

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean: promoting climate action?

An analysis of its climate and energy debates

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Abstract

This paper investigates the role of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM) in the promotion of climate action in the region. While its existence originates in an interest to promote energy security, socioeconomic development and stability in the region, in the past decade, climate action increasingly became a key priority on the agenda of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), being equally a top priority since for the EU. Although the PA-UfM lacks formal power in decision-making, literature on inter-parliamentary cooperation and parliamentary diplomacy has identified the potential of inter-regional parliamentary deliberation to address legitimacy concerns of international agreements and the inter-parliamentary assemblies' deliberative and monitoring functions as key for their involvement in international affairs. The analysis of PA-UfM's debates and outputs relating to climate and energy presented in this paper is based on quantitative and qualitative text analysis, in-depth semi-structured interviews and participatory observation. On the one hand, the analysis indicates that the PA-UfM has indeed used its monitoring and deliberative functions to promote climate action in the partnership. However, a deeper analysis of the results shows that there are several limitations to its climate action promotion, often related to its energy interests, limiting its potential contribution to the legitimacy of the UfM's climate action.

1. Introduction

The 2000s witnessed challenges for the EU such as the influx of migrants and instability at Europe's southern doorstep instigated by among others the Arab Spring. This has contributed to the EU being challenged from within, which has been dramatically shown by the Brexit and the appearance of

nationalist¹ or populist² tendencies in European countries (Verbeek & Zaslove, 2015). The EU has since put the Mediterranean Area upfront as a priority area.

Throughout the same decade also climate change policy has become a key dimension of European Foreign Policy. The 2015 Paris Agreement adopted at the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UNFCCC constitutes a major landmark for this combat against climate change. Ever since, negotiations to concretize the Paris Agreement have been slow and difficult, not only because of the withdrawal of the US but also because of widely diverging views between industrialized countries and developing countries. From different regions the legitimacy of the climate deal has been fundamentally opposed. Three years later after its adoption, the 24th COP in Katowice, Poland, (2018) aimed at agreeing on a rulebook to implement the Paris Agreement. The outcome document after two weeks of tense negotiations, is received with mixed reactions, but it is generally acknowledged that it will not help the world to avoid catastrophic climate change.

This paper focuses on climate change debates in the EU's interregional network. Specifically, it analyzes how inter-regional parliamentary deliberation might contribute to addressing the abovementioned legitimacy concerns in the Mediterranean area. Inter-regionalism and the combat against climate change have a strong position in EU's external policy (De Lombaerde, Söderbaum, & Wunderlich, 2015). Although inter-regionalism is considered as a major instrument to export the EU's norms (Hardacre & Smith, 2009), the EU's approach suffered from the said democratic deficits.

The parliamentarisation of the EU's inter-regionalism, referring to the growth of interregional parliamentary assemblies, has the potential to improve legitimacy of the inter-governmental agreements between the EU and various regions ((Costa, Dri, & Stavridis, 2013), (Stavridis & Irrera, 2015), (Cofelice, 2019), (Raube, Müftüler-Bac, & Wouters, 2019)). While these institutions have also been challenged in terms of their purpose and rationale (Delputte, 2012, 2013), (Herranz-Surrallés, 2019), their monitoring and deliberative functions have the potential to contribute to the legitimacy of the EU's diplomacy and

¹ *"Nationalism is about protecting the entire country including its population, economy, agriculture and welfare state from an all-encroaching Brussels, contemporary populism may or may not take a similar position towards European integration including its foreign policy"* (Verbeek & Zaslove, 2015).

² *"One of the claims of populism is that people are homogenous. This implies that although not opposing the foundations of liberal democracy (populism is not anti-system), populism is skeptical of liberal democracy's central features, specifically pluralism"* (Verbeek & Zaslove, 2015).

external relations (Delputte & Williams, 2016), (Lord, 2019). This paper aims to contribute to these debates by analyzing parliamentary engagement regarding climate change in EU's inter-regional relations with the Mediterranean Neighbourhood.

Launched in 2008, and building on the Barcelona Process (1995), the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) is an intergovernmental Euro-Mediterranean organization bringing together 43 countries, including the 28 European Union (EU) Member States and 15 countries of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean. This hybrid or quasi-interregional organization³ (De Lombaerde, Söderbaum, & Wunderlich, 2015) originates in an interest to promote energy security, socioeconomic development and stability in the region. Through this organization, the EU and its regional partners try to tighten its institutional cohesion (De Lombaerde & Schulz, 2009). In the past decade, climate action increasingly became a key priority on the agenda of the UfM (Groen, 2015), as exemplified by the UfM Ministerial meeting on Environment and Climate Change (2014), the launch of the UfM Climate Change Expert Group (CCEG) (2014) or the UfM's active participation to the MedCOP Climate (2016). Moreover, since 2012 several UfM labelled projects have been launched under the UfM's six priority areas, including on 'Climate Change and Energy'⁴.

This paper puts the focus on the parliamentary dimension of the UfM, namely the Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM (PA-UfM), whose origins date back to the very beginning of the Barcelona Process. Indeed, more than twenty years ago, the predecessor of the PA-UfM, namely the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Forum, convened for the very first time and has undergone several changes ever since, with the aim to strengthen its monitoring and deliberative functions. More specifically, this paper will investigate to what extent and how climate action has been promoted by the PA-UfM since 2005 to analyse how the PA-UfM took up its role. For this purpose, an analysis of the PA-UfM's debates and outputs relating to climate and energy is performed. The analysis is based on text analysis, in-depth semi-structured interviews and participatory observation. At a first stage, a quantitative analysis of 71 Recommendations has been done to investigate to what extent and how the priority areas climate change and energy figures in the outputs of the PA-UfM's deliberations. For this purpose, 5 Recommendations of

³ Hybrid or quasi-interregional organization is an organized region negotiating with another unorganized or dispersed region as the Mediterranean Region is (De Lombaerde, Söderbaum, & Wunderlich, 2015).

⁴ The other priority areas are Water & Environment, Business Development & Employment, Higher Education & Research, Transport & Urban Development, Social & Civil Affairs.

the Forum from 1998 to 2004 and 66 Recommendations of the Standing Committees⁵ from 2005 to 2019 were examined. This exercise was complemented by a further analysis of the debates, based on the Minutes of the 'Committee on Energy, Environment and Water' and the Delegation of the European Parliament to the PA-UfM. In a second phase, the preliminary findings of this analysis were further explored via participatory observation and 15 semi-structured interviews in the margins of the 15th Plenary Meeting of the PA-UfM in Strasbourg in February 2019.

By focusing on the parliamentary dimension of inter-regional cooperation on climate change in the Mediterranean, one of the regions which will face the most severe consequences of climate change (Giorgi & Lionello, 2008), this research builds on and aims to contribute to three different strands of literature.

First, scholarship on the UfM focuses mainly on the transformation of the Barcelona Declaration into the Union for the Mediterranean (see for example Rosa Balfour (2009) and Gillespie Richard (2008)) and the role of the EU in the UfM (see for example Stefania Panebianco (2003), Bicchi Federica (2011)). Although authors such as Stelios Stavridis and Roderick Pace (2010) have looked into the role of the Inter-parliamentary institutions in the Mediterranean, attention to the PA-UfM remains low.

Second, although there is an increased attention to the role of inter-parliamentary cooperation and the role of parliamentary scrutiny and diplomacy in the EU's external action (see for example the edited volume by Olivier Costa, Clarissa Dri and Stelios Stavridis (2013) on the role of inter-parliamentary institutions, the edited volume by Daniela Irrera and Stelios Stavridis (2015) on the EU's external policy via inter-parliamentary diplomacy, or the more recent edited volume by Raube, Müftüler-Baç and Wouters (2019) on parliamentary cooperation and diplomacy in EU external relations), this literature has barely looked at the potential of inter-regional parliamentary cooperation on climate change. Indeed, while this scholarship has increasingly tackled theoretical ((Stavridis & Jančić, 2016), (Beetham, 2006)) and institutional ((Stavridis Stelios and Roderick Pace, 2010), (Delputte & Williams, 2016)) questions, focused on specific inter-parliamentary institutions (Scotti, 2016) and their role in relation to specific issues such as trade (Delputte & Williams, 2016) or peace and security ((Cofelice, 2016), (Herranz-Surrallés, 2019)), so

⁵ The five Standing Committees are the Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights; the Committee on Economic and Financial Issues, Social Affairs and Education; the Committee on the Promotion of the Quality of Life, Human Exchanges and Culture; the Committee on Women's rights in the Euro-Mediterranean Countries and the Committee on Energy and the Environment.

far, to our knowledge, little to no attention has been paid to their role in relation to the global fight against climate change.

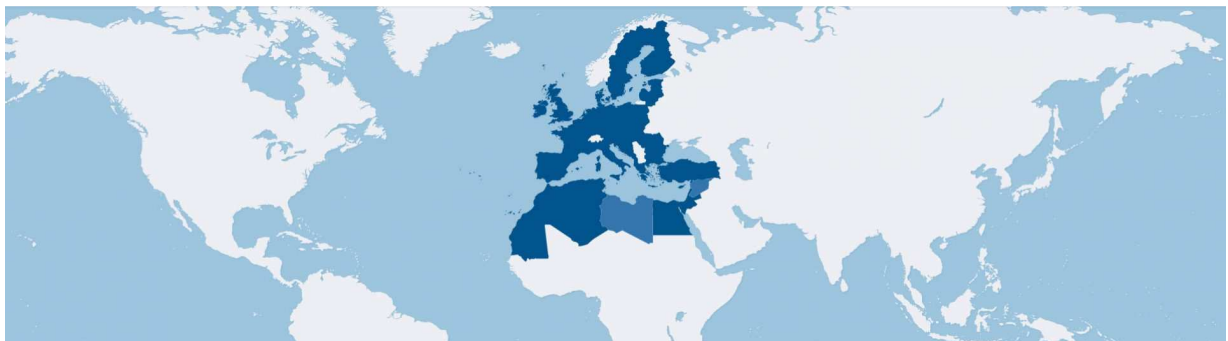
Finally, by exploring the potential of parliamentary involvement to contribute to the legitimacy of the complex regional, inter-regional and international climate change governance, it hopes to contribute to debates on the crisis of the international liberal order (ILO) and the EU.

The next section will introduce the UfM's agenda on climate action. Based on a review of the literature on inter-parliamentary cooperation, section three discusses the potential role the PA-UfM in relation to climate action. Section four presents the basic analytical framework and outlines the methodology of this research. Section five discusses the results of the analysis, while the paper ends with some concluding remarks including some tentative explanations and areas for future research.

2. The UfM and climate action

Launched in 1995 through the Barcelona Declaration, the current Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) is an intergovernmental Euro-Mediterranean organization bringing together the countries of the European Union and 15 countries of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean⁶. The UfM provides a forum for regional cooperation and dialogue, as well as for the implementation of concrete projects. It is unique in that it brings delegates together from Palestine, Turkey, Cyprus, Balkans and EU countries, countries of the Northern, Eastern and Southern shores.

Figure 1: The Members of the Union for the Mediterranean.



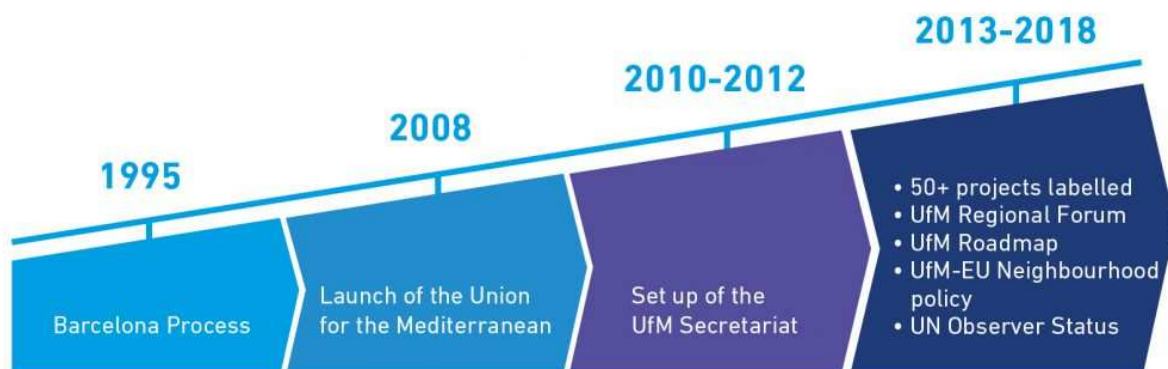
(<https://ufmsecretariat.org/who-we-are/member-states/>)

⁶ Its 43 members are Albania, Algeria, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, The Netherlands, Palestine, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Syria (suspended since December 1, 2011), Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom. Libya is an observer.

The Organisation is chaired by a co-presidency between the Northern and Southern Mediterranean Countries. Since 2012 it is assumed by the European Union on the Northern side and Jordan on the Southern side.

The UfM is organized alongside three components: the 'political fora' which define the scope of the common agenda, 'dialogue platforms' involving more than 25000 stakeholders from around the Mediterranean, and 'regional projects' of which 51 projects have been launched.

Figure 2: History of the Union for the Mediterranean.



(<https://ufmsecretariat.org/who-we-are/history/>)

Climate action increasingly became a formal priority on the agenda of the UfM, given the various climate challenges in the Mediterranean region. The Mediterranean area is one of the world's hotspots due to water scarcity, desertification, concentration of economic activities and population in coastal areas and the reliance on climate-sensitive agriculture. Climate change causes reduced crop yields leading to increased risk of hunger, shortages of water and food, greater risks to health and life, spread of climate sensitive diseases and increased risk of extinction of plant and animal species (UNFCCC, 2007). For five domains in the Mediterranean area (water, ecosystems, food, health and security) current climate change and future scenarios consistently point to significant and increasing risk in the coming decades (Cramer Wolfgang et al, 2018).

In the context of the 2014 UfM Ministerial meeting on Environment and Climate Change, the UfM Climate Change Expert Group (UfM CCEG) has been created to act as the main climate policy dialogue platform in the Mediterranean. The strategic objectives of the Group are threefold. First to promote a Mediterranean agenda for energy as well as for climate action linked to the global agenda and international fora. Second,

to reinforce and animate a structured regional dialogue on energy and climate action among Member States, regional organisations, financial institutions, civil society, private sector and experts. Third, to support the promotion of projects and initiatives as well as their implementation and replicability, in line with the priorities identified within the dialogue platforms. The aim of the UfM climate meetings is to share experiences and knowledge about common climate action challenges impacting the region, stimulate the discussions on climate change mitigation and adaptation actions, and catalyse the identification, support and development of specific projects and initiatives related to low-emission and climate-resilient development. Indeed, since 2012 51 UfM labelled projects have been launched under the UfM's six priority areas, including on 'Climate Change and Energy'⁷.

However, the UfM's agenda on climate change should be met with scepticism. A closer look at the projects financed under the partnership shows that only three projects have been launched under the 'Energy and Climate' label⁸. All three of them focus on energy while none of the projects focus on climate change. Moreover, when analysing the situation in the Mediterranean area further, the exploration of fossil fuels in the region hasn't stopped. New drilling concessions were given to the territorial seabed, which causes not only disputes among the Mediterranean countries but also environmental damage because of the drilling and of the use of the fossil fuels extracted (Mohamed, 2018). An example is the 10 concessions given by Egypt in 2018 to three European companies, the Italian energy company 'Eni', the 'British Petroleum' company and the Italian company 'Edison'.

3. The PA-UfM and climate action

The PA-UfM is the parliamentary dimension of the Barcelona Process and aims 'to bring parliamentary support, impetus and influence to the consolidation and development of this process' (PA-UfM, 2018). It consists of 280 elected representatives equally distributed between the EU and its Southern partner countries. At least once a year a plenary meeting is held which is prepared by the Bureau. The Bureau of the PA-UfM consists of four members of which one president and three vice-presidents. Two members are from the Southern and two from the Northern Mediterranean partner countries. The European

⁷ The other priority areas are 'Water & Environment', 'Business Development & Employment', 'Higher Education & Research', 'Transport & Urban Development', 'Social & Civil Affairs'.

⁸ The three projects are 'The SEMed Private Renewable Energy Framework "SPREF"', the 'Tafila Wind Farm' and 'UfM Energy University by Schneider Electric'

Parliament is a permanent member of the Bureau. Its function is to coordinate and represent the Assembly⁹.

According to the Rules of Procedure 'the PA-UfM aims to advance the visibility and transparency of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the alignment of the UfM's work with public interest and expectation, democratic legitimacy of cooperation within the Mediterranean region and dialog between Israel, Palestine and other Arab elected officials'. The Rules of Procedure further mention that 'it shall debate in public issues arising from the Barcelona Process, and in particular all matters of common interest that are of concern to the member countries'¹⁰.

The PA-UfM has five Standing Committees which are responsible for monitoring the priority areas of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. At the creation in 2004, three Standing Committees were established, namely the Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights, the Committee on Economic & Financial Affairs, Social Affairs & Education and the Committee on Improving the Quality of Life, Exchanges between Civil Societies & Culture. The Women's Rights in Euro-Mediterranean Countries Committee was established in 2007, while the Energy, Environmental and Water Committee was established in 2009. The Committees are responsible for monitoring their respective thematic areas of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and meet at least once a year (PA-UfM, 2018). Since 2005, during the yearly plenary meeting, every Standing Committee has issued a Recommendation indicating its concerns in the implementation of the Partnership¹¹.

Although the PA-UfM lacks formal power in decision-making, literature on inter-parliamentary cooperation and parliamentary diplomacy¹² has identified inter-parliamentary assemblies' deliberative and monitoring functions as key for their involvement in international affairs. Following Costa and Dri the

⁹ <https://paufm.org/bureau/#> - consulted 3 May 2019.

¹⁰ Rules of Procedure, https://paufm.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/343_1_EN.pdf - consulted 24 April 2019.

¹¹ With exceptions for two Standing Committees. The Women's Rights in Euro-Mediterranean Countries Committee did not issue a Recommendation in 2018. The Energy, Environmental and Water Committee did not agree upon a Recommendation in 2018 and 2019.

¹² In the broadest sense parliamentary diplomacy could be defined as individual or collective action by parliamentarians aimed at 'catalyzing, facilitating and strengthening the existing constitutional functions of parliaments through dialogues between peers on countless open policy questions across continents and levels of governance' (Costa, Dri & Stavridis, 2013).

Parliament is one of the institutions whose power and interregional activity has increased in recent decades (Costa & Dri, 2014). We can divide the influence of parliamentary diplomacy in interregional relations in two categories. First, they can help assure the legitimization of multi-level governance and democratic control of public policies (Cofelice & Stavridis, 2017). As Fasone, Delputte & Longo claim, although inter-parliamentary assemblies are devoid of law-making powers, their constitutional role is performed by enhancing the visibility and public exposure of disputable decisions that have been taken by one or more national authorities (Fasone, Delputte & Longo, 2016). Hence the importance of their monitoring function to scrutinize the actions of governmental actors (Beetham, 2006). Parliaments have a forum role in debating and criticising all points of view in public and in relation to one another. Also co-operation between parliaments can presumably reduce dangers that parliaments feel individually constrained from challenging decisions they might have opposed jointly and helps overcome asymmetries of information and information costs (Lord, August 2017). They create a direct channel between constituents and international organizations (Cofelice, 2018) and can bring a moral dimension to international politics (Beetham, 2006). Parliamentary diplomacy provides mechanisms for appraising the legitimacy of regional governance adding democratic representation to the regional organisation.

Secondly, in contrast to diplomats and thanks to their flexibility to debate more openly with their counterparts from other countries, parliamentarians have the potential to advance solutions to seemingly intractable problems (Beetham, 2006) or as the President of the Netherlands Senate, Ankie Broekers-Knol, has stated 'parliamentarians are ideally placed to build bridges between conflicting parties and they are not bound by the positions taken by the government' (Broekers-Knol, 2014, cited in Stavridis & Jančić, 2016). Also Stavridis and Jančić argue that these parliamentary forums foster public debate on global diplomatic affairs and seek to have an impact in delicate situations where intergovernmental channels of international politics have been exhausted or cannot be used (Stavridis & Jančić, 2016). The parliamentary setting should allow participants to behave less strategically and update their opinions based on arguments and new information. Moreover, in contrast to national parliaments, debates in inter-parliamentary institutions are less oriented towards voting or mobilizing constituencies, but more towards aggregating new information and arguments and weighing positions (Stavridis & Pace, 2010). Parliamentary diplomacy should increase mutual understanding between countries, promote democracy, contributing to international conflict resolution, supporting regional cooperation with the aim of greater integration or decentralization and enhancing technical and administrative cooperation between parliaments ((Stavridis & Jančić, 2016), (Anne-Marie Slaughter, 2004)).

Based on the climate challenges in the Mediterranean described above, its prioritization on the agenda of the UfM, and the potential of the PA-UfM to exercise its monitoring and deliberative functions, climate change is expected to figure frequently in the debates and outcomes of the PA-UfM. The next section will explain the research approach adopted for the analysis presented in this paper.

4. Methodology

This paper investigates to what extent and how climate action has been promoted by the PA-UfM since 2005. It analyses if and how the Parliamentary Assembly took up its monitoring and scrutinizing role on the subject of climate change. The research is based on quantitative and qualitative text analysis, in-depth semi-structured interviews (based on the questions in annex 3) and participatory observation.

At a first stage, a quantitative analysis of 71 Recommendations has been done to investigate to what extent and how climate change figures in the outputs of the PA-UfM's deliberations. For this purpose, 5 Recommendations of the Forum from 1998 to 2004 and 66 Recommendations of the Standing Committees¹³ from 2005 to 2019 were examined. Since climate change didn't occur in the Recommendations until 2004, these weren't analysed any further.

Out of the reading of these Recommendations it appeared that climate change was mostly related to energy, which is an important factor in this region¹⁴. Because of this, a second reading of the 66 Recommendations has been made, this time focused on energy. The analysis of the Recommendations focused on three sub-questions: 1) *to what extent?* – how often does climate change and energy appear in the Recommendations of the different Committees, 2) *how?* – in which context does climate change and energy appear and, 3) *evolution?* – how does the frequency and the context in which climate change and energy appear evolve over time.

¹³ The five Standing Committees are the Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights; the Committee on Economic and Financial Issues, Social Affairs and Education; the Committee on the Promotion of the Quality of Life, Human Exchanges and Culture; the Committee on Women's rights in the Euro-Mediterranean Countries and the Committee on Energy and the Environment.

¹⁴ Cf. renewable energy being a priority area (e.g. the Mediterranean Solar Plan) and the fossil fuel resources present in the area on which some of the Mediterranean member countries are dependent (e.g. for Algeria, 97% of its foreign income comes from the export of oil and gas).

After this second text screening, the Minutes were read of the meetings of the Committee on Energy, Environment and Water and the Minutes of the meetings of the Delegation of the European Parliament to the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Parliamentary Assembly (DMED). The Minutes facilitated the understanding of the context but unfortunately those of the Committee were rather limited in the extent to what was said by whom and those of the DMED only put forward the vision of the delegates of the European Parliament. So although, it gave an impression, these documents were only used as background information to conduct the second phase of my analysis.

In a second phase, the preliminary findings of this analysis were further explored via participatory observation and semi-structured interviews during the 15th Plenary Meeting of the PA-UfM in Strasbourg in February 2019. More specifically, in the margins of the meeting and during the weeks after the plenary meeting a total of 15 interviews were conducted with a reasonable distribution among the members. The participatory observation and the interviews tried to find out who put the climate change debates forward, which factors stimulated or hindered the debates on climate change, in which context it appeared most and why. It also tried to find out how the atmosphere was in general and how the delegates found themselves in the working of the PA UfM.

5. Findings

The results of this analysis are presented in the tables below. The years without a recommendation are shaded in grey. The data starts in 2005 as, is mentioned above, climate change has only appeared in the recommendations since 2005¹⁵. Secondly, although it could be that references have been made in the 71 Recommendations to climate change, if they aren't explicit, they aren't taken into account¹⁶.

This analysis indicates that on the one hand, the PA-UfM has indeed used its monitoring and deliberative functions to promote climate action in the partnership. However, a deeper analysis of the results shows

¹⁵ Before, in the five Final Recommendations of the Parliamentary Forum of the Union for the Mediterranean between 1998 and 2004 it did not appear. The Forums took place in 1998, February 2001, November 2001, 2002 and 2003.

¹⁶ To just mention one example: in the Recommendations of the Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights of 2019 it is mentioned that "all the root causes of migration should be addressed". Although in other parts, they mention climate change as a root cause, as it isn't explicitly mentioned here, it hasn't been taken into account in the counting.

that there are several limitations to its climate action promotion, limiting its potential contribution to the legitimacy of UfM's climate action.

Four findings indicate that the PA-UfM has indeed used its monitoring and deliberative functions to promote climate action in the partnership.

First, climate change clearly got its place in the Recommendations. Since 2005 it has been present without interruption (see table 1). It had peaks in 2009, 2011 and 2016. In 2009, the first, then still Ad-hoc Committee on Energy, Environment and Water was held. It appeared 6 times in that Committee causing it to have a first peak of the subject climate change in the Recommendations, with in total appearing 8 times in all the Recommendations of that year. In 2011, with a peak of 13 times, climate change frequented in the Committee on Energy, Environment and Water, the Committee on Improving Quality of Life, Exchanges between Civil Societies and Culture and in the Committee on Economic and Financial Affairs, Social Affairs and Education.

Table 1: Word count of the appearance of Climate Change and Global Warming in the Recommendations between 2005 and 2019.

Word count (Climate Change + Global Warming)	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Energy, Environment and Water					6	2	6	0	2	1	4	8	1			30
Women's Rights in Euro-Mediterranean Countries			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0
Improving Quality of Life, Exchanges Between Civil Societies and Culture	1	0	3	0	0	0	5	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	11
Economical and Financial Affairs, Social Affairs and Education	0	1	3	3	2	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	13
Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Total	1	1	6	3	8	3	13	2	2	1	4	8	2	1	1	56

During the interviews, one delegate said over 2011: *“these were the years that the meetings were well prepared with attention paid to what really matters to all of us”*. Another delegate mentioned: *“the chair was very active, working closely with the Union for the Mediterranean to get things done”*. 2011 was the year just in front of the new priority setting of the Union for the Mediterranean, with in 2012, climate change appearing as one of the six priority areas together with energy in the UfM. From this it seems that the PA UfM functioned well in promoting climate action. But in 2015, it appeared only 4 times, which seems moderate being the year of the Paris Agreement. This year the migration crisis took over every Recommendation. In 2016, the COP 22 had been organised in Morocco. Just before the COP, the plenary meeting of the PA-UfM took place, also in Morocco. In that year, climate change appeared again higher on the agenda with a frequency of 8 appearances, of which half of them appeared in the Recommendation of the Energy, Environment and Water Committee on measures to counter the consequences of climate change.

Second, from table 2 we can deduct that climate change has been brought into relation with many issues indicating that it has been seen in a broad perspective. Table 2 (how?) represents the words with reference to climate change. Before drawing the second table, a list of words had been composed out of literature that appeared important when talking about climate change in the Mediterranean. This list has been compared with the words found in the Recommendations. The words which were deducted from literature in relation to climate change in the Mediterranean are underlined in table 2.

Table 2: Climate change in the Recommendations connected with the following terms between 2005 and 2019.

CC	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Policy	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	5
<u>Education</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Environment	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	5
New technologies	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	5
Tourism	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<u>Migration</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	4
Energy	0	1	2	3	2	2	1	0	1	1	2	4	1	0	0	20
<u>Water</u>	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	4
Finance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Summits/EU goals/ENP	0	1	5	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	14
<u>Sea</u>	0	0	1	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	10
<u>Agriculture/Food security</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	4
<u>Desertification</u>	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
World Heritage	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
<u>Ecosystems/Biodiversity</u>	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
<u>Infrastructure</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
<u>Adaptation</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	1	2	10	5	10	6	16	2	3	3	5	20	4	1	1	89

In 2009 the promotion of alternative energy resources and the consequences of climate change were put forward in both Committees where climate change appeared. It recommends that the commitments of the clean development mechanisms of the Kyoto Treaty be oriented toward energy projects (Ad-hoc Committee on Energy and the Environment). In 2011, next to the Sea, climate change has been brought in relation with other themes such as biodiversity, infrastructure¹⁷, migration and the world heritage. It seems that climate change has been seen in a broader perspective just one year upfront of the priority setting of the UfM. In 2016, the subjects with which climate change was linked were manifold, namely

¹⁷ ... climate in relation with infrastructure development and especially regarding maritime security, as well as for the transportation of oil and chemicals, while ensuring the need for sustainable mobility...
 ...develop the rail network ... to reduce CO₂ emissions and fight against climate change by promoting a modal shift to environmentally friendly transport modes (Committee in Economic and Financial Affairs, Social Affairs and Education).

policy, environment, new technologies, energy, finance, EU goals, adaptation measures (although appearing only once) and the Sea. As one delegate said it: “*climate change is important. It touches upon every area of our life in the Mediterranean area, and we all know it. People from the Northern, Eastern and Southern Mediterranean Countries*”.

Third, fossil fuels were less and less promoted. While in 2007, fossil fuels were still stimulated to be invested in, in the following years, it has only been mentioned when talking about phasing out or taking environmental assessments of fossil fuels. Table 3 shows that fossil fuels were mentioned only a few times and almost always in the context of a plea against a rise in fossil fuels. In 2014, the Committee on Energy, Environment and Water made a clear call against fossil fuels for clean energy technologies with the request to develop a strategy for the replacement of fossil fuels by means of ambitious national targets and through intensified regional cooperation. In 2016 and 2017 emphasis was put on the negative consequences of hydrocarbons, from its exploration and its extraction until its transportation.

Table 3: Energy in the Recommendations connected with the following terms between 2005 and 2019.

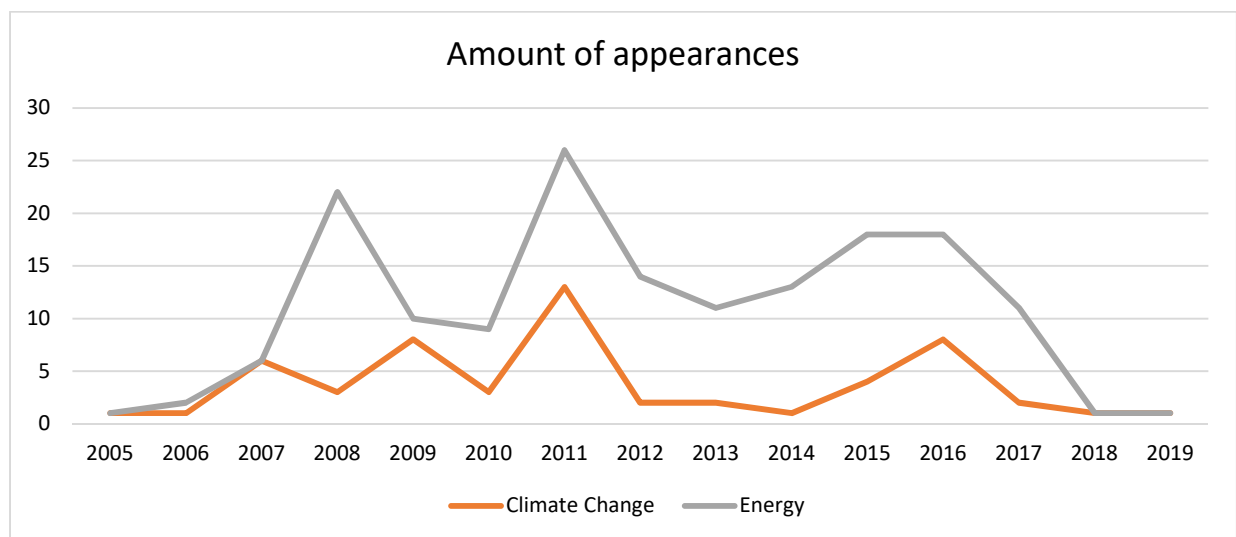
Energy	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Environment	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1			6
Energy efficiency	0	1	1	2	0	2	1	1	6	4	1	2	0			21
Clean energy	0	1	2	7	3	4	6	10	4	2	6	2	4			51
Security	0	1	0	2	0	0	3	0	2	1	0	0	0			9
Solidarity	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	2	0			6
Education and training	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0			5
Transport	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0			2
Economy	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	3	2	2	0	0			11
Conservation	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			1
Migration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1			2
Infrastructure	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	1			9
Fossil fuels	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1			6
Technologies/research	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	1	0			9
Development Goals	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1			4
Climate change	0	1	2	3	2	2	1	0	1	1	2	4	1			20
Finance	0	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0			5
Total	1	8	9	24	7	8	21	14	23	13	16	13	10	0	0	167

Fourth, renewable energy and energy efficiency became the hot topics when talking about energy. While in the Barcelona Declaration, fossil fuels were still promoted, this changed rapidly after 2007. Energy efficiency and clean energy are by far the two most mentioned subjects when the Recommendations mentioned energy (see table 3).

From the above it seems that climate change has been featuring high in the debates and outcomes of the PA-UfM gatherings. However, when digging deeper into the results, some qualifications should be made, which point to the limitations of the PA-UfM in its climate action promotion.

First, climate change has been mentioned mostly in relation to energy in the Recommendations (see table 2). This is in contrast to the almost absence of issues that are defined in the literature to be of utmost importance for climate change in the specific region of the Mediterranean such as adaptation measures, water, food security, agriculture and finance (see the words underlined in table 2). Energy also did appear more frequently in the Recommendations which makes it seemingly a more important issue for the PA-UfM. Figure 1 represents the amount of appearances of climate change and energy. If we compare the frequency that energy appeared² with that of climate change we perceive that they make the same evolution, although energy appearing much more than climate change.

Figure 3: Amount of appearances of climate change and energy in the Recommendations from 2005 until 2019.



Second, it seems that climate change has remained a sectoral issue. Although climate change did appear in other Committees than the Energy, Environmental and Water Committee, this was only marginally or before the Committee on Energy, Environment and Water was established. As can be seen in table 1, in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 climate change disappeared from all the other Committees, except for the Committee on Energy, Environment and Water. It has only been brought in relation to migration in 2011 and 2012 when it was stated that ‘climate change and environmental degradation are becoming an

increasingly common cause of migration'. Ever since, it did not appear in the recommendations of the other Committees. This seems remarkable, as since 2012, climate change became an important strategic priority for the UfM (see part 2 of this paper).

Third, none of the Recommendations of the Committees mention the one-sided focus of UfM projects on energy, and the absence of climate-related projects (see part 2 of this paper). In the same vein, almost no notion is made of the ongoing exploration of fossil fuels in the region. In the recommendation of 2017, which is the last one of the Committee up to now, it is mentioned that *'there should be an environmental impact assessment model made for the concessions given for offshore hydrocarbons prospection, exploration and exploitation, and in the wind energy sector, so as to ensure protection of the maritime environment as a whole, and in particular prohibit the installation of wind turbines near protected marine areas, in order to comply with the principles of liability, accountability and the provision of guarantees and payment of compensation for any environmental damage caused by the use of such concessions'*¹⁸. This question for an environmental impact assessment has already been asked for since the establishment of the Forum. This is a reverse trend as in 2014 the request had been put forward *'to adapt a strategy for the replacement of fossil fuels with the aid of ambitious national targets and through intensified regional cooperation'*. It even seems that this recommendation is harder for the wind energy sector than for the hydrocarbon sector. When confronting the delegates with this observation, the two answers most frequently given were *'there are other priorities in the region'* and *'the one who is chairing the Committee meetings is the most important for the outcome'*. This is a shortcoming of the mission of the Parliamentary Assembly to fulfil its monitoring and scrutinizing function on climate change.

Fourth, it seems that a negative trend has been set. In 2018 climate change was only mentioned once. In that year, the Energy, Environment and Water Committee could not reach an agreement on a recommendation to adopt during the plenary meeting. Because of this, the plenary endorsed the Committee's proposal to select a working group to draft a fresh Recommendation. But the Committee did

¹⁸ To design a common, shared and binding Environmental Impact Assessment model for the issuing of concessions for offshore hydrocarbon prospection, exploration and exploitation, and in the wind energy sector, so as to ensure protection of the maritime environment as a whole, and in particular prohibit the installation of wind turbines near protected marine areas, in order to comply with the principles of liability, accountability and the provision of guarantees and payment of compensation for any environmental damage caused by the use of such concessions.

not convene again during the second half of the year as was foreseen nor during the Plenary in 2019. As a delegate mentions: *“if the chair doesn’t take an initiative to organize a meeting, nothing will happen”*.

6. Concluding remarks

This paper investigates to what extent and how climate action has been promoted by the PA-UfM since 2005. For this purpose, an analysis of the PA-UfM’s debates and outputs relating to climate and energy was performed. The research found that on the one hand the PA-UfM has indeed used its monitoring and deliberative functions to promote climate action in the partnership. It has been in the Recommendations since 2005 and has had several peaks in its frequency. In 2011, it had its highest peak after which climate change became a priority area of the UfM from 2012 onwards via giving the UfM label to projects in the area of ‘Energy and Climate’ and creating the ‘Climate Change Expert Group’.

However, a deeper analysis of the results shows that there are several limitations to its climate action promotion, limiting its potential contribution to the legitimacy of UfM’s climate action. The context in which climate change appeared focused rather on EU priorities than on those of the Mediterranean. The lack of focus on adaptation measures and finance is to say the least notable. Although cooperation in developing renewable energies, for example the Mediterranean Solar Plan may hold a formula for engaging Southern Mediterranean countries in win-win energy projects (Darbouche 2011), the EU’s promotion of renewables is not free from in-built tensions. For example, some authors have pointed out that the promotion of big renewable energy projects in the Southern Mediterranean may end up benefiting only the EU and its renewable energy industry if it fails to alleviate rural energy poverty and does not promote technological and human resources development in local populations (Escribano & San Martín, 2012). Next to this, there seems to be a downward trend what concerns the topic of climate change on the agenda with even disagreement during the past two years. Moreover, important issues such as the new drilling concessions given by Mediterranean countries to European energy companies have hardly been addressed.

To conclude, it seems that the PA UfM has exercised its function of monitoring and deliberation although only partially. Some tentative conclusions for this are put forward.

A first tentative explanation is that the agenda is overtaken by other problems in the region. Out of the counting of climate change in the recommendations, it seems that climate change has indeed been an issue, but did not figure frequently in all the Committees. The most repeated reason following the delegates interviewed was that *‘local conflicts overtook large parts of the meetings’*. Some delegates

assumed that conflicting parties were abusing the meetings for their own political agenda because of which there was no time left for other important issues such as climate change.

A second tentative explanation is that not all parliamentarians are free to say what they think. As Lord (2017) mentions national parliaments can be controlled by their own governments. On the Southern and Eastern shores of the Mediterranean, there is still little democratic practice in spite of the hopes that the so-called 'Arab Spring' raised initially. As some delegations mentioned '*not all parliamentarians are acting independently from their government*'. While another claimed '*it all depends on who is chairing and on a lack or presence of strong personalities in the organisation*'¹⁹.

A third tentative explanation is that there is an asymmetry in the relations. It seems that clean energy has been put forward as the action to take while local consequences around the Mediterranean of climate change have been lost in the Recommendations. One delegate stated that '*the Northern countries not having any border at the Mediterranean Sea have too much impact on this organisation as they have the resources*'. Hence, the PA-UfM largely follows the UfM's approach which seems to put the focus on promoting clean energy.

Out of this, it seems that the PA-UfM does not fully fulfil its potential to contribute to address the legitimacy concerns identified in the introduction of this paper. Further investigation is needed to look closer into these tentative explanations.

¹⁹ Out of the Freedom House Index of 2019 are partly free: Morocco, Montenegro Lebanon, Jordan, Albania, Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Hungary. Are not free: Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Syria, Turkey.

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Annex I: Timeline of the Parliamentary plenary meetings since the first Forum in 1998.

Year	Meeting	Chair
27 November 1995	Barcelona Declaration	Belgium
1998	Forum 1	Belgium
February 2001	Forum 2	Belgium
November 2001	Forum 3	Italy
2002	Forum 4	Italy
2003	Forum 5	Italy
2004	Inaugural Session	Greece
2005	1 st EMPA	Egypt
2006	2 nd EMPA	
2007	3 rd EMPA	
2008	4 th EMPA	
2009	5 th EMPA	
2010	6 th Session of the PA-UfM	
an	7 th Session of the PA-UfM	Italy
2012	8 th Session of the PA-UfM	Morocco
2013	9 th Session of the PA-UfM	Belgium
2014	10 th Session of the PA-UfM	Jordan
2015	11 th Session of the PA-UfM	Portugal
2016	12 th Session of the PA-UfM	Morocco
2017	13 th Session of the PA-UfM	Italy
2018	14 th Session of the PA-UfM	Egypt
2019	15 th Session of the PA-UfM	France

Annex II: Chairs from the (Ad-hoc) Committee on Energy, Environment and Water.

Chair	Years
George Salagoudis (Greece)	2009
Stefan Schennach (Austria)	2010 - 2016
H.E. Samir Murad (Jordan)	2017 - ...