

Council endorses new EU strategy on adaptation to climate change

The Council today approved conclusions endorsing a new strategy that outlines a long-term vision for the EU to become a climate-resilient society that is fully adapted to the unavoidable impacts of climate change by 2050.

Climate change is not just a future threat - it is happening now. We need to be better prepared for its consequences on human health, nature and the economy. Today's conclusions set the ball rolling for enhanced adaptation action. The new strategy focuses on better data and better use of existing data, promoting nature-based solutions, integrating financial and economic considerations and stepping up action at international level. Climate has been a key priority for the Portuguese Presidency and we are pleased that the Council has today endorsed the new EU climate adaptation strategy which, together with the recently agreed European Climate Law, will help the EU to become climate-resilient and climate-neutral in the next decades.

João Pedro Matos Fernandes, Portuguese Minister for the Environment and Climate Action

The conclusions adopted today give political guidance to the Commission as regards the implementation of the strategy.

The Council supports the strategy's focus on better gathering and sharing data to improve access to and exchange of knowledge on climate impacts and adaptation, including by enhancing the Climate-ADAPT platform.

In its Conclusions, the Council recognises the importance of climate-water nexus and emphasises the important role of nature-based solutions in building climate-resilience, helping to maintain or enhance biodiversity, as well as protecting and restoring ecosystems.

Member states support the strategy's efforts to integrate adaptation into macro-fiscal policies. The Commission is invited, in consultation with the member states, to look into how climate-related risks on public finances can be measured and managed and to develop a framework that encourages the use of insurance against climate-related risks.

The Council highlights the important role of building climate-resilience in the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The EU has set a target of at least 30% for climate action, including adaptation, in the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027, and of at least 37% under the Recovery and Resilience Facility

The Council supports the strategy's aim to step up international action on adaptation, in line with the Paris Agreement. It reconfirms the commitment of the EU and the Member States to further scale up mobilisation of international climate finance and supports the strengthening of global engagement and exchanges on adaptation.

The conclusions adopted today also provide guidance for the submission of an EU Adaptation communication to the UNFCCC before COP26.

Background and next steps

The Commission published its Communication on a new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change on 24 February. The strategy builds on the 2013 adaptation strategy and is one of the key actions identified in the European Green Deal. Since the first strategy, all member states have put in place a national adaptation strategy or plan. The Climate-ADAPT platform has become a reference for adaptation knowledge and adaptation has been mainstreamed into the EU's policies and long-term budget.

EU environment ministers held an exchange of views on the strategy during their informal video conference in March and

discussed it during the informal Presidency event held by video conference in April.

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