

Press release for the report:

‘Strengthening resilience to climate change

– Recommendations for an effective EU adaptation policy framework’

Escalating climate impacts demand urgent, coordinated adaptation across the EU

As Europe faces increasingly severe climate impacts, including rising loss of life, economic damages and ecosystem harm, the European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change calls on the EU to urgently strengthen its policy framework for effective and coherent adaptation. Adaptation and mitigation must advance together: while rapid and sustained mitigation is indispensable to limit future warming, strengthening adaptation is crucial to prepare for unavoidable temperature increases and safeguard Europe’s strategic priorities.

A new report from the European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change, ‘*Strengthening resilience to climate change – Recommendations for an effective EU adaptation policy framework*’, sets out how the EU can strengthen its approach to climate adaptation in the face of escalating and increasingly systemic climate risks.

Global average temperatures have risen to around 1.4 °C above pre-industrial levels. With insufficient global progress on mitigation, exceeding the Paris Agreement’s 1.5 °C goal is increasingly likely. Europe is warming about twice as fast as the global average, with rising temperatures driving more frequent and severe climate hazards – including heatwaves, droughts, wildfires, flooding, sea-level rise and coastal erosion – and impacts felt across all regions of Europe.

Prof. Ottmar Edenhofer, Chair of the Advisory Board, commented: *“Weather- and climate-related extreme events are already causing severe losses across Europe. Extreme heat alone has resulted in tens of thousands of premature deaths in recent years, including an estimated 24,000 in summer 2025. Economic damages to infrastructure and physical assets now average around EUR 45 billion per year. These mounting impacts underline that strengthening adaptation is not optional, but essential to protect lives, livelihoods and Europe’s economic foundations.”*

Current adaptation efforts are insufficient

As the planet continues to warm, climate hazards will intensify, bringing frequent, severe, persistent and far-reaching impacts. This could increasingly weaken Europe’s competitiveness, strain public budgets and increase security risks. Without adequate adaptation, impacts will compound, eroding and destabilising Europe’s economic and social foundations. Despite this, adaptation efforts to date remain insufficient to prevent avoidable impacts and to manage escalating climate risks.

Addressing climate risks requires combined and coordinated action across policy domains and governance levels. Local and national action is essential to drive adaptation. At the same time, adaptation efforts face many barriers, and many climate risks are transboundary, affecting critical services, cross-border supply chains, as well as financial and ecological systems. A stronger EU framework can provide coherence and long-term direction, facilitate cooperation and solidarity, and enable Member States to manage their climate risks more effectively.

Prof. Laura Diaz Anadon, vice-Chair of the Advisory Board, commented:

"Adaptation goes beyond climate policy. A robust EU adaptation framework is fundamental to address the systemic risks that threaten the security of critical services, food, water and energy, to provide the stability needed to invest in a competitive and innovative economy, and to protect the health of EU citizens and ecosystems."

Preparing Europe for unavoidable temperature increases

Scientific projections show climate hazards will continue to increase in intensity and frequency. Europe must prepare for the climate risks it faces today and those associated with future levels of warming that cannot yet be ruled out.

Adapting in an early and strategic manner is the most effective way to manage climate risks and can deliver high societal returns, with social, economic and ecosystem benefits. To support a more effective, fair and systemic EU approach to adaptation, **the Advisory Board puts forward five recommendations** to guide ongoing EU policy processes. These call on the EU to:

1. Mandate and harmonise **climate risk assessments** across EU policies and Member States, using common climate scenarios and methodological standards.
2. Adopt a **common reference for adaptation** planning, preparing for climate risks consistent with a pathway to 2.8-3.3 °C of global warming by 2100. This would translate to higher levels in Europe, which is currently around 1 °C warmer than the global average. This should be complemented by the systematic use of more adverse scenarios for stress-testing.
3. Set a clear **vision for a climate-resilient EU** by 2050 and beyond, supported by sectoral strategies and measurable adaptation targets.
4. Embed **fair and just climate resilience by design** across EU policies, programmes and investments, underpinned by monitoring, evaluation and learning.
5. Mobilise **public and private adaptation investment**, and establish a more coherent approach to managing the growing costs of climate impacts through the EU budget, economic governance and risk-sharing mechanisms.

Mitigation and adaptation must advance together

There are limits to what adaptation can achieve, and every additional increment of global warming increases climate impacts and risks across Europe. Adaptation cannot substitute for mitigation. Deep and sustained emission reductions, alongside the scaling-up of carbon

removals, remain essential to stabilise, and eventually reduce, global temperatures and prevent the most severe and irreversible impacts.

Even under optimistic mitigation pathways, hazards will intensify in the decades ahead. Europe must therefore act on both fronts at once: cutting emissions to limit future risks, while strengthening adaptation to minimise climate impacts.

Prof. Jette Bredahl Jacobsen, vice-Chair of the Advisory Board, commented:

"Robust risk management means the EU should prepare for a range of possible futures to ensure a resilient Europe. At the same time, adaptation cannot prevent all losses, therefore mitigation efforts remain essential to limit climate hazards to manageable levels. Strengthening adaptation alongside mitigation is essential to safeguard citizens, security, and the EU's wider strategic goals."

About the European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change

The European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change is an independent body established under the European Climate Law to provide the EU with scientific knowledge, expertise and advice relating to climate change. The Advisory Board evaluates policies and identifies actions and opportunities to successfully achieve the EU's climate targets. [More information about the Advisory Board can be found here.](#)

Press contact: Rasmus Sangild / rasmus.sangild@esabcc.europa.eu