

**Adapting to Climate Change –
Launching a public debate on options for EU Action**

**3rd July 2007 – Alcide de Gasperi Room
Charlemagne Building - Brussels**

Draft Programme

Purpose of the conference:

On 19 June 2007 the Commission adopted its Green Paper on "Adapting to climate change in Europe – options for EU action". This green paper represents the Commission's first comprehensive policy initiative on adaptation and can therefore be considered as a milestone.

The green paper on adaptation complements the Commission's proposals for early and deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. A swift transition to a low carbon economy is the only way to reduce the risks for dangerous, unpredictable climate change impacts. However, a certain degree of climate change is already happening and inevitable even if mitigation efforts prove successful and global temperature increases are kept below 2°C. The IPCC documented recently that impacts are already measurable and felt worldwide.

Europe will not be spared and all parts of Europe will feel increasingly the adverse effects of climate change. The green paper concludes that adaptation efforts need to be stepped up at all levels and need to be well-coordinated across boundaries. Early and cost-effective adaptation action is the best option to reduce the overall cost.

The aim of the conference is to launch publicly the consultation on the green paper. All those interested –organisations and individuals- are invited to contribute to the debate. During this conference active participation and feedback from the audience is requested in particular on the questions raised in the green paper.

Morning session:

08:15 – 09:00

Registration

09:00 – 09:15

Introduction and welcome by Jos Delbeke, Director of Air & Environment Directorate – DG Environment and presentation of key questions to be addressed in the plenary

Key questions:

Which of the adverse impacts of climate change identified in the Green Paper is the greatest concern? Does the Green Paper place the right emphasis and urgency on the matter of adaptation in Europe? Should further important aspects be added?

Is the Green Paper's assessment of adaptation actions and the justification for Community action correct? Could the Community add more value with respect to adaptation actions? Is a more detailed discussion on the different roles of EU, national, regional, local authorities and the private sector needed? Apart from the main priority areas identified in the four-action approach, have other areas that been missed out?

09:15 – 09:30

Opening address by Commissioner Dimas – Climate Change Adaptation within the European Dimension

09:30 – 09:45

Key speech by representative of the Portuguese Presidency (tbc)

09:45 – 10:15

Key speech by leading impacts expert – The need for adaptation: overview of impacts and vulnerability in Europe and cost of inaction – Dr Rajendra Pachauri IPCC chair

10:15 – 10:45

Coffee Break

10:45 – 12:00

Session 1: Knowledge, information, innovation and research (Panel session)

Sound scientific results are paramount in the development of climate policy. Considerable progress has been made, some knowledge gaps remain. Research should address the complexity of interrelated factors which cannot be analysed separately. An integrated cross-sectoral approach to research is to be promoted to overcome this challenge. Internalisation of environmental costs of physical and biological system degradation is a must. Innovation in adaptation technologies may create new market opportunities for European businesses. Better use should be made of existing information systems, tools and data. Modern Information and Communication Technologies will be a key instrument to support decision makers at local, regional and national level.

Some key questions:

How can we ensure that all information is readily available across the EU? How do we transfer this information to the decision-makers at national, regional and local level? Are there still gaps on research and knowledge in specific sectors? Should detailed guidance on access and effective use of scientific information be developed for practitioners?

Moderator: DG ENV

- Speaker: Janez Potocnik, The Commissioner for Science and Research (tbc) – introduction of the main aspects and conclusions of the green paper (15 minutes)
- Panel: Three external panellists - critical review of the green paper's analysis (10 minutes each) –

- Roberto Bertollini, Chairman, WHO European Centre for Environment and Health (ECEH)
- Prof. John Schellnhuber, Director Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research
- Jacky McGlade, executive director EEA
- Feedback from the audience (30 minutes)

12:00– 13:30

Lunch

Afternoon Session:

13:30 – 14:30

Session 2: Natural resources and planning processes (Panel Session)

Despite the fact that impacts are frequently felt at a local and regional level, a number of existing EU initiatives, policies and regulations are relevant for addressing climate change impacts. Now is the time for reflection on these policies to increase Europe's resilience to climate change impacts. Priority policy areas to be looked at relate to water, ecosystems and biodiversity, agriculture and rural development, health, forestry, coastal zones and the marine environment, fisheries.

Some key questions:

Is the action proposed in the green paper under "early action" appropriate, correct and comprehensive? How can the EU ensure policies are fit to address adaptation to climate change? Should existing policies be amended or new policies created? How can existing policies influence land use and land management decisions?

Moderator: DG ENV

- Speaker: Mariann Fisher Boel Commissioner for Agriculture and rural development (tbc) - introduction of the main aspects and conclusions of the green paper (15 minutes)
- Panel: Three external panellists - critical review of the green paper's analysis (5 minutes each)
 - Daniel Villesot president of EUREAU
 - Tony Long WWF (tbc)
 - Peter Kendall Vice-President COPA-COGEPA (tbc)
- Feedback from the audience (30 minutes)

14:30 – 15:30

Session 3: Public Infrastructure, Community funding programmes and the role of Insurance (Panel Session)

The Community budget supports a large variety of economic activities through structural funds, rural development programme, trans-european networks and innovation programmes. The resulting investments could be affected by climate change. These programmes can be used to encourage and support the implementation of adaptation policies that relate to public and private

investments across the EU. Adaptation to climate change may involve mainstreaming adaptation activities within the direct EU funding policies. Discussions will cover policy areas in particular relating to cohesion, regional policies as well as regional and urban planning and the internal market for financial services and insurance.

Some key questions:

Does the green paper address appropriately and completely the funding instruments which could be used? How should we make sure that limited European Funds are spent for climate-resilient infrastructure projects? How can financial markets and insurance stimulate the adoption of adaptive measures by individuals and industries? How should we face up to new climate change-related disparities between different regions in Europe?

Moderator: DG ENV

- Speaker: Danuta Hubner Commissioner for Regional Policy (tbc) – introduction of the main aspects and conclusions of the green paper (15 minutes)
- Panel: Three external panellists -critical review of the green paper's analysis (5 minutes each)
 - Ernst Rauch, Head Dept Georisks Munic RE
 - Council of European municipalities and regions (tbc)
 - Nicky Gavron, Deputy Mayor of London (tbc)
- Feedback from the audience (30 minutes)

15:30 – 16:00

Coffee Break

16:00 – 17:00

Session 4: EU external action and Community cooperation (Panel Session)

Climate change will particularly affect the most vulnerable developing countries. Adaptation will be fundamental in securing the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals after 2015. The EU has a duty to support adaptation actions in developing countries. The EU should also pursue its collaboration with key partners in neighbouring regions, countries in economic transition and other developed countries. Discussions will focus on the role of the EU in leading the implementation of adaptation across the world.

Some key questions:

Which priorities should the Community set when assisting other parts of the world in adapting to climate change? Which are the main opportunities and obstacles? What could be the value added compared to UN-led initiatives including the UNFCCC and other multi-lateral funding instruments? How can the European Community strengthen its collaboration other Annex I countries in the sharing of good practice. What are the best options for making the EU's external action more resilient to climate change?

Moderator: DG ENV

- Speaker: Louis Michel Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid (tbc)- introduction of the main aspects and conclusions of the green paper (15 minutes)
- Panel: Three external panellists (to be selected) - critical review of the green paper's analysis (5 minutes each)
 - Red Cross (tbc)
 - Saleem Huq, head climate change group IIED
 - Sir John Kaputin, Secretary General of the ACP secretariat (tbc)
- Feedback from the audience (30 minutes)

17:00 – 17:30

Conclusions and close of meeting - Jos Delbeke