



*Delegation to the EU-Albania Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee*

*Delegation for relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo*

*Delegation to the EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee*

*Delegation to the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee*

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**D-AL\_PV(2021)0621\_0**

# **MINUTES**

**of the joint meeting of 21 June 2021, 17.00-18.30**

**Brussels**

The meeting opened at 17.00 on Monday, 21 June 2021, with Delara Burkhardt (D-SEE, Vice-Chair), Manolis Kefalogiannis (D-AL Chair) and Sergey Lagodinsky (D-TR Chair) presiding.

Dr Joel Guiot (MedECC expert) presented the 1st “[Mediterranean Assessment Report on Climate and Environmental Change in the Mediterranean Basin: Current Situation and Risks for the Future](#)”. The report encompasses a number of topical issues related to climate change, including issues such as human security, health, development, food, agriculture, water, impact for society, urbanisation, air and sea pollution, resources, the marine, energy transition, ecosystems, and socio-ecological resilience. He warned about the different impacts of current trends: the spread of vector-borne diseases; impact on coral reefs and decrease of fish and jellyfish; the imbalance of ecosystems and replacement of traditional fish due to the inflow of tropical fish from the Suez canal; and the high reliance on fossil energy sources.

Furthermore, he presented pessimistic and optimistic scenarios for the region, and highlighted the differences between the areas of the Mediterranean basin: the Balkan region is the most vulnerable to precipitation changes; water scarcity is more serious in the east and south of the region; sea level rise presents a particular risk for the Adriatic coast; water used for agricultural purposes is more of an issue in the south and in countries like Albania and Turkey; and global warming will result in an increase of energy demand particularly in the Balkans. In conclusion, he urged all decision-makers and stakeholders to urgently take action against climate change and to strengthen efforts to satisfy the Paris Agreement, which is the minimum thing to do.

Ms **Silvia Crescimbeni** (DG CLIMA) discussed the various instruments and opportunities offered by the enlargement process and stressed that the report presented by the previous speaker constitutes an essential tool in addressing the multidimensional and complex challenges that the region is facing. She highlighted the importance of green recovery, which is at the core of the EC's policy engagement with its immediate neighbouring partners, and expressed her wish to turn post-COVID recovery into a lifetime opportunity by taking the green path out of the crisis. She underlined the [Green Agenda for the Western Balkans](#) and the [Economic and Investment Plan](#), which serve to stimulate the economies and the climate objectives in the region. Ms Crescimbeni also underlined the [Sofia Declaration](#) endorsing the Green Agenda and representing a joint commitment by the region. Furthermore, she stressed the importance for the transition not to be imposed by the EU but to come from within, and that the Green Agenda is a tool to accelerate sustainable development, EU standards and the approximation to EU *acquis*.

Ms Silvia Crescimbeni informed that the next steps should be to: continue the approximation to EU *acquis* beyond chapter 27; strengthen resilience at the local level in addition to existing national policies; reshape national strategies and promote new consumer behaviour; capacity-building, awareness-raising and implementation of best practices; cooperate and exchange knowledge at regional level; include CSOs for the advocacy and mobilisation of citizens and leaders; and to implement policies. She concluded by pleading for stronger ambition from the governments throughout the region and by calling for increased collective action. The EU is ready to engage more systematically with its partners and provide support through the new IPA III, financial assistance and envelopes, diplomacy and exchange of knowledge and expertise.

Vice-President **Pedro Silva Pereira** conveyed President Sassoli's sentiments, which he shares, in strengthening the cooperation of delegations and making it more dynamic. He underlined that climate change is a cornerstone of the cooperation with the Mediterranean region, and attached particular importance to the EP's contribution within the framework of the UfM. He informed that the goal of the PA-UfM is to exert political influence and stressed the importance of putting climate change on top of the agenda. Furthermore, he expressed regrets that the region is among those that have been most negatively affected by climate change, which has resulted in both environmental, social, and economic issues, as well as issues related to migration and security.

Mr **Viktor Berishaj** (Southeast Europe Climate and Energy Policy Coordinator, [Climate Action Network \(CAN\) Europe](#)) discussed how the EU could help streamline climate mitigation policies in the enlargement countries, and apprised that the enlargement process in itself is one of the main tools to push for development in this direction. Furthermore, he agreed with Ms Crescimbeni that it was necessary to go beyond chapter 27 and to include climate *acquis* as a part of the primary negotiations between the EU and the accession countries. Additional steps and instruments, which should be used to incentivise climate action in the Western Balkans include the Green Agenda, the continuous tackling of greenhouse gas emissions through the Energy Community Treaty, strengthened cooperation between the countries in the Western Balkans, and the empowerment of people in the region. Local responsibility and ownership of the process is crucial, as there is a tendency in the region to view environmental measures as something imposed by the EU rather than a necessary step to protect the sustainability, economy and health of people.

Ms **Özlem Katisöz** (Policy Coordinator for Turkey, [Climate Action Network \(CAN\) Europe](#))

gave an account of the situation in Turkey and regretted that the country is the only G20 member which has not yet ratified the Paris Agreement or established a long-term decarbonisation target - a goal supported by various CSOs, business associations, high carbon sectors as well as the Turkish Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Environment, but not backed by the Foreign Ministry or the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources. She underlined EU's exceptional position as a political partner and a trade ally in motivating Turkey to accelerate its climate change policy performance, and that the EU's low carbon transition would have a significant impact on the industries and businesses in Turkey. Furthermore, she informed that the country has a high share of renewable sources in its energy mix (42% - well above the European average), but a strong coal-oriented energy policy and an energy strategy which prioritises domestic resources which includes both renewables and coal, in order to replace the need of imported natural gas.

D-AL Chair **Manolis Kefalogiannis** addressed some questions to Dr Guiot and inquired about the spread of vector-borne diseases and the inflow of tropical fish from the Suez Canal, resulting in an imbalance of ecosystems and replacement of traditional fish.

D-TR Chair **Sergey Lagodinsky** directed a question to Dr Guiot regarding necessary recommendations on how to combat climate change; questions to Mr Berishaj about the political challenges for the Western Balkans, whether the Green Deal is seen by all stakeholders as a vehicle to approach the EU, and about potential geo-strategic energy and investment interests in the region; and a question to Ms Katisöz on Turkey's prospects for economic recovery and greening of economy. He concluded by summarising his reflections and highlighting three key points, namely the importance of: mutual commitment; coordination and synergies; and motivation and incentives for all relevant actors.

The meeting closed at 18:30.

**/LISTA DE ASISTENCIA/PREZEN NÍ LISTINA/DELTAGERLISTE/  
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LISTE DE PRÉSENCE/POPIS NAZO NIH/ELENCO DI PRESENZA/APMEKL JUMU RE ISTRS/DALYVI S RAŠAS/  
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| <p>Dr Joel GUIOT, expert, Mediterranean Experts of Climate and Environmental Change representing the organization</p> <p>Mr Viktor BERISHAJ, Southeast Europe Climate and Energy Policy Coordinator, Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe</p> <p>Ms Özlem KATISÖZ, Policy Coordinator for Turkey, both from the Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe</p>   | 2 |

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| Silvia CRESCIMBENI, DG CLIMA |
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| <p>/Secretaría de los Grupos políticos/Sekretariát politických skupin/Gruppernes sekretariat/<br/>         Sekretariat der Fraktionen/Fraktsioonide sekretariaat/μμ μ /Secretariats of political groups/Secrétaire des groupes politiques/Tajništva klubova zastupnika/Segreteria gruppi politici/Politisko grupu sekretariats/Frakcij sekretorija/<br/>         Képviselő csoportok titkársága/Segretariat gruppi politi/ Fractiesecretariaten/Sekretariat Grup Politycznych/Secretariado dos grupos políticos/Secretariate grupuri politice/Sekretariát politických skupín/Sekretariat politi nih skupin/Poliittisten ryhmien sihteeristöt/<br/>         De politiska gruppernas sekretariat</p> |                   |
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| ECR  | Antonia Dimitrova |
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Aušra Rakstelyte

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 Avustaja/Assistenter

Vesselina Veleva,

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