



European Commission

March 2024

# Building a climate resilient Europe to protect people and prosperity

**2023 was the hottest year on record.** Europe is already facing the impacts of global warming, with higher temperature changes than the global average. The potential consequences are dramatic and climate change could reduce EU GDP by about 7% by the end of the century. However, **we have the tools to boost the resilience of our societies and to protect people and prosperity.**

The first ever European Climate Risk Assessment provides a comprehensive overview of the level and urgency of risks and identifies who has the responsibility for taking action. The Commission's Communication on Managing Climate Risks responds to it and shows how **we can build climate resilience in the EU** and effectively manage climate risks.

## Climate impacts in Europe



Greece

Wildfires fuelled by drought and heatwaves burnt 170,000 hectares of land, and floods destroyed 15% of the annual agriculture yield



Slovenia

Flooding affected 2/3 of the country and caused economic damage estimated conservatively at around 16% of the country's GDP



Scandinavia

Storm Hans caused major damage to infrastructure, agriculture and transport



Europe-wide

The Cerberus heatwave set temperature records across Europe, following on from the 2022 heatwaves which contributed to 60,000 - 70,000 premature deaths

**The first-ever European Climate Risk Assessment has identified 36 key climate risks for Europe at different degrees of urgency.**

**Urgency to act:** ● Urgent action needed ● More action needed ● Further investigation ● Sustain current action ● Watching brief

## Climate risks by cluster

### Ecosystems

- Coastal ecosystems
- Marine ecosystems
- Biodiversity/carbon sinks due to wildfires\*
- Biodiversity/carbon sinks due to wildfires
- Species distribution shifts
- Ecosystems/society due to invasive species
- Soil health
- Aquatic and wetland ecosystems
- Biodiversity/carbon sinks due to droughts and pests
- Cascading impacts from forest disturbances

### Food

- Crop production\*
- Crop production
- Fisheries and aquaculture
- Food security due to higher food prices
- Food security due to climate impacts outside Europe
- Livestock production

### Health

- Heat stress — general population
- Population/built environment due to wildfires\*
- Population/built environment due to wildfires
- Well-being due to non-adapted buildings
- Heat stress — outdoor workers\*
- Pathogens in coastal waters
- Health systems and infrastructure
- Infectious diseases
- Heat stress — outdoor workers

### Infrastructure

- Pluvial and fluvial flooding
- Coastal flooding
- Damage to infrastructure and buildings
- Energy disruption due to heat and drought\*
- Energy disruption due to heat and drought
- Energy disruption due to flooding
- Marine transport
- Land-based transport

### Economy and finance

- European solidarity mechanisms
- Public finances
- Property and insurance markets
- Population/economy due to water scarcity\*
- Population/economy due to water scarcity
- Pharmaceutical supply chains
- Supply chains for raw materials and components
- Financial markets
- Winter tourism

\*Hotspot region: southern Europe

# How is the EU preparing and adapting to climate risks?

Implementation of the 2021 **EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change** is underway. EU countries are improving actions on adaptation and they have made first steps including climate resilience in their draft national energy and climate plans (NECPs). However, **more efforts on adaptation and building climate resilience are fundamental**.

The **Commission Communication on managing climate risks** provides further clarity on necessary areas of focus and the tools and policies at our disposal at EU, national and local levels.

## Key elements of the Communication



Underlines that making the EU climate resilient requires to **step up action** across sectors and at all levels, **ensure coordination** with and among Member States and their regions, and bring public institutions and the private sector along;



Stresses that preparedness and **resilience needs to be factored into** EU level and Member State action across policy areas;



**Puts forward policy responses and key actions** for the EU and its Member States on **six impact clusters**: natural ecosystems, water, health, food, economy, infrastructure and built environment (inc. transport and energy);



Recognises that the best, lasting solutions to climate risks are those that secure multiple benefits and **proposes cross-cutting solutions** to remove barriers to adaptation to climate change.

## The policy framework for boosting climate resilience

### Governance

- Greater clarity about responsibilities and which risks are managed at the EU level and which at Member State level
- EU level processes to better embed climate risk
- Member States to ensure adequate capacities for addressing risks

### Tools

- Improved access to data, models and scenarios that are needed for informed decision-making, from early warning systems to long-term planning
- Continued support for capacity-building and provision of guidelines, and better use of existing tools

### Structural policies

- Member States to reflect climate risks in spatial planning decisions and measures to protect critical infrastructure
- Stronger EU solidarity mechanisms to better incentivise the anticipation of risks

### Financial resilience

- Ensure climate resilience is at the heart of all EU spending decisions
- Public and private financial institutions and industry to better mobilise private investment
- Member States to consider resilience in their public procurement

PDF ISBN 978-92-68-13458-0 doi:10.2834/826 ML-05-24-184-EN-N



Publications Office  
of the European Union

© European Union, 2024

Reuse is authorised provided the source is acknowledged. The reuse policy of European Commission documents is regulated by Decision 2011/833/EU (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39). For any use or reproduction of elements that are not owned by the European Union, permission may need to be sought directly from the respective rightholders.  
All images © European Union unless otherwise stated.