



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF FORMER MEMBERS
OF PARLIAMENT OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE
COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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**INFLUENCES OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON MIGRATION AND SOCIAL
POLICY: ROLE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY**

LUGANO DECLARATION

*Adopted unanimously by the delegates representing the members of the
European Association of Former Members of Parliament of the
Member States of the Council of Europe*

1. We former parliamentarians underline the relevance of the contribution of parliamentary diplomacy in the ongoing Global and European climate negotiations to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change, to complement and support the efforts of national governments and international organizations. Beyond classic diplomacy, the Parliamentary Diplomacy denotes the means through which parliamentarians and parliaments of different levels conduct dialogues and serve as intermediaries to contribute to improving foreign policy and relations, solving key international important and complicated issues and topics, such as climate change migration or war and peace, and encouraging one another to cultivate enhanced control of governments and democratic legitimacy of intergovernmental bodies.
2. Climate change has always had an influence on migratory phenomena of species, ecosystems and biological communities of departure, transit (or transits) and provisional (more or less) destination and the social evolution of the human species; in turn, our species has influenced the climate and migrated with an ever greater degree of freedom. That is why parliamentary delegation trips should also always take into account the aspect of climate.
3. Climate change and migration are closely linked; global anthropogenic climatic changes (affecting all countries) have multiple effects on the social and cultural biodiversity of the planet (in particular for the effects on water and on the various water cycles), they determine new forced migratory flows, they cause new inequalities (the impact is no longer strong where the human contribution to climate change has been most relevant), and they affect every social policy, and therefore also constitute an important field of parliamentary diplomacy.
4. Outcomes of climate-related migration are highly variable, with socioeconomic factors and household resources affecting migration success; displacement or low-agency migration is associated with poor health, well-being and socioeconomic outcomes for migrants and yields fewer benefits to sending or receiving communities; involuntary migration occurs when adaptation alternatives are exhausted or not viable and reflects non-climatic factors that constrain adaptive capacity and create high levels of exposure and vulnerability.
5. In addition of the high number of Refugees registered in the 1951 Convention for political reasons there are now more and more climate displaced people (refugees for natural-driven reasons) and fleeing migrants (there is no internationally legally recognized definition) who leave their own country to find a new, better life in another, as well as war refugees. All of them in need for adequate assistance and a chance to start afresh. We acknowledge that after

Second World War the term *Refugee* is reserved to people enshrined in the Geneva Convention and in the UN Resolution 302 (IV) of 1949 only; according to the UNHCR Global Trend 2023 there are in the 2022 world 35,3 million Refugees, under UNHCR's mandate or UNRWA's (UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East); others are referred to as *asylum-seekers* (5,4 million) or as *displaced people*, either internal (registered and supported by UN institutions) or internationally (partially safeguarded people by 2018 Global Compacts or other conventions) to achieve adequate burden and responsibility sharing on refuge issues among all UN members.

6. Another group can be described using the adjective connected to global human induced climate changes; *environmental displaced people* and *climate international refugees* are those who suffer from the consequences of global warming with extreme unexpected events or slower processes (more frequent and intense extreme weather events, sea level rise, water stress) without being responsible for it through emissions; they are people currently lacking any kind of international protection; in particular, the sea level rise will also affect the coasts of many European countries, perhaps forcing the occurrence of IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) and internal migration and relocation plans. The institutional international instruments to manage migration flows must be found immediately, also by implementing the two *Global Compacts for Migration and on Refugees*.
7. Parliamentary Diplomacy is certainly not an alternative to classical diplomacy, but constitutes a good complement to foreign policy and creates the necessary parliamentary control mechanism for supranational structures and organizations, such as the European Union, the African Union, the North Atlantic Pact, the Council of Europe or the OSCE.
8. By also acknowledging that parliamentarians constitute several advantages because they have their finger on the pulse of the population, are freer and more independent, and represent a wider political spectrum, and Parliamentary Diplomacy (PD) actors include national and international parliaments, their committees, delegations, friendship groups, inter-parliamentary dialogues and individual parliamentarians,
the PD can improve the following:
 - I. Promote the *understanding* of contemporary migratory phenomena: no European country is ever just a destination for immigration, all countries were and are also countries of emigration in the past and in the present, from exchanges and partnerships there can be collective and individual benefits and from immigration there can be help to limit and prevent the ongoing demographic decline.

- II. Ask for a greater commitment to practically and promptly achieve the objectives of the *UN 2030 Agenda*: such as peace, resilience, health, gender equality, youth and the relevance of international migration to the development of countries of origin, transit and destination, with a general emphasis on greater coherence of action and the development of joint evaluation approaches (e.g. between the EU and Africa).
 - III. Underline the links between biodiversity, climate change and the fight against desertification, taking into account the balance of ecosystems, for example with assisted reintroduction, translocation and *migration of species*: assisted migration and evolution might reduce extirpation and extinction.
 - IV. Facilitate and accelerate the *intergovernmental climate negotiation* within the UN, suggesting that it also address more and better the issue of human "climate" migration as mentioned in the 2015 Paris Agreement.
 - V. Promote national, bilateral, European and multilateral policies for the implementation of the two agreements approved by the UN at the end of 2018, *Global Compacts*, for "*safe, orderly and regular migration*", *interest of both non-European immigrants and European citizens*.
 - VI. Promote *awareness* that Europe can certainly benefit from non-European migrants to secure needed jobs - provided they are enabled and promote mutual respect for the cultures, traditions and customs of the countries of origin and destination in a balanced manner taking into account the universal human rights; for only if we succeed in achieving mutual cohesion in this way will the benefits of such increased immigration be secured.
 - VII. Mitigate the negative impact of climate change on *social inequalities* promoting policies designed to prevent the need for displacement; policies that regulate and manage the process of displacement; and policies that address the health-care needs of migrants
 - VIII. Demands that official bodies be supported with sufficient *financial funding* to provide migrants with appropriate language training before departure and after arrival, as well as teaching about social norms and customs in the country of destination, including the elimination of nationalist, racist as well as misogynist and xenophobic content in school textbooks.
 - IX. Mitigate the impact of population movements within each single country and between the *countries of the European Union*, in particular those forced by the main effects of global anthropogenic climate change (rising seas, water change and growth of the phenomena of scarcity of water, increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events).
9. Governments and parliaments must strengthen social cohesion with due regard to distributive justice. Policies in order to strengthen citizens' confidence in democracy have to be implemented.