022, with Mr Rik Daems, former President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (2020-21) in the chair.

IV. Project description

Summary



Expected results of the project

10. The European continent is protected by powerful legal instruments ensuring effective protection of the environment by the system of human rights. Some of the tools are open to countries in other continents.

11. All Council of Europe member countries have ratified the Paris Agreement. According to the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), the decade that began in 2020 is decisive for implementing an alternative scenario to the climate crisis. Parliamentarians are called on to contribute to the efforts and ensure that future generations are adequately protected. In Recommendation 2211 (2021), the Assembly called on the Committee of Ministers to draw up an additional protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Social Charter on the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. It also called on it to launch the preparation of a feasibility study for a "5P" convention on environmental threats and technological hazards threatening human health, dignity and life. In addition, it recommended that Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)3 on human rights and business be revised.

12. The development of the network is covered within the limits of the Parliamentary Assembly project funded by voluntary contributions (VC 2517) during its implementation (31 December 2023). If necessary, a stand-alone project could emerge.

13. The document takes into account the proposals of the members made on the occasion of the first meeting of the network, during the plenary part session of January 2022.

Intermediate results:

The scientific consensus is followed with swift measures by Council of Europe member States

Parliamentarians inform national governments about what children and young people want in the fight against the climate crisis

Parliaments support the right to a healthy environment in Europe

Legislation is adopted at national, international and European (EU and Council of Europe) level to protect the right to a healthy environment.

Immediate results

- Parliamentarians are better informed about the effects and consequences of the climate crisis

The network holds hearings

- Consultation between parliamentarians and governments is strengthened

Children and Young people's voices are heard by parliamentarians

- The network mobilises more national parliaments

The network mobilises other major parliamentary assemblies

- The network inspires negotiations on new national legislation

The network inspires co-ordinated negotiations on new legislation

Proposed activities:

- The newsletter is sent out every six months.

Details of information monitoring and exchanges of best practices between members are forwarded monthly. Each year, members select the best initiative and award the Special Prize of the Network of Parliamentarians.

A newsfeed between members is set up.

The Network chooses a logo and adopts a communication strategy for its members.

A time for discussion is foreseen during each plenary session to share the activities of the Network and of the fight against the climate crisis.

Exchanges of views are held online between members and with experts on planned topics, depending on current developments.

- Parliamentarians raise issues with governments, in a concerted manner, during the same week on the occasion of an Accountability Day.

The voice of children and young people is heard on a broad and long-term basis allowing the collection of diverse expression, followed individually by the members and collectively by the Network. The members support environmental and biodiversity education by adapting the Assembly's reports.

- A handbook on engaging parliamentarians is prepared and shared. It provides the necessary capacities to promote the set-up and implementation of the Assembly's Resolutions and Recommendations.

Awareness-raising activities are carried out to promote the right to a healthy environment among parliaments, in particular through the preparation of binding legal tools. They aim, among other things, to set up a network of defenders of future generations. (ombudsman)

Awareness-raising activities are carried out to promote the right to a healthy environment among the general public

- Ambitious and enhanced dialogue at national level based on sharing of best practices

The protection of vulnerable people is emphasised at national level

Ambitious and enhanced international dialogue based on sharing of best practices and co-operation with the UN, the IPU and other parliamentary assemblies

The protection of vulnerable people is emphasised at international level

Co-operation between national parliamentary committees on the environment is strengthened

Furthermore, the carbon footprint of the activities of the Network is as far as possible compensated in accordance with the decision of the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly.

V. Project progress indicators

The composition of the Bureau takes into consideration the gender equality as well as a broad geographic and political representativity (one chair and one vice chair)

The number of Network members increases.

The number of countries represented increases.

Press articles, social media presence

Number of meetings, origin, quality and number of experts heard, number of participants.

VI. Calendar of activities

- April part-session 2022 of the Assembly, 25-29 April 2022, Strasbourg
- Thursday, 19 May 2022, Paris (Council of Europe Office)
- October part-session 2022 of the Assembly, 10-14 October 2022, Strasbourg
- *2023 dates to be decided*

Appendixes:

- Terms of Reference of the Network, as adopted on 1 December 2021
- List of the main texts adopted by PACE on the environment before 2022
- Link to the page [#EnvironmentRightNow: a PACE initiative](#)

The Network of Contact Parliamentarians for a healthy environment

Terms of reference

In accordance with Resolution 2399 (2021) on “the climate crisis and the rule of law”, the Network of Contact Parliamentarians for a healthy environment of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe shall be constituted in the January 2022 part-session of the Assembly under the auspices of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development.

The terms of reference of the network were adopted by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe at its meeting on 1 December 2021 for transmission to the Bureau of the Assembly.

Aim of the Network of Contact Parliamentarians

1. In accordance with Resolution 2399 (2021) on “the climate crisis and the rule of law”, it is the task of the Network “to inspire and follow the action taken by the national authorities to honour the strong commitments they have made vis-à-vis the climate crisis while fostering the mutual enrichment of ideas and setting up regular opportunities for parliamentarians in Europe and on other continents to pool their experience.”

Composition of the Network of Contact Parliamentarians

2. The Network shall be composed of:

2.1. In respect of the 47 member States of the Council of Europe: one member of parliament for each unicameral parliament, and one member of each Chamber for bicameral parliaments, appointed by the national parliament or chamber respectively.

2.2. In respect of the parliaments with Observer or Partner for Democracy status with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe: one member of parliament for each unicameral parliament, and one member of each Chamber for bicameral parliaments, appointed by the national parliament or chamber respectively.

2.3. One member each appointed by the European Parliament, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie.

2.4. One member each appointed by the following Committees of the Parliamentary Assembly:

- Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy
- Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights
- Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons
- Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media
- Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

2.5. One associate member appointed by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

3. The members of the Bureau of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, the chairpersons of political groups and the immediate past President of the Assembly, shall be *ex officio* members of the Network.

Working methods of the Network of Contact Parliamentarians

4. In terms of the application of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly, the Network shall be assimilated to a Sub-Committee of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development. All members of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development shall be entitled to attend the Network’s meetings.

5. The working languages of the Network shall be English and French.

6. The Network shall hold its first meeting during the January 2022 part-session of the Assembly, with the immediate past President of the Assembly in the Chair and shall elect its Bureau at its second meeting during the April part-session of the Assembly.
7. In fulfilling its task set out in paragraph 1 of these terms of reference, the Network shall be inspired by international and European treaties, declarations, and reports (including the Assembly's #EnvironmentRightNow initiative), the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and the texts adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly, in particular those related to the environment adopted during the Autumn 2021 part-session.
8. The Network may co-operate with parliamentarians and national parliaments outside of Europe, as well as parliamentary networks and regional and international parliamentary assemblies.
9. The Network shall endeavour to limit its environmental impact so as to enhance its sustainability.

List of the main texts adopted by PACE in the field of environment and sustainable development (2016-2022)

2022:

- [Resolution 2415](#) and [Recommandation 2219](#) (2022)
Inaction on climate change – a violation of children's rights
Rapporteur: Ms Jennifer De Temmerman, France, ALDE

2021:

- [Resolution 2399](#) and [Recommendation 2214](#) (2021)
The climate crisis and the rule of law
Rapporteur: Ms Edite Estrela, Portugal, SOC
- [Resolution 2396](#) and [Recommendation 2211](#) (2021)
Anchoring the right to a healthy environment: need for enhanced action by the Council of Europe
Rapporteur: Mr Simon Moutquin, Belgium, SOC
- [Resolution 2401](#) (2021)
Climate and migrations
Rapporteur: Mr Pierre-Alain Fridez, Switzerland, SOC
- [Resolution 2397](#) and [Recommendation 2212](#) (2021)
More participatory democracy to tackle climate change
Rapporteur: Mr George Papandreou, Greece, SOC
- [Resolution 2398](#) and [Recommendation 2213](#) (2021)
Addressing issues of criminal and civil liability in the context of climate change
Rapporteur: Mr Ziya Altunyaldiz, Turkey, SOC
- [Resolution 2402](#) and [Recommendation 2215](#) (2021)
Research policies and environment protection
Rapporteur: Mr Olivier Becht, France, ALDE
- [Resolution 2400](#) (2021)
Combating inequalities in the right to a safe, healthy and clean environment
Rapporteur: Ms Edite Estrela, Portugal, SOC

2020-2016:

- [Resolution 2329](#) and [Recommendation 2174](#) (2020)
Lessons for the future from an effective and rights-based response to the Covid-19 pandemic
Rapporteur: Mr Andrej Hunko, Germany, UEL
- [Resolution 2307](#) (2019) **A legal status for “climate refugees”**
Rapporteur: Ms Marie-Christine Verdier-Jouclas, France, ALDE
- [Resolution 2285](#) (2019) **Sustainable urban development fostering social inclusion**
Rapporteur: Ms Sybille Benning, Germany, EPP/CD
- [Resolution 2286](#) (2019) **Air pollution: a challenge for public health in Europe**
Rapporteur: Mr Serhii Kiral, Ukraine, EC/DA
- [Resolution 2272](#) (2019) **Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: synergy needed on the part of all stakeholders, from parliaments to local authorities**
Rapporteur: Ms Jennifer De Temmerman, France, NR
- [Resolution 2241](#) (2018) **Nuclear safety and security in Europe**
Rapporteur: Ms Emine Nur Günay, Turkey, EC/DA
- [Resolution 2210](#) (2018) **Climate change and implementation of the Paris Agreement**
Rapporteur: Lord John Prescott, United Kingdom, SOC
- [Resolution 2152](#) (2017)
“New generation” trade agreements and their implications for social rights, public health and sustainable development
Rapporteur: Mr Geraint Davies, United Kingdom, SOC
- [Resolution 2140](#) (2016)
The exploration and exploitation of non-conventional hydrocarbons in Europe
Rapporteur: Mr Geraint Davies, United Kingdom, SOC
- [Resolution 2115](#) (2016) **Forced migration: a new challenge**
Rapporteur: Mr Philippe Bies, France, SOC