

Checklist: For robust, meaningful and ambitious adaptation policies across the EU

ACT Alliance EU: Recommendations on adaptation policy

“Future climate-related risks would be reduced by the upscaling and acceleration of far-reaching, multilevel and cross-sectoral climate mitigation and by both incremental and transformational adaptation”¹

- IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C

Current EU economic losses from weather and climate related extremes are on average €13 Billion per year and are set to increase to EUR €1 Trillion by the end of the century². The EU and the Member States must be prepared to scale-up their efforts to adapt to climate change.

There are clear benefits to adapting, including strengthened food and water security, conserved nature and biodiversity, including via eco-based solutions, and resilient communities. All of which will help to fortify Europe's path to climate neutrality.

Moreover, the EU should not only make the exercise of developing a new and 'improved' EU adaptation strategy a domestic exercise. The EU must also think about how to support developing countries in the global south with implementing their adaptation measures. Developing countries and vulnerable communities are currently experiencing the worst effects of climate change, despite having contributed the least to climate change, and they often do not have the resources to adapt without support. This opportunity can be used to determine how the EU and the Member States can support developing countries and encourage other G20 countries to increase their support too.

Support should come in the form of furthering the development of needs assessments, public finance and sustainable investments that help to de-risk further investments in low-income countries, capacity building on implementation, awareness raising, best practices, and sustainable technology transfer, focused on technologies that provide co-benefits that can support to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The future challenges that climate change brings makes it imperative to ensure that the new EU Adaptation Strategy is robust, meaningful and ambitious and developed vis-a-vis what is best for the world's most vulnerable. **ACT Alliance EU believes that the new EU Adaptation Strategy should include the following principles, policy priorities and practices:**

¹ IPCC (2018). IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C. Available at: <https://www.ipcc.ch/2018/10/08/summary-for-policymakers-of-ipcc-special-report-on-global-warming-of-1-5c-approved-by-governments/>

² European Environment Agency. Data. Available at: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/indicators/direct-losses-from-weather-disasters-3/assessment-2>

PRINCIPLES

The EU should apply robust principles when engaging in domestic adaptation, and when supporting international adaptation.

- **Adaptation must be treated as equal to mitigation** and efforts to adapt to climate change must be pursued at the same level as efforts to reduce emissions;
- **Adaptation & loss and damage must not be conflated** with each other: Adaption³ and loss and damage⁴ are two separate issues that both need to be addressed;
- **Support developing countries and vulnerable communities in the global south with the implementation of adaptation measures**, by entering into strategic dialogue on adaptation to determine what their needs are and how the EU can support implementation, and to work with local communities to employ best practices;
- **Policy coherence and synergies should be prioritised** and be applied across domestic policies and to the EU's international commitments, in order to ensure that policies do not inadvertently undermine ambition or the integrity of EU climate policies. This includes ensuring that adaptation is considered in all EU trade agreements and international partnerships.

POLICY PRIORITIES

The EU and EU Member States should develop policy frameworks that enable and enforce the implementation of robust adaptation measures domestically, that can also be supported internationally.

- **Scale-up finance for adaptation domestically and internationally**, conduct needs assessments, and adopt climate-smart investment to ensure that investments do not undermine adaptation measures. This includes scaling-up the amount of project funding provided by central and investment banks, available for adaptation measures to be implemented.
- **Strengthen the EU's external climate change policies and instruments** e.g. EU Climate Diplomacy plan(s) to provide support (finance, capacity building and sustainable technology transfer), in order to help ensure that the EU Adaptation Strategy is created in the context of global equity.
- **Prevent disasters**, by preventing hazards within and outside the EU from becoming international disasters. Climate change is not localised and climate impacts abroad not only impact those countries, but also have the potential to impact Europe;
- **Strengthen domestic services** e.g. transport, housing and power, supply chain durability, services access etc, in order to ensure that services can accommodate more people as the world population grows;

³ IPCC (2014, p5) The process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects.

⁴ Impacts that fall outside of normal, historical parameters where reparation or restoration is either impossible (losses), or only possible with a significant change to a way of life, existing livelihoods etc, or would require a non-traditional approach to a solution (damages).

- **Prioritise food security** by supporting agro-ecological and agroforestry approaches (in terms of farmers and measures), and diverse and sustainable food systems;
- **Implement sustainable water management systems** that plan for climate risks including risks to water quality from e.g. heatwaves, floods and droughts, and also prioritise water efficiency, for particular use by water-intensive industries;
- **Embed ecological solutions** for landscapes and ecosystems across EU adaptation and mitigation policy and encourage EU Member States and cities to do the same, in order to address existing imbalances between the implementation of mitigation and adaptation measures;
- **Increase the capacity to maintain the global health of humans, biodiversity and ecosystems** by integrating health risk considerations (e.g. vector borne diseases, sanitation and hygiene) into vulnerability, climate risk and financial needs assessment tools, and by building the capacity of the healthcare work-force and local communities to build climate-resilient health-care systems;
- **Create resilient cities** that act on climate risks and pursue co-benefits with other sustainable urban development measures e.g. urban allotments, tree-lined pavements, water fountains, circular irrigation and drainage systems e.g. that use grey water to water plants;
- **Prioritise climate resilient infrastructure design** for all new builds and retrofits, make such infrastructure design mandatory and encourage investments in such infrastructure e.g. via incentives, or approving planning permits that have co-benefits e.g. tree lined walkways outside of climate resilient new builds and retrofits;
- **Ensure that the just transition also incorporates adaptation measures** to ensure that marginalised communities, workers and vulnerable industries/sectors are supported against climate risks e.g. working in extreme weather conditions, goods availability, service provision.

PRACTICES

The EU and EU Member States should carry-out adaptation measures in an inclusive, gender-responsive manner, domestically, and support these practices internationally.

- **Carry-out participatory impact mapping** by conducting participatory consultations to determine existing conditions, changing patterns, impacts on societal structures (e.g. economic, social), drivers and causes in order to deduce expected economic, social and environmental challenges, how a community should be adapting, and to build a community's capacity to adapt;
- **Encourage and prioritise locally led** policy and project development and implementation and ensure that all relevant local stakeholders, including faith stakeholders;
- **Support local agriculture communities and indigenous people** (particularly the agroecological movement and its small-scale producers) in responding to climate risks and increase their resilience;

- **Empower citizens, communities and industry to carry-out adaptation efforts** that benefit livelihoods and provide co-benefits for the community and local environment, through capacity building and knowledge sharing opportunities to practice sustainable, adaptation measures;
- **Prioritise, support and fund capacity building** for community, local and regional leaders to inform, update and carry-out implementation;
- **Encourage best practice, solution and experience sharing** within the EU and internationally to enable countries, regions, cities, communities and civil society to learn from each other, to cooperate and create lasting partnerships for change;
- **Ensure that measures are implemented in a human-rights and gender equality approach** that help to transform power relations and structures within communities, in order to uphold the rights of the most vulnerable and marginalised, namely women, children, the transgender community and indigenous peoples.

Author information

Leia Achampong
Policy Officer, Climate Justice
Tel: +32-2 234 5660
www.actalliance.eu

