

Climate Alliance represents more than 1400 local governments in 17 European countries active in local climate policies.

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Priority adaptation measures at the European level

– Climate Alliance proposal

During the last few years Climate Alliance coordinated an European project titled AMICA (Adaptation and Mitigation - an Integrated Climate Policy Approach). The project was built around the collaboration of a group of cities and regional governments, all victims of extreme weather events that occurred in the last years. Factors such as land-use patterns, coverage of urban trees and vegetation, integration of transport modes and systems, as well as the materials and heating systems used in building construction can be directly affected by local decision makers. This is where integrated policies and programmes to mitigate climate change and to alleviate adverse impacts of climate change can be most effective.

The AMICA project identified three policy fields where synergies for adaptation and mitigation are particularly relevant: These three aspects – urban planning, construction and decentralised energy production – are of their nature very local or regional. Therefore municipalities and regions should take on a leadership role in adaptation, and developing integrated mitigation and adaptation strategies.

The European level has a great potential in pushing forward the integrated mitigation and adaptation approach through awareness raising, integrating climate issues in their existing and new policy initiatives and in supporting future research and concrete projects in this field.

On the basis of the AMICA project and our participation in the European Commissions consultation process on the Green Paper, we would like to make the following recommendations:

- 1) Modify existing EU policies to take into account adaptation issues:
 - a) The review of the Directive on Energy Performance of Buildings is an important tool for setting new building standards on insulation and extending the scope of the directive. Risk prevention for buildings and cooling comfort during heat-waves are two areas in which synergy effects for climate change mitigation can be achieved. The directive has potential to influence greatly the heating and cooling needs e.g. by avoiding energy intensive cooling systems. Supporting other measures such as thick insulation, using green roofs or shading steep roofs with solar panels contribute to cooling comfort during heat waves.
 - b) Modify and revise EIA and SEA directives to include adaptation and mitigation objectives explicitly.
- 2) Use the EU funding programmes to (influencing current funding systems)
 - a) Improve knowledge about regional impacts of climate change with the aim to raise awareness of the need to adapt and create a basis for how to assess vulnerabilities and adaptive capacities at the local level.
 - b) Help to develop practical tools, which can help decision makers in their planning decisions; assessing what is an acceptable risk and how to define it; as well as defining what land uses can be located and where etc. The AMICA tools are a start towards this direction (www.amica-climate.net)
- 3) Increase the capacities for disaster management as well as financing emergency interventions at the European level (e.g. using the European Solidarity Fund). The natural disasters are likely to

get more frequent and more costly. Therefore new preparedness and early warning systems in this field are necessary.

4) Require national governments to prepare national adaptation plans with a particular emphasis on creating common ground between mitigation and adaptation and thus creating coherent and integrated approaches. It is important to ensure the policy coherence and the necessary links between other relevant national plans, such as the energy efficiency action plans and the action plans on renewable energy sources now required by the European Commission. In addition the European Commission should encourage cooperation between the different levels of government in drafting these plans.

To conclude the green paper includes a section on involving society, business and public sector in preparing comprehensive adaptation strategies. It also proposes to set up a European advisory group for adaptation to climate change. If the European Commission decides to establish such a group, the Climate Alliance calls upon the European Commission to invite local government organisations to participate in the advisory group and to establish a group with a long term mandate and objectives.

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