



Plenary sitting

B9-0405/2022

12.9.2022

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the consequences of drought, fire and other extreme weather phenomena:
increasing the EU's efforts to fight climate change
(2022/2829(RSP))

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B9-0405/2022

European Parliament resolution on the consequences of drought, fire and other extreme weather phenomena: increasing the EU's efforts to fight climate change (2022/2829(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 28 November 2019 on the climate and environment emergency¹,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 11 December 2019 on the European Green Deal (COM(2019)0640) and to Parliament's resolution of 15 January 2020 thereon²,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 June 2021 establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulations (EC) No 401/2009 and (EU) 2018/1999 ('European Climate Law')³,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 entitled 'EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives' (COM(2020)0380) and to Parliament's resolution of 9 June 2021 thereon⁴,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 entitled 'A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system' (COM(2020)0381) and to Parliament's resolution of 20 October 2021 thereon⁵,
- having regard to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and in particular the 2015 Paris Agreement thereof, which entered into force on 4 November 2016,
- having regard to the UNFCCC Glasgow Climate Pact, adopted on 13 November 2021,
- having regard to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which entered into force on 29 December 1993, and the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) to be held in Montreal from 5-17 December 2022,
- having regard to the assessment reports and special reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change,
- having regard to the global assessment report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of May 2019 on biodiversity and

¹ OJ C 232, 16.6.2021, p. 28.

² OJ C 270, 7.7.2021, p. 2.

³ OJ L 243, 9.7.2021, p. 1.

⁴ OJ C 67, 8.2.2022, p. 25.

⁵ OJ C 184, 5.5.2022, p. 2.

ecosystem services,

- having regard to its resolution of 17 December 2020 on the EU strategy on adaptation to climate change⁶,
 - having regard to the 2022 report of the Commission’s Joint Research Centre entitled ‘Drought in Europe – August 2022’,
 - having regard to its resolution of 17 September 2020 on the European Year of Greener Cities 2022⁷,
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 17 November 2021 entitled ‘EU Soil Strategy for 2030: Reaping the benefits of healthy soils for people, food, nature and climate’ (COM(2021)0699) and to Parliament’s resolution of 28 April 2021 on soil protection⁸,
 - having regard to its resolution of 8 September 2015 on the follow-up to the European Citizens’ Initiative Right2Water⁹,
 - having regard to its resolution of 9 October 2008 on addressing the challenge of water scarcity and droughts in the European Union¹⁰,
 - having regard to its resolution of 4 September 2003 on the effects of the summer heat wave¹¹,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas summer 2022 was characterised by extreme weather phenomena in large parts of the world, including Europe, in particular droughts, wild fires and floods; whereas Europe experienced its worst drought in at least 500 years and withstood a record 660 000 hectares of wildfire destruction; whereas extreme weather events occurred across the world; whereas China experienced its worst heatwave on record and Pakistan was the victim of a devastating flood, destroying over a million homes and killing over a thousand people;
- B. whereas extreme weather events are becoming increasingly frequent because of climate change and are causing unprecedented damage across the EU; whereas climate change and biodiversity loss constitute increasing threats to food security and livelihoods with recurring droughts, floods, forest fires, and new pests; whereas the cost of extreme weather events in the EU has been steadily increasing over the last decade;
- C. whereas in its 2018 special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found that limiting global warming to

⁶ OJ C 445, 29.10.2021, p. 156.

⁷ OJ C 385, 22.9.2021, p. 167.

⁸ OJ C 506, 15.12.2021, p. 38.

⁹ OJ C 316, 22.9.2017, p. 99.

¹⁰ OJ C 9 E, 15.1.2010, p. 33.

¹¹ OJ C 76 E, 25.3.2004, p. 382.

1.5°C would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change; whereas limiting global warming to 1.5°C requires rapid, deep and sustained reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions, including reducing global carbon dioxide emissions by 43 % by 2030 compared to 2019 levels;

- D. whereas urgent action to mitigate climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions in line with the best available science and in combination with significantly stepping up actions on adaptation and resilience is needed across all sectors in order to reduce and control the short-, medium- and long-term impacts on the economy, the environment and well-being and health;
- E. whereas natural disasters are known to have negative impacts on both physical and mental health; whereas according to the European Environment Agency, heatwaves, floods, and other extreme weather events have killed 142 000 people in Europe over the last 40 years and have cost European economies more than EUR 500 billion; whereas since 2005, natural disasters have cost the EU close to EUR 100 billion;
- F. whereas according to the International Organisation for Migration, more than 200 million people could be forced to migrate due to the impact of climate change by 2050; whereas coastal populations are particularly vulnerable to the consequences of climate change;
- G. whereas unsustainable agricultural practices, deforestation and intensive urbanisation aggravate the risk of natural disasters occurring, as well as their severity;
- H. whereas the European Climate Law requires the EU and the Member States to take action to adapt to climate change; whereas the EU adaptation strategy provides tools to understand and address climate change adaptation needs, but falls short of fully addressing the climate impacts that are already happening; whereas there is therefore a need for greater coordination at the EU level through a legislative framework for adapting to the increasing climatic shocks and to improve the EU's resilience;
- I. whereas the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 states that the Commission will continue to work with the Member States to ensure that the EU is sufficiently equipped to prevent and respond to major forest fires, which can cause significant damage to forest biodiversity;
- J. whereas urban ecosystems provide vital ecosystem services, including natural disaster risk reduction and control (e.g. floods, heat island effects), cooling, recreation, water, air filtration and climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- K. whereas the Joint Research Centre's August 2022 report put two thirds of Europe in a state of alert or warning, with 47 % of Europe in warning conditions, with a clear deficit in soil moisture, and 17 % in a state of alert, in which vegetation is affected;
- L. whereas according to the European Forest Fire Information System, some 842 000 hectares have already been devastated by fires so far this year, reaching an all-time record for as long as the EU has collected data; whereas Spain has been the Member State most affected by forest fires (293 000 ha), but major fires have also hit Romania (149 000 ha), Portugal (109 000 ha) and France (62 000 ha);

- M. whereas droughts and heatwaves linked to climate change have made it more difficult to fight fires, as these conditions make it easier for fires to spread rapidly and increase their severity; whereas climate change will increase the frequency of forest fires and their destructive potential, and Europe's wildfire season is likely to start earlier and end later in the year; whereas these unprecedented changes should be taken into account in Member States' fire management practices;
- N. whereas the phenomenon of fires is also being exacerbated by the abandonment of rural areas and their traditional activities, deficiencies in forest management and clearance, the planting of unsuitable varieties of trees and inadequate prevention policies;
- O. whereas there is a risk of forest fires being deliberately caused to encourage local authorities to reclassify former forest areas as residential or recreational land; whereas it is crucial to prevent such declassification to ensure the protection of our forests by strengthening our local authorities;
- P. whereas poorly managed forests increase the risk of dead biomass flammability, which may undermine the capacity of these forests to make a positive contribution to the environment, in particular to soil health and carbon storage; whereas more knowledge is needed to characterise the flammability of combustible material from different forest species and the influence of fire on soil temperature before and after fires;
- Q. whereas sustainable agriculture in fire prone areas can contribute to preventing and reducing the effects of fire, especially as regards grazing, but also other agricultural activities that are useful for the protection of biodiversity and for the provision of ecosystem services;
- R. whereas the new EU forestry strategy aims to achieve effective afforestation and the preservation and restoration of forests in Europe in order to, inter alia, reduce the incidence rate and extent of forest fires;
- S. whereas vegetation planting strategies should consider the landscapes of climatic zones, strengthening the role of natural regeneration;
- T. whereas primary forests require special attention and protection, as they are unique and irreplaceable, possess high carbon stocks and unique ecological features, and host invaluable biodiversity;
- U. whereas the vast majority of fires in the EU are caused intentionally or through negligence; whereas awareness-raising across Europe is therefore necessary;
- V. whereas the intensification of extreme weather phenomena due to climate change, the new geostrategic situation resulting from the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the growing world population are factors that may destabilise food security and endanger the resilience of our food systems in the EU and globally;
- W. whereas the impacts of climate change increase economic and environmental risks in the agricultural sector, reducing yields at farm level, destroying production capacities in some parts of the EU, affecting the stability of farmers' incomes and diminishing the effectiveness of national and EU support policies, all of which reduce the attractiveness

of this activity for new generations;

- X. whereas contrary to initial expectations and despite measures to boost domestic production, EU cereal production in 2022 will be 2.5 % lower than in 2021 because of drought, jeopardising Europe's role in cushioning the impact of the expected lack of Ukrainian cereal exports on world markets;
- Y. whereas 2022 production forecasts for grain maize, soybeans and sunflower are respectively 16 %, 15 % and 12 % lower than the five-year average as a result of droughts; whereas other European agriculture, such as fruits, vegetables, olive oil, wine, potatoes, honey and livestock, have also been greatly impacted;
- Z. whereas there is a need to increase digitisation in European agriculture and to upscale sustainable practices requiring no or few inputs in order to optimise water use and reduce the volume of pesticides and fertilisers used on farms, in line with the objectives of the Green Deal; whereas some new agricultural production techniques have the ability to better combat droughts and increase the resilience of crops to climate change;
- AA. whereas the severe precipitation deficit is also affecting river flows across Europe, with direct impacts on hydroelectric generation, cooling systems of some nuclear power plants and river transport;
- AB. whereas rainfall in mid-August may have mitigated the drought in some parts of Europe, but it also caused new difficulties where these rainfalls turned into storms and floods; whereas the Joint Research Centre report predicts warmer and drier conditions than usual in the western Euro-Mediterranean region until November 2022;
- AC. whereas the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has warned that the Mediterranean region is particularly sensitive to the impacts of climate change and that large areas will be particularly vulnerable not only to the reduction of water resources but also to their variability;
- AD. whereas severe droughts have historically affected the EU's southern regions the most; whereas in recent years droughts have expanded from southern to central and northern Europe as a consequence of climate change;
- AE. whereas the EU has to produce effective responses to the current water challenges and manage existing water resources efficiently, as they directly affect human health, the environment, ecosystems, energy production, agriculture and food security;
- AF. whereas 20-40 % of the water available in Europe is wasted due to, among other factors, leaks in the water distribution system, insufficient installations of water-saving technologies, excessive and unnecessary irrigation activities and dripping taps;
- AG. whereas the new common agricultural policy (CAP), which will enter into force in 2023, restricts investments for enlarging irrigated surfaces in areas where the status of water bodies is 'less than good';
- AH. whereas soils rich in organic matter very positively contribute to increasing water retention capacity, improving infiltration, and spurring microbiological activity;

- AI. whereas between 2007 and 2021, more than 17 % of all requests for assistance through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism were in response to forest fires;
- AJ. whereas better alignment in terms of practices, standards, guidance, targets, resources and knowledge could be achieved through closer coordination at EU level under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, and internationally, under the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction; whereas there is a growing need for greater European prevention, cooperation and common resources;
- AK. whereas in 2021, about 365 000 people were employed as professional firefighters in the EU, representing 0.2 % of total EU employment; whereas according to Eurostat, government spending on fire protection services has remained largely unchanged since 2001, at just 0.5 % of GDP at the EU level;

Climate change adaptation and mitigation

1. Expresses its deepest sympathy for and solidarity with the families of those who were victims of the recent extreme weather events and with the inhabitants of the devastated areas, and salutes the dedication of the full-time and voluntary firefighters, rescuers, national, regional and local authorities involved in relief efforts, and members of the public who tried to rescue people and prevent the spread of fires, often risking their own lives;
2. Believes that these extreme weather conditions are a sign of the need for more ambitious action on climate change mitigation and adaptation; considers that the EU should play a leading role in this process and reinforce its efforts in all sectors;
3. Expresses concern at the findings of the UN Environment Programme's 2021 report on the emissions gap, in particular the fact that, despite more ambitious climate pledges made in the last year, predicted emissions leave the world on a path to a 2.7° C rise in temperature if these national pledges are fully implemented, which would have severe impacts across the world; urges the Commission and the Member States therefore to remain strongly committed to the EU Green Deal and to step up action on EU climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience, paying special attention to extreme weather phenomena;
4. Notes with concern the social and economic impacts of drought, fires and other extreme weather phenomena on people, particularly vulnerable groups such as children, older people and people with disabilities; stresses that special provision should be made for such groups in national and regional responses to extreme weather events; further stresses the impact of such phenomena on local and regional economies, in particular on micro- and small enterprises and the knock-on consequences for employment in affected regions, particularly in the agriculture, nature conservation, tourism and hospitality sectors;
5. Calls for climate resilience to be integrated into all relevant policies, in particular into the implementation of the Farm to Fork strategy, the biodiversity strategy and the entire Green Deal;
6. Reiterates its supports for the EU adaptation strategy; regrets however that the

adaptation strategy fails to set out concrete, measurable and time-bound targets for the EU and its Member States to become climate resilient and recalls the European Parliament's call for binding and quantifiable targets; calls, in this regard, on the Commission to propose a comprehensive, ambitious and legally binding European climate adaptation framework, including the appropriate legislative tools, with particular emphasis on the most vulnerable regions;

7. Calls on the Commission to urgently draw up a comprehensive EU-wide climate risk assessment, paying special attention to the risks of droughts, forest fires, health threats, ecosystem vulnerabilities and effects on critical infrastructure and network hotspots, in order to guide and prioritise short-, medium-, and long-term adaptation and resilience efforts; calls for, in particular, an EU climate resilience stress test for key infrastructure to be completed by summer 2023;
8. Calls on the Commission to develop common standardised methods to estimate the economic and environmental impacts of extreme weather events in order to allow for increased comparability, coordination and cooperation across regions in the EU;
9. Stresses that harmonised procedures for wildfire risk assessment are needed at the European level to enhance the planning and coordination of prevention, preparedness, and cross-border firefighting actions; welcomes in this regard the recently launched pan-European wildfire risk assessment;
10. Underlines the need to mainstream both mitigation and adaptation action in all relevant EU policies; calls on the Commission to update its Better Regulation guidelines and toolbox to better take into account both climate mitigation and adaptation needs and to reflect the principles of climate-risk management in order to ensure alignment across policies and public funding;
11. Calls for the Member States to establish enhanced early warning systems;
12. Recognises the Mediterranean region's particular vulnerability to climate change and the importance of deploying specific mechanisms and resources to deal with the risks and effects of these extreme events in these territories;
13. Underlines the urgent need to scale up global action, both to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change, as highlighted in the Glasgow Climate Pact, adopted in 2022; calls for the EU to play an active role in continuing the process of defining a global goal for adaptation and in ensuring that the goal for international climate finance is met, including ensuring a balance between financing for mitigation and for adaptation; calls furthermore for the EU to engage actively in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction to take concrete actions to protect development gains from the risks of natural disaster;
14. Recalls that the ocean plays an essential role in regulating the climate, yet a rise in ocean temperatures has also been observed and is having a dangerous impact on marine ecosystems; expresses its concern about the increase in cyclonic activity, which requires special attention to be paid to tropical regions and the outermost regions, but also Western Europe, which is also affected by westerly circulation;

Nature restoration and biodiversity

15. Calls for all initiatives and actions related to the prevention and mitigation of droughts, heatwaves and their impacts to fully integrate consideration of the natural environment, notably forests, biodiversity and ecosystem services;
16. Recalls the crucial role played by biodiversity and healthy ecosystems in enabling humans to combat and adapt to global warming and increase their level of resilience; welcomes, in this regard, the Commission proposal on nature restoration as an opportunity to improve synergies with climate change mitigation, adaptation and disaster prevention;
17. Underlines the need to leverage more investments in nature-based solutions to generate gains for adaptation, mitigation, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity and health;
18. Calls on the Member States to prioritise and identify short-, medium- and long-term restoration measures for degraded ecosystems as a result of extreme weather events; calls furthermore for EU guidelines for post-emergency restoration plans to identify priority areas for the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phases after disasters caused by floods, forest fires, heatwaves, or droughts, including recommendations to increase resilience and the revitalisation of livelihoods, economies, and the affected environment;
19. Calls on the Member States to ensure the continued protection of our forests and to protect land from being reclassified as non-forest land following a forest fire, as this may encourage deliberate fires with the aim of being able to use the land for other uses not allowed before the fire;
20. Calls on the Committee of the Regions and the Commission's services to ensure collaboration with local authorities and to research the history of land reclassification after forest fires;
21. Calls on all relevant governance levels to take action to restore degraded urban ecosystems and better integrate green infrastructure and nature-based solutions into urban planning in order to mitigate increasing climate change impacts, such as floods and heat islands in cities;

Forestry

22. Calls for the multi-functionality of forests to be retained, as they play an important societal role as a source of natural resources, as a basis for economic activity and as providers of multiple ecosystem services, including soil protection, the hydrological cycle, carbon storage, biological diversity and ecological and landscape connectivity; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that these ecosystem services are preserved, protected, restored, improved and managed in a sustainable manner;
23. Stresses the need to adapt forest management to the geographical, climatic and socio-economic characteristics of the different European regions;
24. Considers it necessary to strengthen wildfire prevention in areas with an increased fire

risk through the sustainable clearing of combustible materials and the adaptation of forest species to climate change, as well as by recognising and supporting the essential role played by forest operators in combating fires through sustainable forest management;

25. Considers it necessary to increase the resilience of managed forests, following the model of close-to-nature forestry as much as possible and taking ancient and primary forests as a reference, and to apply planting strategies, taking into consideration the change of climatic zones and using resilient and local species in order to strengthen the role of natural regeneration;
26. Calls on the Member States to strengthen the promotion of pastoralism and agroforestry activities, particularly in mountain regions and other vulnerable areas of the EU, taking into account the role of farmers and forest managers in protecting land against desertification and fires; calls on the Commission and the Member States, in this context and in the context of the pledge to plant 3 billion trees, to pay special attention to planting trees in areas with degraded land and areas affected by desertification;
27. Calls for monitoring to be reinforced in the locations that are most vulnerable to fires and prolonged droughts with a view to strengthening preventive measures and enabling genuinely effective action and coordination to be carried out at local, national and EU level;
28. Stresses the need for timely, frequent and comparable data to be available across all Member States and underlines the crucial role that analysis of such data plays in supporting the protection of forests and in anticipating and mitigating the impacts of wildfires; highlights the need to retroactively create a database of all sites fulfilling the criteria for old-growth and primary forests; welcomes, in this context, the Commission's commitment to put forward a legislative proposal for a forest observation, reporting and data collection framework;
29. Strongly believes that other sectoral policies, such as those pertaining to agriculture, rural development, infrastructure, spatial planning, tourism, and employment, must be involved in forest fire risk management, since this is a transversal global problem that requires cross-sectoral responses from both the public and private sectors;
30. Recalls that illegal logging and the related timber trade are major drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, undermining sustainable forest management and contributing to desertification, soil erosion and global warming; calls for a harmonised definition of illegal logging and the extension of the European Public Prosecutor's Office's mandate on environmental crimes with a transnational dimension to facilitate cross-border investigations and harmonised prosecutions across the EU;

Agricultural sector

31. Calls on the Commission to fully assess the impacts of the continuing drought situation on EU food production in the current year, and on food supplies over the coming winter; calls on the Commission and the Council, furthermore, to consider what remedial action can be taken and what support can be given to ensure that primary food producers suffering from production losses due to heat and drought damage can restart

- new cycles of production for essential food supplies without delay;
32. Stresses the importance of going beyond short-term measures and the mitigation of the current crisis; underlines that the EU must continue to transform its food systems in order to make them more resilient in the long run;
 33. Stresses that drought and other climatic phenomena may affect market prices, increasing the pressure from energy and fertiliser prices and from the war in Ukraine and therefore weakening food security;
 34. Advocates greater EU support for improving water management on agricultural land by encouraging the introduction of more efficient irrigation systems that are better adapted to different crops;
 35. Regrets that public policies do not adequately support experimentation carried out by farmers on the ground to improve production resilience and urges the Member States and the Commission to review their policies and strategies in order to encourage such experimentation; invites the Member States to mobilise funding, invest in research and innovation, support the actors involved in research, development and advice, and encourage the economic organisation of sectors in line with adapting production systems to climate change;
 36. Highlights the need to promote regenerative agriculture, agroforestry and the bio-economy based on agroforestry in order to improve carbon storage in the soil and water retention and to invest in climate-resilient agriculture; is in favour of exploring the benefits that new production techniques can bring in improving the resilience of agricultural production to climate change; considers it likewise essential to support and promote the use of digital technologies by European farmers to reduce the consumption of inputs;
 37. Invites the Member States to improve, through the CAP, the introduction of crop varieties that are more resistant to drought and climate change in general and welcomes the introduction of the new eco-schemes, which should facilitate the transition to more resilient and green agriculture;
 38. Invites the EU and the Member States to increase the share of agricultural support dedicated to the prevention and management of risks in agriculture; believes that climate change necessitates a thorough review of the current rules for setting up crop insurance schemes to take account of warmer weather conditions and increasingly recurrent hazards, for which the current support tools are becoming less and less effective;
 39. Notes the decision taken under the new CAP reform regarding irrigation investments in areas where the status of water bodies is 'less than good'; calls on the Member States to encourage investments in these areas that lead to water savings in a way that addresses structural water scarcity and reduces impacts on the waters;
 40. Urges the Member States and the Commission to support the introduction of irrigation systems that do not use surface or groundwater, such as rainwater storage and waste water recycling, in combination with efforts to reduce overall water use; asks the

Commission to clarify, as soon as possible, the interpretation of the new EU provisions on irrigation investments under the CAP framework in order to eliminate any uncertainties; asks the Commission to improve the existing guidelines to Member States regarding investments on irrigation under the new CAP strategic plans;

41. Emphasises the responsibility of farmers to keep soil and water resources in good condition, as well as the need to increase low-carbon farming practices; urges the Member States and the Commission therefore to promote these practices through the new eco-schemes and through the development of a market to support carbon farming, which will also have to integrate other environmental elements, such as water management, in order to increase the incentives for producers; welcomes the Commission's intention to present a proposal on the certification of sustainable carbon cycles;
42. Welcomes the Commission's intention to propose new legislation in 2023 on soils, with the aim of clarifying the conditions for improving soil health conditions, identifying options for soil monitoring and establishing rules for sustainable soil use, protection and restoration; considers it important and urgent to present the proposal, which should also address desertification, including by following the recommendations made by the European Court of Auditors in its report on desertification and by establishing a methodology to map and assess desertification and land degradation in the EU, and to regularly report on relevant trends;

Water

43. Calls for measures to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, as well as the conservation and maintenance of the associated aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems;
44. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and, where applicable, regional authorities to develop drought management strategies, particularly with a view to ensuring the provision of drinking water and safeguarding food production and the resilience of our food system, as part of the river basin management plans and flood risk management plans; stresses, in this regard, the need to also develop, based on projected hazards and risk maps, flood risk management plans containing appropriate measures to take the effects of climate change into account;
45. Invites the EU and the Member States to encourage the development of multi-use water storage, allowing collective water management and adjustments according to the evolution of all needs; considers that collective water storage has advantages and should be favoured over individual solutions;
46. Stresses the need to protect water sources and prevent the overexploitation of groundwater and surface water bodies and asks that water legislation be effectively implemented and that dissuasive penalties for breaching EU rules be introduced;
47. Supports the creation of a European water development plan to carry out a comprehensive analysis of new facilities that could be built to combine water storage with energy storage (pumped storage) and generation (hydropower plants);

48. Strongly supports integrating digitalised monitoring, control and early warning systems to understand the state of vegetation and its response to drought in order to support effective and data-based measures on protection, response and communication;

Civil protection and emergency response

49. Underlines that wildfire prevention and preparedness are equally important; notes that pan-European assistance in the form of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism has benefited from the March 2019 upgrade that established a new European reserve of capacities, the rescEU reserve; considers, nevertheless, the number of vehicles mobilised as part of this mechanism to be insufficient for the scale of the recent forest fires and supports a reinforcement of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism;
50. Calls for an expansion of the current voluntary firefighting reserve under rescEU and calls on all Member States to consider placing part of their national firefighting brigades in a European reserve; asks the Commission to present a plan of action to increase the EU's response capabilities;
51. Supports the modernisation of civil protection assets through new common public procurements, so that equipment and ground and air assets are better adapted to the geography of different EU territories;
52. Calls for reinforcements to the seasonal pre-positioning of firefighters in wildfire hot spots, based on the success of the pilot programme operationalised this summer in Greece;
53. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to accelerate the establishment of the new permanent rescEU aerial firefighting fleet and urges them to ensure sufficient funding for this and to expand the existing seasonal European safety net of firefighting airplanes as soon as possible;
54. Underlines the importance of finding synergies between flood risk assessments and disaster prevention and preparedness planning under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism;
55. Calls on the Member States to increase investments in research and innovation and to support the creation of a European centre of excellence in civil protection, in particular to promote the training of agents in the fight against fires and crisis management, and to encourage the exchange of best practices;
56. Recalls that the budgetary instruments that the EU has at its disposal in the current multiannual financial framework to address rapid and urgent responses to help people in need and repair damages are not sufficiently funded, i.e. the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve; calls therefore for an urgent and immediate revision of the multiannual financial framework to enable a tangible expression of EU solidarity and support via long-term adequate and sufficient funding for emergency services and reconstruction efforts by such instruments;
57. Notes with concern the limitations of the current EU-level disaster response framework based on a voluntary pool of pre-committed response resources from the Member

States; calls on the Commission and the Member States to explore the possibility of expanding the EU's disaster response capacity and competences in light of increasingly frequent and severe climate disasters, notably through the creation of a permanent EU civil protection force;

Workers

58. Recalls the need for the Member States to work towards a 'Vision Zero' approach to work-related deaths in line with the 2021-2027 EU strategic framework on health and safety at work; stresses, in this context, the need to ensure the occupational health and safety of all emergency workers, including firefighters, who are particularly exposed to carcinogens in the course of their work; stresses the importance of including regular safety and risk-management training for emergency responders, as well as of providing proper protective equipment and materials in Member States' national occupational safety and health strategies; calls on the Commission to supervise the implementation of these measures;

Solidarity

59. Recalls that the EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF) has undergone several modifications in order to expand its scope of application; underlines that the 2022 budget line for the EUSF has already been fully mobilised owing to, among other reasons, the increase in natural disasters; calls therefore on the Commission to clarify how it plans to provide the necessary budgetary resources for the EUSF; supports furthermore a review of the EUSF in order to significantly increase its budget to improve the speed of the distribution of funds, damage assessments, the simplification of procedures and the quality of reconstruction;

Other issues

60. Asks the Member States and the Commission to pay special attention to the economic and environmental consequences of natural disasters in outermost and mountain regions and isolated areas; considers it necessary to provide these areas with specific financial and logistical support that takes their natural conditions into account; believes that the EU should take advantage of the experience of the outermost regions regarding difficult climatic conditions and use these territories as innovation laboratories for the fight against climate change;
61. Asks that Council Directive 2003/96/EC on the taxation of energy products and electricity¹² be revised in order to introduce an exemption to the internal consumption tax on energy products for fire fighters in the course of their duties;
62. Calls for increased investments in education and awareness-raising for European citizens on natural disasters; calls for the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction (13 October) to be promoted with visible EU initiatives;

¹² Council Directive 2003/96/EC of 27 October 2003 restructuring the Community framework for the taxation of energy products and electricity, OJ L 283, 31.10.2003, p. 51.

63. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.