



**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN**  
**ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA MEDITERRANEE**  
الجمعية البرلمانية للبحر الأبيض المتوسط

**2<sup>nd</sup> Standing Committee on Economic, Social and Environmental Cooperation**

“Failure of the COP25: the need to act”

Rapporteur: Hon. Alain Perea (France)

**Report**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Climate change is posing unprecedented challenges to our planet, and particularly to the Mediterranean basin, which is among the most affected regions in terms of land degradation, extreme weather events and increasing threats to biodiversity.
2. The impact of climate change is threatening the international community at large, and involves each aspect of our societies with, inter-alia, major repercussions on Mediterranean economies. Climate change is a crosscutting challenge which needs to be consciously addressed by everyone at local, regional and international level.
3. In 2020, the Parties of the Paris Agreement will meet again to take stock of the actions taken during the first 5 years since its adoption. Since the Paris’ meeting, climate change effects have continued to worsen, often resulting in major damages through wildfires, flooding, hurricanes, and prolonged period of droughts, among others.
4. In 2019, PAM has continued to monitor and joined discussions and Climate Change negotiations by participating both at the COP25, held in Madrid, and the COP21 Barcelona Convention held in Naples, both in December 2019, with a view to bring to PAM’s Members and their National Parliaments policy responses to climate change, which need to be based on scientific evidence.

**II. GLOBAL TRENDS**

5. Despite science appeals for urgent actions, the efforts made and the strategies adopted by governments until now are far from being adequate to limit the global impact of climate change.
6. First and foremost, oxygen, which is necessary to support life on Earth, makes up about 21% of the air human beings and animals breathe. It is phytoplankton that produces 50 % of it. But to continue doing so, aerobic life requires oxygen to produce energy. Instead, ocean warming is reducing global ocean oxygen, creating some oxygen minimum zones (OMZs), which also impact oceanic commercial fisheries and brings ecosystem-level consequences, for instance leaving coastal economies more vulnerable. Because deoxygenation may have direct economic impacts

on marine resources, it warrants attention by policy-makers, in particular when coupled with warming and acidification of the seas, building up a catastrophic scenario for marine life. Since climate change is the driving cause of ocean deoxygenation, reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is the only real solution.<sup>1</sup>

7. To achieve this, world leading experts on environmental issues encouraged the international community to implement concrete climate adaptation policies to limit the temperature rise to 1.5 Celsius degree by the end of this century. Scientists also called on world leaders to achieve a 45 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and reach carbon neutrality by 2050, giving clear indications on how to achieve these goals.<sup>2</sup>
8. Unfortunately, emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) resulting from human activities are far from reaching the limit recommended by the IPCC special report on “Global warming of 1.5 degree”, and the past four years have been the warmest on record.
9. Awareness is moving some governments to revise their initial climate plans submitted under the Paris Agreement and others to develop their long-term strategies to decarbonize their production systems. Available data<sup>3</sup> reveal that 75 countries decided to pursue adaptation plans (37% of global GHG emissions), 37 countries planned to update their National Determined Contributions (NDCs) with new information (16% of GHG emissions), 71 countries did not make clear whether their NDCs will be revised and how they intend to do so (21% of global GHGs emissions), and 14 countries did not consider to revise their NDCs (26% of global GHGs emissions).
10. In the meanwhile, the surface seawater temperature has recently increased by about 0.4°C per decade. The projections for 2100 vary between +1.8°C and +3.5°C, on average, compared to the period between 1961 and 1990. Sea level also rose at about 3 mm per year during last decades.<sup>4</sup>
11. According to the World Health Organization, climate related illness and death have been steadily raising since 1980, having 30 per cent of the world population living in adverse climatic conditions with deadly temperature experienced, on average, 20 days per year.
12. In parallel, the World Bank indicates that the impact of natural disasters<sup>5</sup> on national economies is having major repercussions on low- and middle- income countries. 18 billion US Dollars per year are spent to recover from extreme weather events damages on power plants and transport infrastructure.<sup>6</sup>
13. On the one hand, as consequence of extreme and unpredictable weather events, the occurrence of bank crisis is also expected to grow from 26 to 248%.<sup>7</sup> In this regard, the UN Secretary General called on Ministers of Finance to develop, before the COP26, country-level plans and fiscal

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<sup>1</sup> Gallo N., ‘Ocean deoxygenation’, *Ocean Scientists for Informed Policy*, <https://www.oceanscientists.org/index.php/topics/ocean-deoxygenation>.

<sup>2</sup> ‘2018: Summary for Policymakers’ in *Global Warming of 1.5°C*, IPCC, [https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/SR15\\_SPM\\_version\\_report\\_LR.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/SR15_SPM_version_report_LR.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> NDC Global Outlook Report 2019, UNDP – United Nations Climate Change.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Risks Associated to Climate and Environmental Changes in the Mediterranean Region’, *MedECC*, [https://www.medecc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/MedECC-Booklet\\_EN\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.medecc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/MedECC-Booklet_EN_WEB.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Quantifying Economic Damages from Climate Change, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*—Volume 32, Number 4—Fall 2018.

<sup>6</sup> Hallegatte, S. and others, *Shock Waves: Managing the Impacts of Climate Change on Poverty*. Climate Change and Development Series. Washington, DC: World Bank. 2016, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/22787/9781464806735.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Lamperti F. and others, The public costs of climate-induced financial instability, *Nature Climate Change*, 29 October 2019, <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-019-0607-5>

policies for economic, technological and energy transitions, which will enable both to reinforce climate resilience and generate substantial economic benefits.

14. On the other hand, economists estimated that it will be possible to unlock over 20 trillion US dollars of economic profits by 2030 from green economy through climate-oriented policies.<sup>8</sup> So far 57 carbon pricing projects, implemented worldwide in 2018, raised 44 billion US Dollars.
15. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) experts demonstrated that, to preserve our planet, fundamental changes in our lives and in each sector of our societies are required, such as in transports, energy production systems, use of lands, food security, waste management and settlements. In this prospect, incentives to climate and smart financial instruments are key to unlock this change, and policymakers are crucial to properly regulate them while facilitating access to available funds.
16. In line with its mandate, PAM contributed to the high-level segment of the UNFCCC COP25 and the Ministerial session of the COP21 UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention, respectively the two major global and regional conferences on 2019 on climate change and protection of the marine environment of the Mediterranean. Whereas, the COP25 meant to render fully operative the Paris agreement, signed in 2015, and addressed key aspects to pave the way forward of the UN climate change process, such as green oriented finance, the transparency of climate action, forests and agriculture, technology, capacity building, loss and damage, indigenous peoples, cities, oceans and gender, with its regional mandate, the COP21 focused on pressing challenges for the Mediterranean basin, including Marine litter, Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), Biodiversity and blue economy.

### **III. THE REGIONAL DIMENSION: THE MEDITERRANEAN IS A CLIMATE HOTSPOT**

17. Scientists have identified the Mediterranean as a climate change hotspot. Despite the efforts made, temperatures have already soared by 1.6 Celsius degree above pre-industrial levels, whilst a peak raise of 2 – 3 degrees is expected by 2050 in the region.<sup>9</sup> Equally, sea temperature is set to raise sharply, with projections for 2100 varying between +1.8°C and +3.5°C, particularly in the Ionian, Aegean and Levantine Seas of the Mediterranean.<sup>10</sup>
18. Furthermore, scientists have noticed a trend towards reduced rainfall in coming decades within the Mediterranean basin. This is worrying when coupled with warming temperatures, as it generates drier conditions and increases the frequency of droughts. With the data at disposal, it is calculated that for each degree of global warming, rainfall will likely decrease by about 4% in much of the region.<sup>11</sup>
19. The Mediterranean Sea and its coastal regions also face significant pollution challenges, being one of the most marine litter-affected areas in the world, with plastics accounting for up to 95%

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<sup>8</sup> Unlocking the inclusive growth story of the 21<sup>st</sup> century: accelerating climate action in urgent times. The New Climate Economy. The Global Commission on the Economy and Climate.

<sup>9</sup> NDC Global Outlook Report 2019, UNDP – United Nations Climate Change.

<sup>10</sup> *MedECC* report, p. 7, cit.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

of total floating marine litter and more than 50% of seabed marine litter, mostly originating from single-use plastic products representing more than 60% of the marine litter composition. For this reason, the UNEP Naples Ministerial Declaration decided to scale-up efforts in this area by working on a regulatory framework for reducing single-use plastic products and incorporating reduction measures including on microplastics in the countries' national marine litter agenda.<sup>12</sup>

20. Water resources, and freshwater supplies, in quality and quantity, are decreasing, while the demand for arable lands and tourism continue to increase. These factors negatively impact on Mediterranean ecosystems and generate conflicts over natural resources and food availability. As a matter of fact, the Mediterranean population classified as 'water-poor' – having access to less than 1000 m<sup>3</sup> per capita per year – is projected to increase from 180 million people in 2013 to over 250 million within 20 years. These increases in water scarcity are also enhanced by increasing demand for water. As an example, irrigation represents between 50% and 90% of the total Mediterranean water demand, so that satisfying the increasing demand for good quality drinking water and water for irrigation could even involve potential conflict between countries.<sup>13</sup>
21. As an example, since the PAM report in 2018, the drinking water situation in Gaza continued to deteriorate. and this in spite of the additional water supply coming from Israel.<sup>14</sup>
22. Conscious of the UN's prediction on the Gaza's unliveable conditions in the coming future, PAM is committed to support international initiatives to guarantee a livelihood environment and proper water systems in the Gaza strip, including those projects that are part of the Gaza Sustainable Water Supply Program 2018-2022, supported by the World Bank<sup>15</sup> and other International institutions.<sup>16</sup> One recent project has been started by the EU and the UN to expand the Southern Gaza Seawater Desalination Plant to help address shortages of safe drinking water. Even if already capable of producing drinking water for up to 75,000 people, this plant, at full capacity, shall be able to produce clean water for up to 250,000 people by 2021.<sup>17</sup>
23. On a different note, food demand is increasing in the Mediterranean region, as consequence of rapid population growth, while crop, fish and livestock yields are declining.<sup>18</sup>
24. In fact, extreme meteorological events, such as droughts, heat waves and heavy rainfall, may cause unexpected production losses. In river deltas, crucial places for agricultural production, the area available for agriculture is reduced due to sea-level rise. Grapevines, fruit trees and vegetables may suffer from anticipated flowering, insufficient time with cold weather and reduced water availability. In the same way, fishing, which has been important in the Mediterranean Sea for millennia, has resulted in overexploitation of the main commercial species, with 90% of stocks

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<sup>12</sup> Naples Ministerial Declaration, UNEP/MED IG.24/L.3, 4 December 2019,

<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/30918/Naples%20declaration%20eng.pdf?sequence=7&isAllowed=y>.

<sup>13</sup> MedECC report, pp. 7, 11, cit.

<sup>14</sup> Von Medeazza G., 'Searching for clean water in Gaza', *Unicef*, 10 January 2019, <https://blogs.unicef.org/blog/searching-clean-water-gaza/>

<sup>15</sup> [documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/875871554701815588/pdf/West-Bank-and-Gaza-Gaza-Sustainable-Water-Supply-Program-Project.pdf](https://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/875871554701815588/pdf/West-Bank-and-Gaza-Gaza-Sustainable-Water-Supply-Program-Project.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> 'Gaza Project Development could generate costly traffic footprint', *Aqua Tech*, 2 October 2018, <https://www.aquatechtrade.com/news/article/gaza-water-project-developments-could-generate-costly-traffic-footprint/>

<sup>17</sup> European Union External Action, 'The UN and the EU begin expansion of Southern Gaza Seawater Desalination Plant', 4 December 2019, [https://eeas.europa.eu/regions/middle-east-north-africa-mena/71466/un-and-eu-begin-expansion-southern-gaza-seawater-desalination-plant-help-address-shortages\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/regions/middle-east-north-africa-mena/71466/un-and-eu-begin-expansion-southern-gaza-seawater-desalination-plant-help-address-shortages_en)

<sup>18</sup> MedECC report, pp. 11-12, cit.

categorized as overfished.<sup>19</sup>

25. In addition, more frequent direct and indirect effects on their health, caused by higher temperatures, increased UV radiation, droughts and other extreme events. A recent analysis for Barcelona (Spain) found an increased risk in mortality due to natural, respiratory, and cardiovascular causes during hot nights. The same goes for people over 65 years in Athens (Greece), without counting that warming temperatures will increase the frequency of extreme events, like floods, which will contribute to the future transmission of potential vector- and water-borne diseases in the region. In fact, in recent years, dengue fever cases were reported in Malta, Italy, Greece, France, Spain and Portugal.<sup>20</sup>
26. Business as usual and traditional infrastructures are not designed for this new, cross-cutting, dynamic and challenging situation. Climate rapid evolution imposes resilient and flexible solutions to our societies.<sup>21</sup> In the Mediterranean region, almost 40% of the coastline is inhabited. This means that a third of the population lives close to the sea, adding up to 15 mega cities – port cities with a population of more than 1 million inhabitants in 2005. These places are at risk of flooding due to sea level rise. By 2050, cities in the Mediterranean will account for half of the 20 global cities with the highest increase of the average annual damages. The areas at extremely high risk are located in Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Palestine and Syria. Of the 49 UNESCO World Heritage Sites located in low-lying coastal areas of the Mediterranean, 37 are at risk of being flooded.<sup>22</sup>
27. Statistics have highlighted how inappropriate waste management practices, marine litter, microplastics and hazardous human activities are major threats for the Mediterranean ecosystem and its integrity.
28. The UNEP/MAP Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) 2016-2025 indicates as key target a substantive reduction of waste generation, according to the following waste hierarchy: prevention, reduction, reuse, sorting, recycling, recovery, and eventually, disposal,<sup>23</sup> which also envisages the creation of a Mediterranean network of green and social incubators and training programmes to allow a better cooperation and integration between the Mediterranean countries and promote sharing of capital and knowledge among the different stakeholders.
29. In the framework of the UNEP/MAP, some key events contributed to pave the way towards the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of the Parties of the Barcelona Convention (COP21) hosted by Italy, in Naples, from 2 to 5 December 2019.<sup>24</sup> In this regard, as main parliamentary member of the MCSD, PAM was involved in the Regional Stakeholders Consultation and contributed to the preparation of the Ministerial Declaration of COP 21 suggesting a specific role for parliaments.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 18, cit.

<sup>21</sup> Policy Paper, Enhancing the Mediterranean's climate resilience through Nature-based Solutions, UNEP/MAP, Plan Bleu.

<sup>22</sup> *MedECC* report, p. 19, cit.

<sup>23</sup> 'Report of the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points', UNEP, 10-13 September 2019, [https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/28627/19wg468\\_21\\_eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/28627/19wg468_21_eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

<sup>24</sup> 'Barcelona Convention – COP21', Naples, 2-5 December 2019, <http://web.unep.org/unepmap/barcelona-convention-cop21-naples-2-5-december-2019>

30. In particular, the Naples Ministerial Declaration re-affirmed the strong commitment towards safeguarding the Mediterranean Sea and its good environmental status as a place of peace, dialogue and solidarity for the benefit of present and future generations. Also, four were the priority areas identified for action and commitments, notably tackling marine litter, strengthening and expanding the Marine Protected Areas network, responding to the challenges arising from climate change, and supporting sustainable blue economy and an ecological transition for our region.<sup>25</sup>
31. The conclusions and the recommendations adopted in Naples have been used both as basis for the Ministerial declaration of the COP21 and will be part of the new UNEP/MAP Medium Term Strategy 2022-2027.<sup>26</sup>

#### **IV. A PROPER MEDITERRANEAN ISSUE: WASTE MANAGEMENT. HOW TO FACE THE CHINESE BAN ON WASTE**

32. An important challenge to the Mediterranean ecosystem, which requires due consideration is waste management, especially after the multiple Asian bans on recycled paper and plastic waste imports.
33. Waste has a huge impact on the environment and marine ecosystems, causing pollution and GHG emissions, which intensively contribute to global warming. Inefficient management of industrial processes and hazardous waste practices are having major repercussions on biodiversity, invasive alien species and health diseases.
34. It is foreseen that the population of the Mediterranean region will continue to grow sharply. Thus, more people mean more garbage, which imposes more efficient and sustainable waste disposal strategies to our societies.
35. Moreover, the amount of waste produced and the nature itself is changing due to the increasing use of high-tech items in cross cutting sectors. These items contain complex mix of components, such as plastic, precious metals and hazardous materials, which are extremely difficult to dispose safely. In some countries, such as Italy, unprecedented criminal fires have destroyed many facilities (legal or illegal), as results of the block of exports and the high cost relating to storage facilities.
36. Mediterranean countries' waste legislation frameworks are still not harmonised and the lack of an exhaustive legislation about waste and its management causes major difficulties in waste recycle, collection and disposition.
37. Many countries are implementing, supported by the World Bank, some important advanced techniques to their economies, their waste management systems and methods to produce energy.
38. Following the Asian ban, many European countries began to deliver their waste to Turkish,

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<sup>25</sup> Naples Ministerial Declaration, cit.

<sup>26</sup> Regional Stakeholders Consultation Meeting to contribute to the preparation of the Ministerial Declaration of COP 21, UNEP/MED WG.477/4.

Cypriot and Greek landfills.

39. In parallel, PAM has meanwhile launched a pilot-cooperation project with the Department of Biology of the Federico II University in order to study the effects of micro-plastics pollution on agricultural soil and their impacts on food chain and released health hazards.

## **V. PAM's ENVIRONMENT ENGAGEMENT IN THE NEW DECADE**

40. Since its establishment, PAM has been working together with key UN agencies to address climate related concerns through the instrument of parliamentary diplomacy. The Assembly actively contributes to develop sustainable policies and regulations, creating new and favourable opportunities for MPs to meet together with experts in order to acknowledge the most advanced environmental threats and work towards the harmonization of the Mediterranean legislative frameworks.
41. Over 2019, PAM further reinforced its efforts towards green and blue economies, through its strategic partnership with the Mediterranean Committee for Sustainable Development (MCSD) of the Barcelona Convention UNEP/MAP.
42. In the framework of this cooperation the Assembly contributed to draft the Ministerial Declaration of the COP21 – Barcelona convention, highlighting the critical role of the parliamentary dimension to address climate change.
43. PAM also remains committed to climate mitigation and adaptation global efforts through its active participation as observer organization at the COP25.
44. On food, as part of the activities of the academic platform, PAM, the University of Turin and the Université Côte d'Azur of Nice are working on a new joint project for the promotion of sustainable food systems in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The project includes a PAM Advanced Training School which will bring together MPs, UN, EU and private sectors experts to forge innovative mechanisms of good governance and decision making processes, it will foster public cross-border and regional food policies, discuss common threats and share best practices to achieve adequate sustainable solutions to the pressing challenges on sustainable food in the region.
45. In addition, during the seminar organized by FAO and the Association of Senate, Shoora, and Equivalent Councils in Africa and Arab World (ASSECAA), in Morocco on 30 October and 1 November 2019, PAM supported the establishment and became a full member of the "Parliamentary Networks and Food Security Challenges", which aims at contributing to global efforts to achieve sustainable development goals, in particular the second goal of combating hunger by 2030, improving food security and promoting sustainable agriculture.

