



## EU'S ADAPATION STRATEGY

### An update

EU's Adaptation Strategy goes back to April 2013 - COM(2013) 216 final -. The European Commission's communication to the EP, the Council, the European economic and social committee and the Committee of the regions was based on data provided by the European environment agency (EEA) "Climate change impacts and vulnerability in Europe (2012).

The report underlined that temperatures of the European land area between 2002 and 2011 had been 1.3° above pre-industrial level (higher than the global average), that extreme weather had been more frequent with increased economic losses, public health problems and deaths.

It also pointed out that several economic sectors were dependant on climatic conditions and that utilities providers were also affected. In the large majority of cases, the effects were negative, positive effects (crop yields, forest growth, less energy needed for heating) highly uncertain.

The EEA also proceeded to an estimation of the costs of not adapting to climate change. The agency considered that the losses could range from €100bn in 2020 to €250bn in 2050.

The 2009 White paper "Adapting to climate change: towards a European framework for action" set out a number of measures that have been largely implemented. A key deliverable was the web-based European climate adaptation platform (Climate-ADAPT) launched in 2012. It provides an up-to-date date on adaptation in Europe as well as useful policy support tools.

To date 15 EU states have adopted an adaptation strategy, several others are under preparation. In many cases the adaptation strategies are followed-up by sectorial policies and action plans, including on the regional level. However, it seems that in most cases climate adaptation implementations are in their early stages with few concrete measures although some states have developed sector-specific plans to deal with floods, droughts, heat-waves. Monitoring and evaluation seems to be difficult, indicators and monitoring methodologies have hardly been put into practice.

Yet observations show that there were examples of joint adaptation projects between European countries or cities, some of them financed by the EU, LIFE programme in particular. It was therefore opportune to launch and adaptation strategy.

## **A - THE OBJECTIVES OF THE EU STRATEGY.**

The overall aim of the EU Adaptation strategy is to contribute to a more climate-resilient Europe. This means enhancing preparedness and capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change at local, regional, national and EU levels, developing a coherent approach and improving coordination.

### ***1 – Promoting action by member-states; an eight actions strategy.***

The promotion of National adaptation strategies (NAS) is the central tool recommended by the UNFCCC and supported by the EU.

The main contribution of NAS is to link national risk management plans and adaptation action and several member-states have developed such plans with the support of the LIFE instruments which include a climate-action sub-programme.

To that effect, the Commission provided guidelines for formulating adaptation strategies and LIFE projects included cross-border management of floods, trans-boundary coastal management, mainstreaming adaptation into urban land use planning, mountain and islands resilience, sustainable management of water. The Covenant of Mayors being one of the key partners to support adaptation in cities.

- 1 – Encouraging Member States adaptation strategy
- 2 – Providing LIFE funding
- 3 - Adaptation in the Covenant of Mayors

### ***2 – Better informed decision making.***

The EU strategy also deals with knowledge gaps to be filled to drive innovation forward and support innovative climate adaptation technologies.

Data is insufficient in several fields: information on damage and adaptation costs and benefits, regional and local level analysis and risk assessments, frameworks, models to support decision making and effectiveness of adaptation measures, monitoring and evaluation of past adaptation efforts.

In order to cope with those information deficits EU created the Climate-ADAPT presented as the “one-stop shop” for adaptation information in Europe. This information bank deals with policy experiences and innovative funding via close interaction with regional and local authorities and financial institutions.

- 4 – Bridge the knowledge gap
- 5 – Climate-ADAPT development

### **3 – Climate-proofing EU action: promoting adaptation in key vulnerable sectors.**

The Commission considered that it had to mainstream adaptation measures into EU policies and programmes. So far several sectors have been pinpointed in legislation: inland water, biodiversity, migration & mobility, agriculture and forestry, maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management, energy, disaster risk prevention, transport, research, health, environment...

- 6 – Mainstream to CAP, ESIF and CFP
- 7 – Resilient infrastructures
- 8 – Insurance and financial products for resilience

### **B - GOVERNANCE, FINANCING AND REVIEW.**

To promote the Adaptation agenda between member-states the Commission facilitated cooperation through the Climate change committee.

The access to funding is considered as a critical issue. The 2014-2020 Multi-annual Financial Framework included a 20% increase proposal for climate related expenditures with financial vehicle such as the European Structural Investment Fund, Horizon 2020, LIFE, ERDF and Cohesion Fund. Moreover, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development are also called in to support adaptation measures.

Finally, the 2013 paper insists on the need to monitor and evaluate climate adaptation policies. The process will be driven in 2017.

According to the Commission, the evaluation of the Adaptation policy after 3 years offers a positive overview of the achievements:

- In 2013, 50% of the member-states and of the local levels had an adaptation strategy, 3 years later they are 80%.
- Mainstreaming is also a success with 20% of EU budget & policy mainstreaming,
- Stakeholders are also believed to be better informed.

Adaptation is now an international issue. The Paris Agreement considers that there should be a balance between Mitigation and Adaptation with a global goal on Adaptation. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development urges nations to combat climate change and its impacts (goal 13), 12 SDGs directly involve taking action on climate change. The Sendai Framework on Disaster risk reduction and the New urban agenda seek coherence between sustainable development and climate change including in its consequences.

Therefore, EU needs to align on the UNFCCC timeline and reporting requirements as well as refocus, steer and keep in mind the international process.

The current evaluation seeks to assess what has been done until now as well as consult stakeholders. The final report is due in 2018. The programme includes:

- 2 stakeholders' workshops (2017.04.05 and October 2017),
- 3 month of web based public consultation,
- Interviews and surveys with different stakeholders,
- A stakeholder consultation strategy published on DG Climate Action website.

### **C - EVALUATION OF THE EU ADAPTATION STRATEGY.**

The strategy states that "the European Commission will report to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the EU Adaptation strategy and propose its review if needed". The evaluation process goes through 4 tasks:

- Information base on the strategy's implementation with an initial overview of each of the 28 members-states plan that have been put into application and of the resources allocated to adaptation on the EU level,
- Overview of the EU legislation and guidance where adaptation has been mainstreamed,
- Assessment of the strategy in accordance with evaluation criteria and better regulation guidelines,
- Stakeholder consultation strategy with workshops & web-based consultation during the later stages of the project.

#### **The evaluation criteria takes into account:**

- **Relevance:**
  - To what extend do the objectives and actions of the Strategy (still) respond to needs within the EU and at international level?
  - How relevant is the Strategy for the different stakeholders (EU, Member States, regional and local authorities and private sector & businesses) at local regional, national and supra-national level?
- **Effectiveness:**
  - has the objective been achieved? What are the divers and barriers?
  - To what extent do the objectives been achieved during the period 2013-2016?
  - To what extend has each of the eight actions of the Strategy contributed to these achievements? For each action explain the extent to which the effects achieved were expected un unexpected (i.e. not considered at the moment when the strategy was adopted).
  - What drivers and barriers 'expected or unexpected) contributed to or stood in the way of implementation of the EU Adaptation Strategy and how did they affect it?
  - What effects has the strategy produced so far for different stakeholders e.g. according to socio-economic background and vulnerability?

- **Efficiency:**
  - how adequate were the resources for the overall implementation of the EU adaptation strategy and how proportionate were those resources across its eight actions?
  - How do different stakeholders view monitoring of the implementation of the EU Adaptation Strategy? Which aspects are perceived as an unnecessary burden, if any, and to what extent?
  
- **Coherence:**
  - how well does the adaptation strategy fit together with the other relevant EU legislation and policies or similar initiatives at international, national or regional level?
  - Are there any gaps or inconsistencies between policies? Are there components to be further developed or added to increase coherence of action?
  
- **Added value:**
  - What is the added value of addressing climate adaptation at EU level, in addition to the vertical and horizontal cooperation at national level?



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