



TEXTS ADOPTED

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**Consequences of drought, fire, and other extreme weather phenomena:
increasing EU's efforts to fight climate change**

European Parliament resolution of 15 September 2022 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 farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system (COM(2020)0381) and its 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,

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.

- having regard to the Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction (GAR) Special Report on Drought 2021 by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction,
- having regard to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed upon in 2015, in particular goal 15,
- having regard to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD),
- having regard to the 2021 special edition of the Global Wetland Outlook published by the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands,
- having regard to the Commission’s Joint Research Centre report entitled ‘Drought in Europe - August 2022’,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 16 July 2021 entitled ‘New EU Forest Strategy for 2030’ (COM(2021)0572),
- 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),
- having regard to the global assessment report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of May 2019 on biodiversity and ecosystem services,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 December 2020 on the EU strategy on adaptation to climate change¹,
- 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 protection²,
- having regard to the European Charter on Water Resources,
- having regard to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report entitled ‘Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability’,
- having regard to UN General Assembly resolution 64/292 of 28 July 2010, which recognises the human right to water and sanitation,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 September 2015 on the follow-up to the European Citizens’ Initiative Right2Water³,
- having regard to European Environment Agency (EEA) report No 17/2020 entitled ‘Water and agriculture: towards sustainable solutions’,

¹ OJ C 445, 29.10.2021, p. 156.

² OJ C 506, 15.12.2021, p. 38.

³ OJ C 316, 22.9.2017, p. 99.

- having regard to the World Resources Institute report of 21 January 2020 entitled ‘Achieving Abundance: Understanding the Cost of a Sustainable Water Future’,
 - having regard to the EEA report of 14 October 2021 entitled ‘Water resources across Europe — confronting water stress: an updated assessment’,
 - having regard to the Commission’s 2019 Fitness Check of the Water Framework Directive, Groundwater Directive, Environmental Quality Standards Directive and Floods Directive (SWD(2019)0439),
 - having regard to the assessment reports and special reports of the IPCC,
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 24 February 2021 entitled ‘Forging a climate-resilient Europe – the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change’ (COM(2021)0082),
 - having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy¹ (Common Provisions Regulation),
 - having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund²,
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 of 11 November 2002 establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund³ (EUSF),
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas according to the European Drought Observatory, in August 2022, 64 % of the continent was under a drought warning (with 17 % on drought alert); whereas preliminary data suggest the current drought is the worst for at least 500 years; whereas the average temperature across Europe in 2022 was the highest on record for both August and the period June-August⁴; whereas drier than normal conditions are forecast to persist in the coming months in large parts of Europe, and whereas heat waves and drought reinforce each other;
- B. whereas according to the IPCC, it is clear that the climate crisis makes extreme weather events such as floods, storms and heat more frequent and more intense, which means that precipitation and storms are getting heavier, heatwaves are getting hotter and droughts are getting longer and more severe;

¹ OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 159.

² OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 60.

³ OJ L 311, 14.11.2002, p. 3.

⁴ Copernicus Climate Change Service, ‘[Surface air temperature for August 2022](#)’.

- C. whereas the climate crisis is already having dramatic effects on ecosystems, human populations and peoples' livelihoods; whereas the European continent is warming faster than other parts of the world according to the IPCC, with a temperature increase of 2 °C in 2019 compared to the pre-industrial era, while the global average temperature rise is 1.1 °C; whereas this year's record-breaking drought is the latest in a series of extreme climate events that are becoming the new normal, increasing in volume and magnitude; whereas as the water cycle is intensifying with climate change, there will be more frequent and intense droughts, storms and floods;
- 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 the World Resource Institute found that six EU countries (Cyprus, Belgium, Greece, Spain, Portugal and Italy) face high levels of water stress, and projects that by 2030 there will be a 56 % gap between renewable global water supply and demand¹; whereas the EEA estimates that water stress already affects 20 % of European territory and 30 % of its population, and estimates the cost of droughts in Europe to be between EUR 2 and 9 billion annually²;
- F. whereas climate change has altered Europe's wind and weather patterns so that high-pressure systems persist, resulting in long periods with little or no rainfall, resulting in crop growing seasons becoming drier; whereas soil moisture contributes to groundwater recharge, soil structure and biota, soil temperatures, and water shortfalls lead to soil erosion and lower crop production inter alia; whereas soil moisture anomalies remain markedly negative in most of Europe due to the lack of precipitation and the heatwaves that have occurred in recent months, compared to June 2022;
- G. whereas the EU yield forecasts for grain maize, soybean, and sunflowers are the most affected, with reductions (compared to the average for the last five years) estimated to be, respectively -16 %, -15 %, -12 %; whereas other crops are likely to be heavily affected, especially fodder; whereas the severity of the impacts of droughts and heat waves on agricultural production has roughly tripled over the past 50 years³; whereas these lower production levels are particularly concerning given the consequences on the food and feed market of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine;
- H. whereas unsustainable agricultural practices, deforestation and intensive urbanisation aggravate the risk of natural disasters occurring, as well as their severity;
- I. whereas according to the latest World Atlas of Desertification more than 75 % of earth's land area is already degraded and over 90 % could become degraded by 2050; whereas at EU level, desertification affects 8 % of the territory, mostly in Southern,

¹ World Resources Institute, 'Achieving abundance: understanding the cost of a sustainable water future', 21 January 2020.

² European Environment Agency, 'Water resources across Europe — confronting water stress: an updated assessment', 14 October 2021.

³ Mekonen, Zelalem A. et al, 'Wildfire exacerbates high-latitude soil carbon losses from climate warming', *Environment Research Letters*, Vol. 17, No. 9, September 2022.

Eastern and Central Europe, covering 14 million hectares; whereas 13 Member States have declared themselves to be affected by desertification under the UNCCD; whereas desertification is driven by, inter alia, soil erosion, overgrazing and loss of vegetation cover, especially trees, salinisation, loss of soil organic matter and biota and biodiversity degradation; whereas in 2015, the EU and Member States committed to achieving land degradation neutrality in the EU by 2030;

- J. whereas the Water Framework Directive (WFD)¹ states in Article 4(1) that ‘Member States shall protect, enhance and restore all bodies of groundwater, ensure a balance between abstraction and recharge of groundwater, with the aim of achieving good groundwater status at the latest 15 years after the date of entry into force of this Directive’; whereas 22 years later, only 40 % of monitored lakes, estuaries, rivers and coastal waters are in the ‘good’ or ‘very good’ ecological status required by the WFD; whereas the fitness check under the WFD showed that nearly 50 % of water bodies is covered by an exemption, which is unsatisfactory; whereas bad management practices and measures have been implemented in the past with a devastating impact on soil water retention, such as: straightening of rivers and/or concreting of riverbeds, intensifying land use and desiccating of ponds and wetlands;
- K. whereas water is an essential component of the food cycle; whereas it is necessary that ground and surface water is of good quality and available in sufficient quantities in order to achieve a fair, healthy, environmentally friendly and sustainable food system as described in the farm to fork strategy; whereas clean and sufficient water is an essential to implementing and achieving a real circular economy in the EU; whereas the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Strategic Plans Regulation² sets the objective of ‘fostering sustainable development and efficient management of natural resources such as water, soil and air, including by reducing chemical dependency’;
- L. whereas agriculture depends on the availability of water; whereas irrigation helps to shield farmers from climate variability and increase yields, but also puts significant pressure on water resources; whereas in 2016 only 6 %³ of EU farmland was irrigated but accounted for 24 % of all EU water abstraction; whereas according the European Court of Auditors (ECA) special report on sustainable water use in agriculture, CAP implementation has not been consistently aligned with EU water policy, and failing to improve this could lead to increased pressure on water resources;
- M. whereas the new 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’;

¹ Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1).

² Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013 and (EU) No 1307/2013 (OJ L 435, 6.12.2021, p. 1).

³ European Court of Auditors, ‘Special Report 20/2021: Sustainable water use in agriculture: CAP funds more likely to promote greater rather than more efficient water use’, 2021 .

- N. whereas water abstraction from open water and groundwater for drinking, industry and agriculture, compounded by extremely high temperatures and lack of rainfall, means increased pollutant and nutrient concentrations and thus incidences of toxic algal blooms and pathogens, as experienced across Europe's river systems, estuaries and water bodies, resulting in mass freshwater die-offs and fish kills, collapsing fisheries and vanishing livelihoods; whereas high water temperatures also reduce oxygen content with dramatic impacts on fish; whereas diminished river flow coupled with dredging releases concentrated toxins that have accumulated in sediments, with major impacts on downstream aquatic life and fisheries;
- O. whereas 60 % of river basins are in transnational regions, which makes effective transboundary cooperation crucial; whereas 20 European countries depend on other countries for more than 10 % of their water resources, with five countries relying on over 75 % of their resources coming from abroad via rivers¹; whereas non-compliance with the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive² in border regions causes deterioration of cross-border bodies of water, which makes it impossible to reach WFD goals in the receiving Member State; whereas while the WFD mentioned 'relevant ecoregions', in practice cooperation on water is poor; whereas due to resource scarcity the hydropolitical complexity of shared basins is expected to increase;
- P. whereas renewable water resources per capita have decreased by 17 % in the EU over the last 60 years; whereas several EU countries have had to ration drinking water in recent months due to drought, with, for instance, communities relying on drinking water delivered by trucks; whereas water leaks account for 24 % of total water consumed in the Union;
- Q. 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;
- R. whereas annual river flows are decreasing in southern and south-eastern Europe and increasing in northern and north-eastern Europe; whereas hydropower generation and power plant cooling systems are being severely impacted; whereas the Adaptive Management of Barriers in European Rivers (AMBER) project demonstrated that Europe's rivers are blocked by more than 1 million barriers, with over 85 % small structures in poor condition or inactive; whereas all barriers impact river health and the water cycle, changing a river's natural flow, and blocking fish migration routes;
- S. whereas reduced water levels and volumes have had severe impacts in the fossil-, nuclear- and hydro-based energy sectors and on cooling systems; whereas this summer's droughts exacerbated the severe energy market squeeze Europe is experiencing; whereas subsequent impacts can further affect aquatic ecosystems already struggling with heatwaves;

¹ Baranyai, G., '[Transboundary water governance in the European Union: the \(unresolved\) allocation question](#)', Official Journal of the World Water Council, Vol. 21, No 3, 2019.

² Council Directive 91/271/EEC of 21 May 1991 concerning urban waste-water treatment (OJ L 135, 30.5.1991, p. 40).

- T. whereas many tourist activities are dependent on rivers; whereas water shortages currently affect 17 % of the EU's territory, while the situation is more worrying around the Mediterranean where about 50 % of the population lives under constant water stress during summer, and many tourist sites had to suspend their business activities because of the drought;
- U. whereas the lack of precipitation and massive water withdrawals for irrigation has had an impact on river transport, generating supply difficulties for heavy materials, in particular in the Rhine valley, which has a negative impact for many sectors of activity; whereas major European waterways, particularly the Rhine, Danube and Po, have experienced critically low levels, with impacts on agriculture, drinking water, ecosystems and commerce;
- V. whereas forests are increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, in particular the increasing prevalence of forest fires; whereas years of drought and degradation have created ideal conditions for wildfires to spread; whereas Europe is experiencing forest fires of dramatic proportions;
- W. whereas more than 5 million hectares of forest have burned in the 10 years between 2011 and 2021, primarily because of droughts; whereas wildfire activity between 4 June and 3 September 2022 alone resulted in over 500 000 hectares of total cumulative burnt area¹, with the EU's capacity to fight forest fires reaching its limits; whereas all across the Union's territory, wildfires have destroyed valuable sites, such as natural parks and UNESCO geoparks, causing the loss of biodiversity, crops and pasture;
- X. 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;
- Y. whereas stable, mixed, multi-age, multi-species and biodiverse forests with continuous cover provide many co-benefits, notably drought and heat mitigation; whereas agroforestry systems and trees incorporated into agroecosystems also provide many benefits, including productivity and resilience;
- Z. whereas heatwaves and droughts have an adverse effect on farmers' incomes, which can lead to farm abandonment; whereas furthermore, farm abandonment can create conditions conducive to the outbreak of wildfires;
- AA. whereas the UN estimates that globally 35 % of wetlands have disappeared since 1970, at a rate three times faster than forests, despite providing many benefits; whereas coastal wetlands such as mangroves sequester carbon up to 55 times faster than tropical rainforests; whereas peatlands, which cover only 3 % of the earth's land surface, can store 30 % of all land-based carbon only when wet, and absorb excess water to prevent

¹ Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service, [‘Europe’s summer wildfire emissions highest in 15 years’](#), 6 September 2022.

floods and drought; whereas according to the Commission, in the EU about two thirds of EU wetlands that existed 100 years ago have been lost;

- AB. whereas the UN General Assembly recognised the right to water and sanitation as a human right on 28 July 2010; whereas clean drinking water is essential to all human rights; whereas 1 884 790 citizens signed the European Citizens' Initiative entitled 'Right2Water' in 2013 on the right to water and sanitation; whereas today, 1 million EU citizens have no access to water and 8 million have no sanitation;
- AC. whereas the drought is worsening people's living conditions because of heat and lack of water; whereas the most deprived are being disproportionately affected; whereas there is an excessive death rate in the European countries most severely affected by the drought; whereas drought damages the most fragile buildings, deteriorating the quality of life of the inhabitants;
- AD. whereas drought and other climate change effects have an impact on mental health and reinforce anxiety, especially among young people;
- AE. whereas the budget of the EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF) is insufficient to mount an adequate response to major natural disaster and give expression to European solidarity with disaster-hit regions;
- AF. whereas droughts can have cascading effects, with losses caused by drought in the EU amounting to an estimated EUR 9 billion per year; whereas a Joint Research Centre analysis shows that the impact of droughts on the European economy could reach over EUR 65 billion per year by 2100¹; whereas if global temperatures exceed the Paris Agreement temperature goals, droughts are expected to happen twice as often, and the absolute annual drought losses in Europe would increase to EUR 40 billion per year²; whereas the costs of inaction far outweigh the costs of investing in ambitious climate action today³;
- AG. whereas the climate crisis exacerbates existing inequalities; whereas low-income households and vulnerable people are particularly impacted by the climate crisis and require particular support to adapt to the changing climate; whereas it is necessary to protect workers from the adverse effects of the climate crisis at the workplace;
- 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;

¹ Joint Research Centre news, '[Global warming could more than double costs caused by drought in Europe, study finds](#)' 10 May 2021.

² Joint Research Centre findings [on the projection of economic impacts of climate change in sectors of the EU based on a bottom-up analysis](#).

³ Commission communication of 17 September 2020 entitled 'Stepping up Europe's 2030 climate ambition: investing in a climate-neutral future for the benefit of our people' (COM(2020)0562).

2. Underlines the importance of sustainable water management for guaranteeing food security and calls on the Commission to refrain from proposing further EU legislation that endangers or risks endangering our food security;
3. 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; recalls that in line with the EU Climate Law and the Paris Agreement as well as best available science, the EU should step up its climate action both on mitigation, to contain global warming to 1.5 °C compared to pre-industrial levels, and on adaptation to foster resilience; calls for the EU to update its nationally determined contribution under the Paris Agreement and increase its greenhouse gas reduction target by the 27th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP27), according to the best available science; calls for the highest ambition regarding the 'Fit for 55' package;
4. 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;
5. Expects the Commission proposal for an EU nature restoration law¹ to be an opportunity to improve synergies between climate change mitigation, adaptation, disaster prevention and nature restoration; expects it to provide a framework for the restoration of drought-resilient ecosystems, including the restoration of multi-age, multi-species and biodiverse forests with continuous cover, wetlands, natural vegetation cover, floodplain dynamics and landscape-wide natural infiltration, as well as improvements to river basin resilience;
6. Supports the Commission's intention to contribute to an overall cooling effect by setting up an EU platform for urban greening; calls on the Commission to set ambitious and specific binding targets on urban biodiversity, nature-based solutions, ecosystem-based approaches and green infrastructure, which would benefit both humans and wildlife and contribute to the overall biodiversity targets; stresses the need to include measures such as a minimum share of green roofs on new buildings, supporting urban farming, including the use of productive trees, where appropriate, ensuring that no chemical pesticides are used and reducing fertiliser use in EU urban green areas, and increasing the number of green spaces in line with the number of inhabitants;
7. 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

¹ Commission communication of 22 June 2022 on a proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on nature restoration (COM(2022)0304).

increase resilience and the revitalisation of livelihoods, economies, and the affected environment;

8. Asks the Commission to provide guidance that stakeholders can use to boost the drought resilience of both people and ecosystems; stresses that coordinated action at the European level is also needed in the area of research and monitoring, between already existing entities such as the European Drought Observatory, the EEA, the Copernicus Emergency Management Service and other appropriate stakeholders; stresses that in the area of funding, appropriate financial support should be identified in the context of the CAP, the national recovery and resilience plans and other regional funds;
9. Recognises the particular vulnerability of Mediterranean countries and the importance of deploying specific mechanisms and resources to deal with the risks and effects of these extreme events in these territories; highlights that drought and other climate crisis weather phenomena have not only environment impacts, but also social, cultural, economic and political impacts, increasing the risk of deepening social inequalities;
10. Underlines the negative influence that natural disasters have on the economic, social and territorial cohesion in the EU, hindering the implementation of the Union's cohesion policy; recalls in this respect that over EUR 100 billion in cohesion policy resources will be invested in the energy transition, decarbonisation and renewables by 2030; recognises the particular vulnerability of the territories listed in Article 174 TFEU, in particular islands and mountain regions, and in Article 349 TFEU;
11. Reiterates its support 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 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;
12. 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 the effect on critical infrastructures 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;
13. Points to how the climate crisis exacerbates existing inequalities; emphasises that low-income households and vulnerable people are particularly impacted by the climate crisis and require particular support to adapt to the changing climate; welcomes social policies throughout Member States that protect workers from the adverse effects of the climate crisis at the workplace and encourages Member States to integrate climate adaptation into their labour and social policies;

Civil Protection and Emergency Response

14. Highlights the importance of further developing and making full use of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism in relation to forest fires and other natural disasters; calls on the Commission to collect and disseminate knowledge among the Member States on how to

adapt forests to current and expected climate change, in line with the new EU adaptation strategy; invites the Commission to create forest fire risk assessments and maps on the basis of improved Copernicus products and other remote-sensing data, in order to support preventive action; highlights the importance of boosting the European Civil Protection Mechanism to ensure adequate forest fire fighting capacities in the EU;

15. Calls on the Commission and Member States to accelerate the establishment of the new permanent rescEU fleet and urges them to ensure sufficient funding for this and to expand the existing European seasonal safety net as soon as possible;
16. 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;
17. 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;
18. 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;
19. Calls for the reinforcement of the seasonal pre-positioning of firefighters in wildfire hot spots, based on the success of the pilot programme operationalised this summer in Greece;
20. 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;
21. Recalls that the EUSF has been amended several times in order to extend its scope and that the 2022 budget line for the EUSF has already been fully mobilised due to the increase in natural disasters; calls for a significant increase in the EUSF budget, that will help regions to anticipate and mitigate effects of climate change and for the scope of the EUSF to be broadened so that it is also allowed to support more climate-resilient restoration or new construction of public and private infrastructure; highlights that the severity of some natural disasters is in some cases the result of human-made factors, including imprudent spatial planning leading to the construction of housing and infrastructure in river flood plains or in landslides-prone territories; reiterates in this regard that EUSF reimbursements should favour stronger resilience and sustainability through the financing of ecosystem-based solutions (e.g. reforestation, habitat restoration, earthquake-proof reconstruction);
22. Points out that it is vital for aid and funds to be sent to the affected regions as quickly, easily and flexibly as possible, and underlines that synergies between the EUSF, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, the climate change adaptation component of the European

Regional Development Fund and territorial cooperation programmes are essential in order to create a comprehensive response and resilience package;

23. Invites the Commission to promote the participation of civil society in preventing and coping with the consequences of drought and climate change; invites the Commission to propose a European initiative on civic engagement and to promote voluntary initiatives on disaster response;

Agriculture

24. 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 for the population 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;
25. Stresses the importance of going beyond short-term measures and the mitigation of the current crisis; underlines that the EU must continue to adapt its food systems in order to make them more resilient in the long run;
26. Invites the EU and its Member States to invest in research and innovation to facilitate the introduction of varieties and practices that are more resistant to drought and climate change;
27. Calls on the Commission to ensure that CAP national strategic plans are implemented with a view to rendering agriculture more water efficient with the aim of reducing water use and promoting greater drought resilience while reducing overall hydromorphological pressures, taking into account the findings of the ECA special report on sustainable water use in agriculture; welcomes the introduction of new eco-schemes, which should facilitate the transition to a more resilient and green agriculture;
28. Invites the EU and the Member States to increase the share of agricultural support dedicated to the prevention and management of risks in agriculture and to consider extending the use of public climate insurance schemes; calls on the Commission to promote exchanges of good practice on this and on other mitigation measures;
29. Calls on the Commission furthermore to identify financial resources to aid farms, compensating for the losses resulting from drought damage or other events caused by the climate emergency, to incentivise more climate resilience and sustainability and to ensure that this crisis does not end with definitive farm closures;
30. Calls on Commission and the Member States to prioritise the creation of buffer stocks of strategic feed and foodstuffs as one means to mitigate the most damaging aspects of drought, including big yield variations year on year, and calls on the Commission to address this at international level by pursuing the establishment of food storage as one stabilising tool in the face of the impacts of climate change on agriculture and food supplies;
31. Underlines the need for more efficient and targeted agricultural irrigation systems, as well as water storage capacity and an overall recalibration of irrigation needs to achieve sustainable use of water resources; recalls that investments in irrigation and water

storage capacity are only supported if they lead to water savings; underlines that investment in ecosystem restoration and production methods transitioning towards agroecology should be prioritised;

32. 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 the impact on the waters;
33. 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;
34. Highlights the positive role agroecology, agroforestry and organic production systems play in safeguarding water quantity and quality by increasing resource use efficiency and circularity, improving farm level resilience by reducing inputs and diversifying production and therefore spreading risk, which is especially important to avoid total crop failures. Recalls that planting hedges and trees, ensuring soil cover, avoiding overgrazing, reducing compaction and building up soil organic matter and humus levels are useful for farmers;
35. Underlines the need, in view of the extreme climate events of recent months, for a swift implementation of the farm to fork and biodiversity strategies in order to deliver on the ambition for a greener and more sustainable agriculture sector, taking into account the differentiated climate impacts of different kinds of agricultural production; 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;
36. Underlines the importance of soil health for water retention and filtration; calls on the Commission to make water retention and filtering capacity as well as soil moisture a key pillar of the draft EU soil health law to be published in 2023; underscores that peatlands have huge potential as carbon sinks and play a significant role in filtering water and mitigating floods, droughts and wildfires;
37. Calls for an EU objective of land degradation neutrality in the EU by 2030 in order to ensure that the corresponding target under the UN SDGs is fully met in the EU, given that the EU is not currently on track to meet the SDG target as highlighted in the ECA 2018 special report on desertification;
38. Emphasises the responsibility of farmers to keep soil and water resources in good condition, as well as the need to increase 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 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;

39. Highlights the need to rapidly reduce the contamination of groundwater and surface waters, in particular by nitrates and pesticides;
40. Calls for all initiatives and actions related to the prevention and mitigation of droughts, floods and heatwaves and their impacts to fully integrate consideration of the natural environment, notably forests, and biodiversity and ecosystem services;

Forest Fires

41. Calls for an integrated response to forest fires in order to protect the EU's forests against the destruction caused by extreme climate events; underlines that globally 'megafires' are increasing in intensity and frequency; is concerned about the projected expansion of fire-prone areas and longer seasons with a high risk of fires in most European regions, in particular in high emissions scenarios; recalls that a diverse landscape with biodiverse forests provides a greater bulwark or natural barrier against large-scale and uncontrollable forest fires;
42. Stresses that the restoration and reforestation of diverse forests would assist with fire prevention and containment; underlines the need for more resources for and the development of science-based fire management and capacity-building support through advisory services to tackle the effects of climate change in forests; calls on the Commission and the Member States to better promote and make use of the integrated fire management concept and notes that this may require better regulatory capacity in the Member States, the strengthening of public services and dedicated support and increased cooperation for disaster prevention, preparedness and response;
43. Is concerned about the risk of pyro-cumulonimbus formation from forest fires and the negative impact on the stratosphere and the ozone layer; calls, therefore, for deliberate fires and tree burning in forests to be reduced as much as possible;
44. Draws attention to the health impacts of wildfires and the associated air pollution, and expresses concern at the prediction by the World Meteorological Organization's (WMO) prediction that these are expected to increase, even under a low emissions scenario¹; notes that as the planet warms, wildfires and associated air pollution are expected to increase, even under a low emissions scenario and notes that in addition to human health impacts, this will also affect ecosystems as air pollutants settle from the atmosphere to the earth's surface; points to how the climate crisis has an impact on biodiversity and the reduction of ecosystems' resilience and the subsequent impacts for public health, and therefore insists on the importance of a One Health Approach;
45. 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; 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;

¹ World Meteorological Organization, '[WMO Air Quality and Climate Bulletin highlights impacts of wildfires](#)', 7 September 2022.

46. Asks that Council Directive 2003/96/EC on the taxation of energy products and electricity¹ be revised in order to include an exemption to the internal consumption tax on energy products for fire fighters in the course of their duties;

Water

47. Calls on the Commission to present a comprehensive EU water strategy including the organisation with Member States of a European water conference in order to rapidly develop guidelines on the management of transnational shared river basins, especially in the event of multi-annual droughts, and to ensure a balanced prioritisation between water uses;
48. Calls on the Commission to coordinate the development of comprehensive regional or national plans from well to final use in order to tackle water leakage and seepage due to low-quality or poorly maintained infrastructure, including at basin, urban and farm level, and to exchange best practice for this purpose;
49. Calls on the Commission to support increased Member State efforts to increase the use of water reuse techniques, water-saving irrigation technologies and practices, green roof technologies, smart showers and toilets, in the water sector, including supply, sanitation and storm water management, and across all industrial, residential and commercial water cycles and applications; calls for the amendment of current legislation to encourage the reuse of water in industries that use a lot of water while respecting the strictest quality criteria, as well as in offices and homes by reusing grey water; recalls that water management is of crucial importance to minimising the negative effects of climate change, protecting water and food security, as well as biodiversity, and supporting healthy soils;
50. Points out that the energy sector is a large consumer of water in Europe, that the water sector itself consumes a lot of energy for water abstraction, pumping, heating, cooling, cleaning and desalination; points to the impact low water levels have had on the energy sector and certain industries; highlights that improved water efficiency can have a direct impact on the reduction of energy consumption and climate change;
51. Underlines the need to involve citizens in water management; encourages the Member States to take measures to ensure access to water intended for vulnerable and marginalised groups in line with the Directive and to take further action to ensure the provision of tap water; recalls states' obligations to ensure the human right to drinking water, particularly during heat waves and periods of drought, which entails, for instance, the setting-up of participation mechanism, including the implementation of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for large-scale energy infrastructure and extractive industries; stresses the importance of the systematic recognition of customary rights to drinking water and the provision of justiciable remedies (through a complaints mechanism) for cases of human rights violations;

¹ 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).

52. Underlines the importance of preventing speculation on water in order to ensure fair access and good resource management; calls for a ban on trading water as a commodity on financial markets;

International and Social Dimension

53. Stresses that across Europe, many people live in outdated and run-down housing and unsatisfactory living conditions, making them more vulnerable to the impacts of extreme weather patterns; recalls that access to adequate housing is a fundamental right; calls for the swift adoption of an ambitious social climate fund in order to support the most disadvantaged groups, in particular to increase the energy efficiency of their homes and decarbonise their heating and cooling systems, including by the integration of energy from renewable sources, which will enable them to lower their energy bills and also improve their quality of life;
54. 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;
55. Recalls that health and safety of workers is an EU competence and that in line with Directive 89/391/EEC¹, workers should be protected from any risks, including emerging risks; calls on the Commission to thoroughly and urgently assess the new and emerging risks of climate change on occupational health and safety in order to better protect workers from exposure to higher temperatures, natural ultraviolet radiation and other related and safety hazards, in particular in the construction, agricultural and public service sectors; points out that gender-differentiated roles also cause differentiated vulnerabilities of women and men to the effects of climate change, and that climate change impacts exacerbate gender inequalities;
56. 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;
57. Expresses its deepest sympathies with the people of Pakistan, who have suffered from the deadly impacts of the climate crisis, and acknowledges that Pakistan contributes

¹ Council Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work (OJ L 183, 29.6.1989, p. 1).

very little to the climate crisis; notes that the EU has allocated an initial EUR 1.8 million in humanitarian assistance for flood victims, but acknowledges that this is not commensurate with properly addressing the needs of the people and communities affected;

58. Stresses the importance of advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; welcomes the ministerial declaration adopted this summer at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which notes that droughts and floods are challenges of a global dimension felt most strongly by developing countries, as well as people in vulnerable situations, especially indigenous peoples and local communities; reminds developed countries of the need to show solidarity with developing countries, and particularly the most vulnerable;
59. Recalls that 2021-2030 is the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and expects nature restoration to be the hallmark of this decade in the EU; encourages all parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to urgently implement nature restoration measures in their territories;
60. Notes that countries around the world have also been impacted by serious and record-breaking droughts, including a record-breaking drought in China; calls for closer cooperation with international partners on the issue of droughts, wildfires and other climate change impacts; calls on the EU to strive for enhanced dialogue in these areas, including at COP27, in order to exchange knowledge and mutually improve drought management;
61. Stresses that early warning systems are critical to effective adaptation, particularly in relation to wildfires and floods, but are not available to a large part of the world; supports the WMO's early warning services initiative and hopes that it will be implemented swiftly in order to save as many lives as soon as possible from the impacts of the climate crisis; encourages the Member States to share early warning system technology;
62. Underscores that the drought in the Horn of Africa has placed 22 million people at risk of starvation according to the UN; notes that problems with food access and hunger in countries outside the EU are being exacerbated by the climate crisis as well as geopolitical forces; calls for the EU to prioritise human rights-based and coherent food and nutrition security policies; points to how the climate crisis is compounding humanitarian crises around the world, notably in Afghanistan, where drought is a contributing factor in depriving 20 million Afghans of food;
63. Stresses that the EU must be ready for climate-induced displacement and recognises the need for adequate measures to be taken to protect the human rights of populations under threat from the effects of climate change; considers that such displacement should be addressed at an international level; calls on the Commission and the Member States to cooperate on the development of an international framework to address climate-induced displacement and migration both at international forums and in the EU's external action; encourages the Commission and the Member States to work together to support people who have been displaced due to climate change and who are no longer able to live in their places of residence; underlines that the UN Human Rights Committee has ruled that states must take into account the human rights impacts of the climate crisis in the country of origin when considering the deportation of asylum seekers;

64. Calls for increased investments in education and awareness-raising for European citizens on natural disasters; calls for the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction be promoted with visible EU initiatives;

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