

Address by Mr Joseph FALZON (EPP) Malta

on the report: "Water – a source of conflicts" presented by Mr Bernard MARQUET, Monaco on behalf of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs

We take it for granted, we waste it, ...and still, today, nearly 1 billion people in the developing world don't have access to it. Clean, safe drinking water is scarce. It is the foundation of life, a basic human need.

As more people put ever increasing demands on limited supplies, the cost and effort to build or even maintain access to water will increase. Importance of political and social stability will only grow with the crisis and demand for water, besides, global climatic changes make water supply and demand more problematic and uncertain. The report outlines the links between water and conflict, and presents some of the issues and information that make it possible to assess when and where water related conflicts are most likely to occur.

Where water is scarce, competition for limited supplies lead nations to see access to water as a matter of national security. There are several circumstances in which water resources have been the objectives on interstate conflict and how they have been used as instruments of war.

This report is a series of which I refer to as 'The Marquet initiative'

I thank Mr Marquet for all his genuine, sincere, and very thoughtful contributions on various subjects regarding water.

I refer also to the report on 'Water – a strategic challenge in the Mediterranean'

His contribution in the 5th World Water Forum and his contribution in preparation of the upcoming 6th World Water Forum to be held next Year.

Besides he was instrumental, in organizing the Conference on Conventions of International Waters, which I had the honour to chair, which was addressed by distinctive personalities and His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco.

Dear Members of this Assembly. The reports and work emanating from the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs Committee, as can be seen even from this part session, highlights the facts that the preservation of the Environment is vital for the basic functions of societies.

Environmental threats need to be addressed, at par, with all other issues threatening the rights of human beings and mankind. How can you succeed in health, food and water without protecting the Environment, How can economies develop further without the preservation of the Environment.

I expect, that the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE , with its mission and mandate, will put on top of its agenda environmental matters so as not to undermine human rights. This bears duties and responsibilities on all of us.

Our societies tends to address difficulties when its often too late, this happens in almost all sectors, be they of a social, health, poverty, climate change or financial nature. We are living in an era whereby countries resolve their financial situations by massive bailouts. I bring to the attention of this Assembly that while you can bailout economies you can never bailout the Environment.

