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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0422/2020**

11.12.2020

## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Question for Oral Answer B9-0075/2020

pursuant to Rule 136(5) of the Rules of Procedure

on the EU strategy on adaptation to climate change  
(2020/2532(RSP))

**Lídia Pereira, Marek Paweł Balt, Nils Torvalds, Pär Holmgren, Petros  
Kokkalis**

on behalf of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food  
Safety

**European Parliament resolution on the EU strategy on adaptation to climate change (2020/2532(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol thereto,
- having regard to the Agreement adopted at the 21st Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP21) in Paris on 12 December 2015 (the Paris Agreement),
- having regard to the EU strategy on adaptation to climate change of April 2013 and its accompanying staff working documents,
- having regard to the Commission report of 12 November 2018 on the implementation of the EU strategy on adaptation to climate change (COM(2018)0738),
- having regard to the UN Environment Programme’s Adaptation Gap Report 2018,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 11 December 2019 on the European Green Deal (COM(2019)0640),
- having regard to the Commission proposal of 4 March 2020 for a regulation establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 (European Climate Law) (COM(2020)0080),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 entitled ‘EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives’ (COM(2020)0380),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 entitled ‘A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system’ (COM(2020)0381),
- having regard to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s (IPCC) special report on global warming of 1.5 °C, its fifth assessment report (AR5) and its synthesis report thereon, its special report on climate change and land, and its special report on the ocean and cryosphere in a changing climate,
- having regard to the Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services published by the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) on 31 May 2019,
- having regard to European Court of Auditors special report no. 33/2018 entitled ‘Combating desertification in the EU: a growing threat in need of more action’,
- having regard to the Global Commission on Adaptation’s flagship report of 2019 entitled ‘Adapt Now: A Global Call for Leadership on Climate Resilience’,

- having regard to the EU’s seventh Environment Action Programme to 2020 and its vision for 2050,
- having regard to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),
- having regard to its resolution of 16 January 2020 on the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 28 November 2019 on the climate and environment emergency<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to the European Environment Agency (EEA) indicator-based report of 25 Jan 2017 entitled ‘Climate change, impacts and vulnerability in Europe 2016’,
- having regard to the EEA indicator assessment of 2 April 2019 entitled ‘Economic losses from climate-related extremes in Europe’,
- having regard to the EEA report of 4 September 2019 entitled ‘Climate change adaptation in the agriculture sector in Europe’,
- having regard to the EEA report of 4 December 2019 entitled ‘The European environment – state and outlook 2020: knowledge for transition to a sustainable Europe’,
- having regard to the scientific opinion of the Commission’s independent Group of Chief Scientific Advisors of 29 June 2020 on adaptation to climate-change-related health effects,
- having regard to the EEA report of 8 September 2020 entitled ‘Healthy environment, healthy lives: how the environment influences health and well-being in Europe’,
- having regard to the UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030,
- having regard to Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2020/741 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 2020 on minimum requirements for water reuse<sup>5</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2020)0015.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2020)0005.

<sup>3</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2019)0078.

<sup>4</sup> OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1

<sup>5</sup> OJ L 177, 5.6.2020, p. 3.

- having regard to the Cancun Adaptation Framework,
  - having regard to the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Impacts,
  - having regard to Directive 2007/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on the assessment and management of flood risks<sup>6</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 8 September 2015 on the follow-up to the European Citizens' Initiative Right2Water<sup>7</sup>,
  - having regard to European Court of Auditors special report no 33/2018 entitled 'Combating desertification in the EU: a growing threat in need of more action',
  - having regard to the European Court of Auditors special report no 25/2018 entitled 'Floods Directive: progress in assessing risks, while planning and implementation need to improve',
  - having regard to the Commission's Projections of economic impacts of climate change in sectors of the EU based on bottom-up analysis (PESETA) reports, in particular the 2018 and 2020 PESETA III and IV reports,
  - having regard to the question to the Commission on EU strategy on adaptation to climate change (O-000075/2020 – B9-0075/2020),
  - having regard to Rules 136(5) and 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the motion for a resolution of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety,
- A. whereas the observed climate changes are already having wide-ranging impacts on ecosystems (and biodiversity in particular), social and economic sectors (deepening inequality) and human health; whereas it is important to prevent the emergence of multiple and often interacting threats to ecosystems and wildlife, including habitat loss and degradation; whereas the effects of climate change are continuing to be registered globally and in the EU, and whereas there is further evidence that future climate change will increase the number of extreme climate-related events in many EU regions, as well as in third countries, and trigger invasions of infectious disease carriers that could lead to the re-emergence of infectious diseases previously eliminated in the EU; whereas adaptation to climate change is not only in the EU's economic interest, but is also imperative for the public's well-being;
- B. whereas Member States, regions and sectors in the EU are, and are projected to be, affected differently by climate change; whereas coastal and island regions are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change; whereas adaptive capacity significantly differs between EU regions, and the adaptive capacity of the EU's island

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<sup>6</sup> OJ L 288, 6.11.2007, p. 27.

<sup>7</sup> OJ C 316, 22.9.2017, p. 99.

and outermost regions is limited; whereas adaptation strategies should also encourage a shift to sustainable development in vulnerable areas, such as islands, building on environmentally friendly and nature-based solutions; whereas the Mediterranean area will suffer more from the effects of heat-related human mortality, water scarcity, desertification, habitat loss and forest fires;

- C. whereas coral reefs and mangroves, which are essential natural carbon sinks, are at risk because of climate change;
- D. whereas soil health is a key factor in mitigating the effects of desertification, as soil is the largest carbon reservoir and the backbone of all ecosystems and crops, having significant water retention capacity and playing an important role in improving societal resilience to environmental change;
- E. whereas the water sector, agriculture, fisheries, forestry and terrestrial and marine biodiversity are strongly linked, and are also related to changing land-use patterns and population change; whereas climate change impacts in other parts of the world may affect the EU through trade, international financial flows, public health, migration and security;
- F. whereas overall energy consumption in the water sector in the EU is significant and needs to be more efficient in order to contribute to the goals of the Paris Agreement and the climate goals of the EU for 2030 and to achieve carbon neutrality in 2050;
- G. whereas the Water Framework Directive (WFD) does not include specific provisions to address the impacts of climate change; whereas in its communication on the European Green Deal, the Commission nevertheless acknowledges that the natural functions of ground and surface water must be restored;
- H. whereas buildings are responsible for approximately 40 % of energy consumption and 36 % of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the EU, and whereas their deep, including staged deep, renovation is therefore crucial to achieving the EU's 2050 net-zero greenhouse gas emissions objective;
- I. whereas the EEA has estimated that weather- and climate-related extremes accounted for EUR 426 billion in monetary terms between 1980 and 2017 in the EU-28 Member States, and has said that damage costs from climate change are expected to be high, even if the Paris Agreement is implemented; whereas these costs should be taken into account in the cost-benefit analysis of the measures to be implemented; whereas climate-resilient investments can limit the adverse effects of climate change and thus reduce the cost of adaptation; whereas the impacts of climate change outside of the EU are likely to have economic, social and political repercussions on the EU in numerous ways, including through trade, international financial flows, climate-induced displacement and security; whereas the necessary climate change adaptation investments have not yet been assessed or incorporated into the multiannual financial framework (MFF) climate figures;
- J. whereas climate change and its impacts can be substantially reduced by an ambitious global mitigation policy compatible with the mitigation goal of the Paris Agreement; whereas current emission reduction commitments are not sufficient to achieve the goals

of the Paris Agreement and will result in global warming of more than 3 °C above pre-industrial levels;

- K. whereas adaptation to climate change is necessary to anticipate and cope with current and future adverse effects of climate change and to prevent or reduce short-, medium- and long-term risks from climate change; whereas a robust EU adaptation strategy is fundamental to preparing vulnerable regions and sectors; whereas collective international efforts, inter alia on sustainable development, biodiversity and disaster risk reduction, should be better integrated in the new strategy;
- L. whereas mechanisms for funding adaptation measures to address loss and damage or climate-induced displacement will be more effective if women, including grass-roots women, are able to fully participate in design process, decision-making and implementation; whereas taking women's knowledge, including local and indigenous knowledge, into account can lead to advances in disaster management, boost biodiversity, improve water management, enhance food security, prevent desertification, protect forests, ensure a swift transition to renewable energy technologies and support public health;
- M. whereas health hazards related to climate change will affect people, particularly some vulnerable groups (elderly people, children, outdoor workers and homeless people); whereas these hazards are, inter alia, increasing morbidity and mortality due to extreme weather events (heatwaves, storms, floods, wildfires) and emerging infectious diseases (whose spread, timing and intensity are affected by changes in temperature, humidity and rainfall); whereas changes in ecosystems might also increase the risk of infectious diseases;
- N. whereas according to the World Health Organization, projected climate change will cause approximately 250 000 additional deaths a year by 2030;
- O. whereas the restoration of ecosystems, such as forests, grasslands, peat-lands and wetlands, leads to positive change in the carbon balance of the respective land use system and is both a mitigation and an adaptation measure;
- P. whereas investing in the prevention of environmental disasters can effectively improve adaptation to climate change and reduce the frequency and intensity of climate-related extreme weather events;
- Q. whereas, according to the 2019 IPCC special report on climate change and land, the conservation of high-carbon ecosystems has an immediate positive impact with respect to climate change; whereas the positive impact of restoration and other measures related to land use systems is not immediate;
- R. whereas the objective of achieving a good ecological status for bodies of water is of crucial importance for adaptation, with the ecological status of bodies of water being under increasing pressure from the changing climate;

### ***General observations***

1. Emphasises that adaptation is necessary for the Union as a whole and for all countries

and regions in order to minimise adverse and irreversible impacts of climate change, while implementing at the same time ambitious mitigation measures to pursue efforts to contain global warming below 1.5 °C compared to pre-industrial levels, make full use of the opportunities for climate-resilient growth and sustainable development and maximise the co-benefits with other environmental policies and legislation; in this context, stresses its unwavering commitment to the global goal for adaptation as defined in the Paris Agreement;

2. Recognises that EU cities and regions are already faced with wide-ranging adverse effects of climate change, such as extreme rainfall, floods and droughts, and that these phenomena represent environmental, economic and safety risks for local communities and businesses; considers that the upcoming strategy should reflect this urgency and propose appropriate measures in this regard;
3. Suggests that the reactive nature of the European Union Solidarity Fund be complemented by proactively planned adaptation to climate change, which will reduce the vulnerability of the EU territory and its inhabitants by increasing adaptive capacity and reducing its sensitivity;
4. Expresses its support to the Global Commission on Adaptation for its work in drawing attention to adaptation;
5. Calls for a renewed and improved focus on adaptation; is therefore pleased that the Commission will present a new strategy as a key component of the EU's climate policy and asks it to present the strategy without delay; considers it an opportunity to show that the EU is a global leader in building global climate resilience through increased financing, as well as promoting science, services, technologies and practices for adaptation; considers that the new strategy should be an integral part of the European Green Deal, with the aim of building a resilient EU through the creation and upholding of systems with highly adaptive and responsive capacity in a rapidly changing climate by boosting sustainable economic development, safeguarding quality of life and public health, ensuring water and food security, respecting and protecting biodiversity, turning to clean energy sources and ensuring climate and social justice; welcomes the enhanced governance regime of adaptation under the European Climate Law;
6. Welcomes the Commission's evaluation of the EU strategy on adaptation to climate change of November 2018 and takes note of its conclusion that the wide-ranging objectives of the strategy have not been completely fulfilled, but that progress has been made towards all of its individual actions; believes in this regard that the goals set in the new strategy need to be more ambitious in order for the EU to be prepared for the projected adverse effects of climate change;
7. Calls for adaptation to climate change to be taken into account when building and renovating existing infrastructure, in all sectors and in spatial planning, and calls for effective climate-proofing of spatial planning, buildings, all relevant infrastructure and other investments, in particular through ex ante examination to assess the capacity of projects to cope with medium- to long-term climate impacts in different global temperature rise scenarios, in order to know whether or not they are eligible for Union funding and to ensure that EU funds are being spent efficiently on long-lasting, climate-



compatible projects; calls for a reform of engineering standards and practice across the EU to integrate physical climate risks;

8. Emphasises that green infrastructure contributes to adaptation to climate change through the protection of natural capital, the conservation of natural habitats and species, good ecological status, water management and food security;
9. Regrets the fact that the 2013 strategy fails to properly address the urgency of implementing adaptation measures; calls for strengthened governance of the new strategy, the identification of priority areas and investment needs, including an assessment of the extent to which EU investments contribute to reducing the overall climate vulnerability of the Union, a more frequent review process, with clear goals, a proper assessment, and indicators informed by the latest science to measure progress in its implementation; recognises the need to keep measures and plans continuously up-to-date in an unprecedented changing world; therefore calls on the Commission to regularly review and update the new strategy in line with the relevant provisions of the European Climate Law;
10. Notes also that progress on the number of local and regional adaptation strategies has been more limited than expected, with differences between Member States; encourages the Member States to incentivise and assist regions in implementing adaptation plans and taking action; underlines that adaptation strategies should take due account of territorial specificities and local knowledge; calls on the Commission to ensure that all EU regions are prepared to tackle the impacts of climate change through adaptation; recognises in this context the value of the Covenant of Mayors, which has increased cooperation on adaptation at local level, and of the permanent national multi-level climate and energy dialogues, as envisaged in the Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action; calls for an enhanced role for adaptation in the European Climate Pact;
11. Highlights the importance of managing physical climate risks and calls for the integration of mandatory climate risk assessments into the EU strategy on adaptation to climate change, including of national adaptation plans;
12. Calls for public procurement to serve as an example of the use of climate-friendly materials and services;
13. Highlights the importance of further promoting climate adaptation in regions and cities in the new strategy, for example by promoting legislative frameworks requiring adequate adaptation strategies and monitoring at regional and city level after proper consultation with the relevant stakeholders including civil society and youth organisations, trade unions and local businesses, accompanied by financial incentives to aid their implementation; stresses that special attention should be paid to enhancing the preparedness and adaptive capacity of the most vulnerable geographical areas such as coastal areas, islands and outermost regions, which are particularly impacted by climate change through natural disasters and extreme weather disturbances; regrets the fact that there was a strong lack of a gender perspective in the Commission's 2013 adaptation strategy and insists on a gender perspective that fully considers the vulnerability of women and girls and also upholds gender equality in participation;



14. Stresses the need to improve cross-border cooperation and coordination on climate adaptation, as well as in rapid response to climate disasters; in this context, calls on the Commission to support the Member States in sharing knowledge and best practices on the different climate adaptation efforts at regional and local level;
15. Highlights the need for Member States, regions and cities to build their adaptive capacity to reduce vulnerabilities and the social impacts of climate change; calls for the Commission and the EU agencies to provide the necessary capacity-building and training, and a framework for the proper exchange of information and best practices across local, sub-national and national authorities;
16. Emphasises that adaptation strategies should also encourage a change of model in vulnerable areas, such as islands, based on environmentally friendly and nature-based solutions, and should enhance self-sufficiency to ensure better living conditions, including sustainable and local agriculture and fishery practices, sustainable management of water, greater use of renewable energy, etc., in line with the SDGs, in order to foster their resilience and the protection of their ecosystems;
17. Notes the further need for mapping of the impacts of climate change, for example in the occurrence of natural hazards; welcomes, therefore, the EU Observatory for Climate Change and Health's Climate-ADAPT project, which has already been launched, and encourages the Commission to further develop and expand the project to cover further sectors;
18. Highlights the important synergies and potential trade-offs between climate change mitigation and adaptation; stresses the fact that the evaluation of the current adaptation strategy has established the need for further emphasis to be placed on the link between adaptation and mitigation in policies and plans; notes that synergistic approaches to these issues are essential as a result both of the urgency of the climate and environmental crises, and of the need to protect human health and strengthen the resilience of ecological and social systems, making sure that no one is left behind; stresses that while common efforts are vital to ensure effective action on mitigation owing to its global transboundary nature, particular attention also has to be paid to the impacts of climate change and the costs of adaptation for each region, particularly those regions that are facing the double challenge of contributing to the global mitigation effort while bearing the increasing costs of dealing with climate-related impacts;
19. Believes that the adverse effects of climate change could potentially exceed the adaptive capacities of Member States; is, therefore, of the opinion that the Member States and the Union should work together to avert, minimise and address loss and damage associated with climate change, as provided for in Article 8 of the Paris Agreement; recognises the need to further develop measures to address loss and damage;
20. Recognises that the impacts of climate change are transboundary in nature, affecting, for example, trade, migration and security; urges the Commission, therefore, to ensure that the new strategy is holistic and covers the whole range of climate impacts;
21. Stresses that the EU must be ready for climate-induced displacement and recognises the need for adequate measures to be taken to protect the human rights of populations under threat from the effects of climate change;

### *Nature-based solutions and green infrastructure*

22. Recalls that climate change and its impacts affect not only humans, but also biodiversity and marine and terrestrial ecosystems, and that according to the landmark IPBES report, climate change is currently the third most important direct driver of biodiversity loss worldwide, and sustainable livelihoods will be vital for mitigating dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system and adapting to it; calls, therefore, on the Commission and the Member States to ensure greater coherence between the implementation of the adaptation and biodiversity conservation measures emanating from the biodiversity strategy for 2030;
23. Encourages the development of a truly coherent and resilient Trans-European Nature Network, consisting of ecological corridors to prevent genetic isolation, allow for species migration and maintain and enhance healthy ecosystems, while permitting the development of traditional, yet climate-proofed infrastructure;
24. Stresses the importance of using sustainable nature-based adaptation solutions, of the conservation and restoration of marine and terrestrial ecosystems that can simultaneously contribute to climate mitigation and adaptation, the protection of biodiversity and combating different types of pollution; calls for the new strategy to include ambitious action plans on stepping up the use of such solutions, with adequate funding, including from the MFF, InvestEU and the Recovery and Resilience Facility, and proposes looking into the portfolios of available financial products and improving the terms of financing to remedy the current sub-optimal investment situation; further calls for good use to be made of the LIFE programme, allowing it to act as a catalyst for innovation in adaptation and to become a space to experiment, develop and pilot solutions to build up the Union's resilience to climate risk;
25. Highlights the need to assess and make further use of the potential of forests, trees and green infrastructure in climate adaptation and in the provision of ecosystem services such as, for example, trees in urban areas, which can even out extreme temperatures, in addition to providing other benefits, such as improving air quality; calls for more trees to be planted in cities, for support to be given to sustainable forest management and for an integrated response to forest fires, including, for example, adequate training for the fire fighters involved in combating them, in order to protect the EU's forests against the destruction caused by extreme climate events; highlights that all adaptation measures for reforestation and agriculture should be based on the latest scientific knowledge and should be implemented with full respect for ecological principles;
26. Notes that identifying the forest areas which have remained closest to their natural state and should therefore be given particular protection, was one of the priorities of the second EU environmental action programme of 1977; further notes that, while no action has been taken as yet, the EU also made this a priority in the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030; calls on the Commission to align the future EU climate adaptation strategy with the objectives of the EU Biodiversity Strategy, particularly with regard to the strict protection of all primary forests and its conservation and restoration objectives;

27. Highlights the role of intact forest ecosystems<sup>8</sup> in overcoming environmental stressors, including changes to the climate, thanks to their inherent properties which enable them to maximise their adaptive capacity, and which include evolutionary lineages that are uniquely adapted to survive major seasonal temperature changes and landscape-level disturbances over time;
28. Underlines that several technologies enable trees to be replanted; understands that, in some instances, construction works conducted in cities may entail the destruction of green areas, and supports, in this context, the replanting of trees, giving them a new life in new well-designed places;
29. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to classify green infrastructure as belonging to the category of critical infrastructure for the purposes of programming, funding and investments;
30. Notes that certain components of green infrastructure also suffer under increased heat and other stressful conditions, and that in order for them to create not only physical, but also physiological cooling effects, we need to provide them with favourable conditions, soil and moisture to thrive in urban areas; highlights, therefore, the role of proper green urban planning which takes the needs of the various components of green infrastructure into account and not merely the planting of trees;
31. Recognises the role of the oceans in adapting to climate change, and stresses the need to ensure and promote healthy and resilient seas and oceans; recalls that the IPCC special report entitled 'The Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate' specifies that climate mechanisms depend on the health of the ocean and marine ecosystems, which are currently affected by global warming, pollution, the overexploitation of marine biodiversity, acidification, deoxygenation and coastal erosion; highlights that the IPCC also points out that the ocean is part of the solution to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, and underlines the necessity of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and pollution in ecosystems, as well as of enhancing natural carbon sinks;
32. Points out that the degradation of coastal and marine ecosystems threatens the physical, economic and food security of local communities and the economy at large, and weakens their ability to provide critical ecosystem services such as food, carbon storage and oxygen generation, as well as to support nature-based solutions to climate change adaptation;
33. Warns that certain coastal zones may come under great pressure due to rising sea levels and the intrusion of saline water into both the coastal aquifers used for the abstraction of drinking water and into sewers, as well as due to extreme weather, which may have consequences such as crop failure, the contamination of bodies of water, damage to infrastructure, and forced displacement; encourages the development of green infrastructure in coastal cities, which are generally located near wetlands, to preserve biodiversity and coastal ecosystems, as well as to strengthen the sustainable development of the economy, tourism and coastal landscapes, which also help to

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<sup>8</sup> Watson, J. E. M. et al.: 'The exceptional value of intact forest ecosystems', *Nature, Ecology and Evolution*, Vol. 2, No 4, Macmillan Publishers Limited, London, 2018.

improve resilience to climate change in these vulnerable areas which are particularly affected by rising sea levels;

34. Supports initiatives, including the development of urban strategies and better spatial planning, to use the potential of roofs and other infrastructure, such as parks, urban gardens, green roofs and walls, air filter appliances, cool pavements, penetrable concrete and other measures that can contribute to cooling high urban temperatures, the retention and reuse of rainwater and the production of food, while reducing air pollution, improving quality of life in cities, reducing risks to human health and protecting biodiversity, including pollinators; believes that infrastructure such as roads, parking lots, train tracks and power and drainage systems, among others, need to be made biodiversity- and climate-proof;
35. Acknowledges that assessments by public authorities of the impact of spatial plans and urban development on the water system could provide planning authorities with the necessary advice on ways to build without causing problems for the water system; calls on the Member States to embed these assessments in their approach; calls on the Member States to draw up flood hazard and flood risk maps in accordance with Article 6 of Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks, thereby reducing the impact of floods;
36. Recalls that climate change has an impact on both water quantity and its quality, as lower flow in bodies of water means less dilution of harmful substances which are a threat to biodiversity, human health and the drinking water supply; calls, therefore, for better water management in urban and rural areas, including the creation of sustainable drainage through improved land planning, which safeguards and recovers natural flowing systems and natural water retention measures to help moderate flooding and droughts, facilitate groundwater recharge and ensure the availability of water resources for the production of drinking water; emphasises that adaptation measures in water management should be consistent with measures to enhance sustainability and circularity in farming, foster the energy transition and conserve and restore ecosystems and biodiversity; in this respect, calls for a strong link between the upcoming zero pollution action plan on water, air and soil and the new EU climate adaptation strategy;
37. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to fully implement Directive 2000/60/EC, which establishes a framework for Community action in the field of water policy, improving the quality of waters upstream; notes that measures to retain and abstract water from bodies of water upstream has an impact on bodies of water downstream – also across borders – which might hamper the economic development of downstream areas and limit the availability of drinking water resources; calls for coherent policy measures across areas in order to contribute to reaching at least good ecological status of bodies of water in the EU, and stresses the crucial importance of ensuring WFD-compliant ecological flows and a significant improvement in freshwater ecosystem connectivity;
38. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to further promote water reuse in order to prevent allocation conflicts between different uses of water, while providing sufficient availability of water resources for the production of drinking water, essential to fulfilling the human right to water;

39. Notes the high energy consumption in the water sector; calls on the Commission to consider energy-efficient measures and the possibility of using treated waste water as an ‘on-site’ source of renewable energy; notes that the current Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive has not been revised since its adoption in 1991; calls on the Commission to revise the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive in order to make sure that it contributes positively to the Union’s climate and environmental goals;

#### *Adaptation measures and consistency*

40. Emphasises the need to mainstream climate adaptation in, and maximise the co-benefits with, all relevant EU policies towards a more sustainable future, such as agriculture and food production, forestry, transport, trade, energy, environment, water management, buildings, infrastructure, industrial, maritime and fisheries policies, as well as cohesion policy and local development, and social policies, and the need to ensure that other European Green Deal initiatives are consistent with climate adaptation and mitigation measures;
41. Calls on the Commission to thoroughly assess the climate and environmental impact of all relevant legislative and budgetary proposals, and to ensure that they are fully aligned with the goal of limiting global warming to below 1.5 °C;
42. Regrets the fact that EU policies allowed for climate and environmentally harmful subsidies in the period 2014-2020, which contributed to the reduced resilience of EU ecosystems; urges that the applicable rules across all policy areas should prevent such use of public resources;
43. Calls on the Commission to adopt an ambitious approach to the upcoming renovation wave and adopt proper initiatives securing staged and deep renovations with a strong cost-effective focus; welcomes, in this context, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen’s ambition to set up a ‘European Bauhaus’ bringing together engineers, architects and other personnel from the buildings sector as stressed during the State of the Union speech on 16 September 2020 in the European Parliament;
44. Calls for the new strategy to be consistent with global action and agreements such as the Paris Agreement, the SDGs and the Convention on Biological Diversity; asks the Commission to identify actions that promote and facilitate adaptation outside of the EU in the new strategy, in particular in least developed countries and small island states which are the most severely impacted by climate change and rising sea levels, and to step up its technical assistance for and the sharing of best practices with developing countries as part of its external action;
45. Calls for the new adaptation strategy to promote and develop adaptation solutions with third countries, especially in the parts of the world most vulnerable to and affected by climate change; emphasises, in addition, the need for effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries, the diffusion of technologies for climate adaptation, and the responsibilities that exist throughout supply chains;
46. Calls for the Commission to adequately and swiftly address desertification and land degradation, problems that already affect most countries in the Union and have emerged as one of the most visible consequences of climate change, and to develop a

methodology and indicators to assess their extent; also highlights the need to address soil sealing; recalls the findings of the European Court of Auditors' special report entitled 'Combating desertification in the EU: a growing threat in need of more action', in particular the need to enhance the EU legal framework for soil, to step up actions towards delivering the commitment made by Member States to achieve land degradation neutrality in the EU by 2030 at the latest, and to better address the underlying causes of desertification, in particular unsustainable agricultural practices; regrets the lack of a specific EU policy and action in this regard; calls, therefore, on the Commission to present an EU strategy to combat desertification within the framework of the adaptation strategy; calls for sufficient funding for combating desertification and land degradation;

47. Acknowledges the unequal impacts of climate change, and the fact that the adverse impacts will not only vary between Member States, but also, more importantly, between regions, affecting their respective needs for adaptation measures; calls, therefore, on the Commission to draw up guidance for Member States and regions to help them target their adaptation measures in the most effective manner;
48. Stresses the need to enhance the preparedness and adaptive capacity of geographical areas with a high exposure to climate change, such as the island and outermost regions of the EU;
49. Recognises that the adverse impacts of climate change will particularly affect poor and disadvantaged groups within society, as they tend to have more limited adaptive capacities and are more dependent on climate-sensitive resources; stresses that climate change adaptation efforts need to address the nexus between climate change and the wide-ranging socio-economic sources of vulnerability, including poverty and gender inequality;
50. Calls for reinforced social protection systems to protect the most vulnerable regions and people against the adverse impacts of climate change, as well as for the identification of vulnerable groups in the design of fair adaptation policies at all relevant governance levels;
51. Highlights that the selection of adaptation measures should be carried out on the basis of a multi-criteria analysis through efficiency, effectiveness, financial cost, consistency with mitigation, an urban perspective, etc.; calls on the Commission to develop a definition of climate-proofing as a way to ensure that all measures are effective and fit for purpose;
52. Highlights the risk of maladaptation to climate change and the associated costs thereof; calls, therefore, on the Commission to develop indicators to measure whether the Union is meeting the targets on adaptation, based on projected impacts;
53. Encourages the development of common methodologies and approaches to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of adaptation actions, while recognising that climate change impacts and adaptation actions are local and context-specific;

### ***Financing***



54. Calls for increased funding at all governance levels and for the mobilisation of public and private investments in adaptation; recalls its position calling for a climate-related spending target of 30 % and a biodiversity-related spending target of 10 % in the next MFF 2021-2027 and Next Generation EU, which should contribute to both climate mitigation and adaptation; calls for climate resilience to be considered as a key criterion in all relevant EU funding; considers that the European Investment Bank (EIB), as a climate bank, should also fund climate adaptation measures<sup>9</sup>; calls on the EIB, as the EU's climate bank, to properly deliver the EU's financing for adaptation to climate change and to commit to an enhanced level of ambition on adaptation in its Climate Bank Roadmap, and calls for increased incentives for SMEs, which can play a key role in developing innovative sustainable solutions for adaptation; stresses that the next MFF and the Recovery Fund should neither lead to increased pressure on ecosystems, nor to their reduced connectivity, nor to their overexploitation as only the sustainable use of nature will allow the Union to adapt to and mitigate dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system<sup>10</sup>; calls for adequate financial support for the implementation of the protection and restoration targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy; stresses the need to make the financing of adaptation to climate change inclusive and gender-responsive;
55. Regrets the fact that the EU's tracking methodology for climate funding does not differentiate between mitigation and adaptation, and that climate earmarking has been difficult to track, being used more as an accounting tool than an actual support for policy planning; calls for the climate earmarking system to be policy-specific and include monitoring criteria that allow for comparisons across EU funds, differentiating between climate mitigation and adaptation across all EU budget instruments;
56. Encourages better use of the EU Solidarity Fund as a 'build back better' funding mechanism that also provides incentives for adaptation and forward-looking planning;
57. Acknowledges that adaptation has a cost; notes, however, that the cost of inaction is expected to be far greater; insists on the importance of making investments in adaptation as, in addition to saving lives and protecting the environment, preventive actions can be more cost-effective; emphasises the principle of prevention and calls on the Commission to develop approaches to ensure that the costs arising from a failure to take adaptation measures are not passed on to the general public, and to enforce the 'polluter pays' principle, giving adaptation responsibilities to the polluter; calls for the EU and the Member States to ensure that public investments are climate-proof and, at the same time, provide incentives for green and sustainable private investments to act as a catalyst for systemic changes; believes that the 'do no harm' principle should be explicit in the upcoming adaptation strategy, in particular to prevent negative impacts on biodiversity, and avert maladaptation;
58. Welcomes the Commission's proposal to extend the scope of the EU Solidarity Fund to cover public health emergencies such as pandemics;

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<sup>9</sup> European Parliament resolution of 23 July 2020 on the conclusions of the extraordinary European Council meeting of 17-21 July 2020, Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2020)0206.

<sup>10</sup> IPBES, Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, 2019.



### *Awareness-raising, adaptation knowledge and research*

59. Underlines the importance of raising awareness about the effects of climate change, such as extreme weather events, including on health and on the environment, and about the need for adaptation, as well as its benefits, not only among decision makers, but also through appropriate and continuous information and educational activities at all stages and in all areas of life; regrets, in this context, the fact that budget cuts have been made to important programmes such as EU4health and Erasmus;
60. Recognises that the priority knowledge gaps have not been closed and that new gaps have emerged; calls, therefore, on the Commission to further identify and fill knowledge gaps, also in relation to critical sectors, in order to ensure informed decision-making, by further developing tools such as Climate-ADAPT and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology Climate and Knowledge and Innovation Community (EIT Climate-KIC); in this regard, stresses the importance of better knowledge sharing between Member States, which remains insufficient, and of improved coordination on issues such as international river basins, flood defences, building codes and construction in potential high-risk zones; calls on the Commission to create an adaptation analysis and modelling forum to improve the use of climate change impact and adaptation models for policy-making;
61. Highlights the large amount of innovation that underpins projects and measures for climate change adaptive measures, such as technology development, digital services, etc., and stresses the need for the EU to support the development and deployment of such initiatives;
62. Stresses the importance of supporting research and innovation through the Horizon Europe programme and other financing mechanisms in the areas of climate adaptation, nature-based solutions, green technologies and other solutions that can help in the fight against climate change and extreme weather phenomena; recalls also the potential of Horizon Europe to foster the climate resilience of EU citizens, thereby contributing to adaptation also through societal transformation; regrets, in this context, the fact that massive cuts have been made to the budgets in the field of research and innovation to programmes such as Horizon Europe, as these cuts will diminish the EU's competitiveness in cutting-edge technologies and solutions for climate mitigation and adaptation; recalls the fundamental role that researchers play in combating global warming and stresses, in this regard, the importance of close scientific collaboration between international partners; notes that the agricultural European Innovation Partnership (EIP-AGRI) can be an important tool for developing new technologies and practices for climate adaptation in agri-food systems;
63. Stresses the importance of basing the adaptation measures on the latest scientific knowledge and accessible data; takes note, in this context, of the work already carried out by EU programmes such as COPERNICUS, and emphasises the role of enforced data collection in ensuring the most accurate projections possible; calls for an increase in research and development to find innovative solutions for adaptation and for targeted support to digital innovations that exploit the power of digitalisation for sustainable transformation;

64. Notes that the effects of climate change on health will increase and that, according to the European Environment Agency (EEA) Report on Health and Climate Change, and the Lancet Countdown, these impacts are only now beginning to be considered; stresses, therefore, the importance of further studying the impact of climate change on human health and calls for investment in research in this area, for cross-sectoral cooperation on risk assessment and surveillance, and increased awareness and capacity in the health sector, including at local level, and for the sharing of best practices and the latest knowledge on the risks posed by climate change to human health, through EU programmes such as Horizon Europe and the LIFE programme; calls for the data that is collected to be channelled into the European Health Data Space;
65. Calls on the Commission to take into account in its strategy the need to ensure that Member States have climate-resilient health systems, capable of anticipating and responding to the consequences of climate change for health, particularly for the most vulnerable people, by fully engaging the health community in the design of the instruments for adaptation; stresses that this should include prevention programmes, plans on adaptive measures and awareness-raising campaigns on the effects of climate change on health, such as death, injury, the increased risk of food- and water-borne disease resulting from extreme temperatures, floods and fires, as well as effects emanating from disrupted ecosystems, bringing risks of diseases, changed pollen seasons and allergies; calls on the Commission also to provide the necessary resources for the maintenance and further development of the vector-borne disease surveillance network and entomological surveillance, and its proper implementation in the Member States;

#### *Early warning and rapid response*

66. Calls for the new strategy to put a stronger focus on crisis prevention and preparedness planning, and management and disaster response, including in the event of pandemics, exploiting all synergies with the reinforced Union Civil Protection Mechanism and with the active involvement of EU agencies such as the EEA and the European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (ECDC); is of the opinion that the Member States should coordinate the creation of these preparedness plans with the Union Civil Protection Mechanism through its Emergency Response Coordination Centre; calls on the Commission to develop guidelines on urban heat emergencies and to encourage the exchange of best practices between Member States in this context;
67. Urges the Member States to develop adequate prevention and rapid response plans for climate disasters such as heatwaves, floods and drought, which take into account the specificities of the regions, such as border or coastal regions, and include mechanisms for cross-border action, ensuring shared responsibilities and solidarity between the Member States and with third countries; insists on the need to adopt an adaptation strategy for territories and cities exposed to the consequences of climate change, based on a new innovative ecosystem approach to risk prevention and management, in particular by identifying fall-back areas, flood retention areas, natural protections and, in cases where they are essential, artificial protections;
68. Requests national, regional and local authorities to establish timely early warning systems and prepare appropriate tools to respond to extreme weather events and other

negative impacts of climate change, as well as pandemics;

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69. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission.