



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONFERENCE DES OING DU
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

"Climate Change and Human Rights"

Recommendation of the Conference of INGOs¹ of the Council of Europe
*for the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP24)
to be held in Katowice, Poland, from 3 to 14 December 2018*

Alarmed by the violence, the diversity and impact of climatic disturbances, which are becoming more intense and more widespread;

Alarmed by the conclusions of the last report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Climate Change, adopted on 8 October 2018 by the delegations of State Parties in Incheon (South Korea), which makes the future of the planet more dependent than ever on decisions related to human activity, and by the absolute silence of political leaders regarding this report;

Concerned by the inability of the signatory States to the Paris Agreement (2015) to implement their commitment to maintain or reduce their own GHG emissions in order to achieve the overall target of +2°, which is reduced again today;

Being aware of the difficulties of the drafting and future implementation of the Rule Book of the above Agreement by numerous signatory states with their very diverse levels of political, economic and social development as well as a very uneven level of awareness and regulation of human rights;

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Considering the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948, whose 70th anniversary will coincide with COP24;

Considering the specific reference to human rights in the Stockholm (1972) and Rio (1992 and 2012) Earth Summits ;

Considering that the United Nations Framework Agreement on Climate Change adopted in Rio in 1992 stipulates that "*The Parties should protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind, on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities*";

Recalling that the Millennium Development Goals state that those concerning health and environmental protection can be achieved while guaranteeing human rights; that the development goals 13-16 are focussed on environment and climate questions and

¹ Conference gathering 307 international NGOs having participatory status with the Council of Europe

that the COP23 decision 3 recommends an equal representation of women and men on all levels of decision making and of the fight against climate change ;

Considering the principles and values promoted by the Council of Europe, through its founding text, the European Convention on Human Rights (1950), but also through the European Social Charter (1996), the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979) and the European Landscape Convention (2000);

Considering the Recommendation CM/Rec(2002)1 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent;

Recalling the Recommendation 1885(2009) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on the drafting of an additional protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights concerning the right to a healthy environment;

Appreciating that public access to information and justice and public participation in decision-making, recognised in principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on the Environment and Development as essential human rights, have been formalised in the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention, 1998);

Considering the Guidelines CM(2017)83 on civil participation in political decision-making of 27 September 2017 and Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)4 of 21 March 2018 adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on citizens' participation in public life at local level;

Supporting the statement of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment of 8 October 2018 at the date of the publication of the latest IPCC report that: "*Climate change is considered to be one of the greatest threats to human rights... It has and will have devastating effects on a wide range of human rights, including the right to life, health, food, housing and water, as well as the right to a healthy environment.*";

Considering the above-mentioned report, which recalls the absolute urgency of respecting the Paris Agreements to keep the increase in global temperature below 1.5°;

The NGOs with participatory status with the Council of Europe:

- **affirm** the utmost importance of placing climate change at the top of the agenda in order to ensure the future of humanity and the planet;
- **are convinced** that the necessary and urgent solutions can only be found by involving the whole of civil society at all levels of mobilisation and decision-making;
- **demand** that international negotiations go beyond the strict context of greenhouse gas reductions and include the protection of the fundamental rights of all human beings, taking into account the impact of all phenomena related to climate change on the enjoyment of these rights;

- **demand** that respect for the right to life, dignity and mobility include the establishment of international rules that require States and regional institutions such as the EU, regional and local authorities to take immediate consideration of:
 - the threat to habitats, water and food resources from extreme weather events and slow degradation of soils and subsoils;
 - regular assessment of natural and industrial risks aggravated by climate change;
 - prevention of political and social conflicts related to the resulting sharing of resources;
 - admission of populations driven out of their territory by rising water levels, the scarcity of vital goods or the deprivation of essential services;
 - compensation of populations deprived of their property, aid or assistance to these populations;
 - consideration for the poorest and most vulnerable populations, being potentially the most exposed;
- **recommend** that States and regional institutions put in place effective and fair regulatory measures accompanied by financial incentives to achieve the goals set out in the above-mentioned texts.