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*Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety*

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## **DRAFT REPORT**

on the Commission White Paper: "Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action"  
(2009/2152(INI))

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

Rapporteur: Vittorio Prodi

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## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

### on the Commission White Paper : "Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action" (2009/2152(INI))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Commission White Paper entitled 'Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action' (COM(2009)0147),
  - having regard to its resolution of 10 April 2008 on Adapting to climate change in Europe - options for EU action<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 4 February 2009 on 2050: The future begins today - Recommendations for the EU's future integrated policy on climate change<sup>2</sup>,
  - having regard to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and to the Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC,
  - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the opinions of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, the Committee on Transport and Tourism, the Committee on Regional Development and the Committee on Fisheries (A7-0000/2009),
- A. whereas global warming and climate change are recognised as extremely serious threats,
- B. whereas the effects of climate change will lead to significant economic and social impacts,
- C. whereas even if the world succeeds in limiting and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, it would still require significant adaptation efforts to deal with the unavoidable impacts,
- D. whereas the impacts of climate change will affect European regions in different ways and with different degrees of severity;
1. Welcomes the above-mentioned White Paper;
  2. Agrees with the objective of the proposed EU's Adaptation Framework, i.e. to improve the EU's resilience in dealing with the impact of climate change;
  3. Highlights the importance of mainstreaming adaptation into all EU policies;

#### **Developing the knowledge base**

4. Shares the Commission's view that more knowledge on climate change impacts is needed,

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 247 E, 15.10.2009, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P6\_TA(2009)0042.

so that the information resulting from research can be disseminated in the widest possible scope and, consequently, appropriate adaptation measures can be developed;

5. Emphasises that research efforts should be strengthened, within the framework of the current Seventh Framework Programme and future research framework programmes, in order to address existing knowledge gaps and develop modalities and techniques for adaptation to the impacts of climate change;
6. Underlines the need for further research into appropriate modelling at regional and local levels, as well as the need to define adaptive capacity across the territory of the EU;
7. Takes the view that the Commission should ensure that the Clearing House Mechanism is not redundant given the existence of other systems such as the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) and Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) and should add value in terms of preparing the EU to plan, fund and implement proper adaptation plans;

### ***Integrating adaptation into EU policies***

#### *Water*

8. Is particularly concerned about water, as climate change will have a significant impact on the quantity and the quality of water;
9. Stresses that a large amount of water in the EU could be saved through more efficient water management;
10. Emphasises the importance of fully integrating adaptation into the River Basin Management Plans in line with the guidelines issued on 30 November 2009;
11. Stresses the importance of the implementation of the Floods Directive<sup>3</sup> which provides a comprehensive mechanism for assessing and monitoring increased risks of flooding due to climate change and for developing adaptation approaches;

#### *Agriculture*

12. Emphasises the need to enhance resilience of the agricultural ecosystems by more sustainable use of natural resources, in particular of water and soil;
13. Considers that the common agricultural policy has a central role to play in contributing to adaptation;

#### *Soil*

14. Takes the view that a directive on soil would be an essential tool for adaptation, in particular in response to the risk of soil degradation and desertification; therefore urges the Member

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<sup>3</sup> Directive 2007/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on the assessment and management of flood risks (OJ L 288, 6.11.2007, p. 27).

States to move forward towards the adoption of a directive on soil;

#### *Health and social policies*

15. Welcomes the proposals of the Commission to develop guidelines and surveillance mechanisms on the health impact of climate change by 2011; underlines the increasing risk of propagation of vector-borne diseases;
16. Notes that the health impacts of climate change are likely to impact the hardest on the most deprived communities and the poorest populations; regards it as essential for adaptation measures to be considered in the context of health inequalities;
17. Invites the Commission to develop a comprehensive approach regarding the involvement of the insurance industry towards risk awareness and risk sharing;

#### *Infrastructure*

18. Underlines that medium and long-term investments in infrastructure projects should take full account of the predicted future climatic conditions, while maintaining a certain flexibility;
19. Stresses the need to ensure that, as part of environmental impact assessment, all building permits and urban plans take into account different adaptation scenarios;
20. Calls on the Commission to develop methodologies for 'climate-proofing' infrastructure projects as soon as possible;

#### *Biodiversity*

21. Given that NATURA 2000 forms the central pillar of EU policy efforts to maintain ecosystems in changing climate conditions, calls for active management of NATURA 2000 sites, with proper financing from Member States, to allow species to migrate and survive when climate conditions change;

#### *Cultural heritage*

22. Stresses the importance of developing adaptation measures which take into account all aspects of European cultural heritage;

#### *Structure and governance*

23. Stresses the need for local and regional authorities to be recognised as pivotal actors in the struggle against the harmful effects of climate change;
24. Emphasises the importance of having the appropriate level of intervention in order to maximise the effectiveness of the measures implemented;
25. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to encourage a coordinated approach when dealing with adaptation to guarantee territorial cohesion across the EU;

### ***Financing***

26. Stresses that the next multiannual financial framework should, compared to the current one, accord a higher ranking to climate change, and in particular to adaptation measures, ensuring that the necessary funds are available;
27. Calls for the future reform of the structural funds to prioritise climate change, in particular adaptation;
28. Urges the Council and the Commission to reactivate the process of revision of the Solidarity Fund Regulation (EUSF)<sup>4</sup>, which will make it possible to address damage caused by natural or man-made disasters in a more effective, flexible and timely manner;
29. Underlines that a substantial part of the revenues generated by the auctioning of allowances in the Community greenhouse gas emission allowance trading system (EU ETS), including auctioning for aviation and maritime transport, should be earmarked for enabling Member States and developing countries to adapt to climate change;

### ***Impact and adaptation Steering Group***

30. Supports the proposal of the Commission to set up an impact and adaptation steering group; asks the Commission to ensure that this group includes representatives of Parliament as observers;

### ***Commission progress report***

31. Calls on the Commission to report to the European Parliament by 2012 on progress made to implement the above-mentioned White Paper;

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32. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission and to the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

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<sup>4</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002 of 11 November 2002 establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund (OJ L 311, 14.11.2002, p. 3).

## EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The main impacts of Climate change can be summarised as fewer rainy days but more intense precipitations, decreased volumes of snowfall, and increased drought periods.

This directly impacts on the geography of land, augmenting soil erosion processes and flood risk, whilst reducing snowfall that, in turn, hampers the ability of underground aquifers to recharge independently. Current practises of water management provide an important demonstration of why we need adapt our approaches towards current resource management. Rain needs to be kept as long as possible where it falls and water bodies should be adapted to increase retention times, due to the increased risks associated with flash floods. River beds have to be managed in a proper way, with waterfalls that result from such management being harnessed for electricity generation. Longer droughts will increase the risk of forest fires. In this case, adaptation will consist of decreasing fire loads by thinning the forest which will, in turn decrease the occurrence and speed of fire outbreak. In fact, an important contribution to the adaptation capability will come from the exploitation of forest and agricultural biomass residuals. Adaptation measures are fundamental in order to confront the dynamic challenges of climate change, whilst also improving the safety and service capabilities of the European Union. Macro-Adaptation is a fundamental undertaking which would allow us to improve our current emergency management systems by combining satellite and ground based observations, for nowcasting of severe events and is linked to mitigation but does not identify with it.

This White Paper, though, is only a preparatory work that aims to give a broad policy framework from which necessary plans and strategies can later be developed. Defined by this intent, our initiative report does not contain specific references on many details on a number of policy areas but outlines a general strategic approach on increasing the resilience of the EU to the impacts of climate change. When the specific policy plans will be elaborated there will certainly be space for a thorough analysis, especially on the financing aspect. Funds, in fact, can be defined only when there is a clear idea of what has to be achieved. The main points of a comprehensive adaptation strategy should be: an emphasis on communication (collecting and distributing data to relevant National and local networks) including a clear understanding of how the adaptation efforts should be shared based on National, regional and local adaptation capacities and their territorial footprint; focus on a good governance structure for a real policy effectiveness; mainstreaming of climate adaptation policy into all other EU policies. The territorial dimension should be an operational dimension, not anymore an objective for such an important policy as adaptation; hence the crucial problem is land management and its coherent planning. Some suggestions to the White Paper point to the necessity to approach the relation between climate change adaptation and human and animal health. Finally, the insurance role will have to be reassessed, in order to face increased risks, by proposing new forms of public - private partnerships.