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## PROJECT

Adaptation  
Cities  
Climate

# Policy Instruments for Adaptation to Climate Change in Big European Cities and Metropolitan Areas

In the face of climate change, European cities and metropolitan areas are experiencing particular challenges. This study aims to provide local and regional administrators and interested stakeholders with policy tools and guidance based on existing good practices across Europe.

Many Member States of the European Union have begun to develop overarching adaptation strategies by integrating existing sector specific adaptation approaches and new cross-sectoral approaches. At the EU level, the [European Commission's White Paper of 2009](#) [1] proposes a framework for action to reduce vulnerability and adapt to climate change. However, while both EU and national levels have an important role in shaping the policy framework for adaptation, adaptation as a policy field can benefit by borrowing from the principle of subsidiarity. A local or regional approach to adaptation offers the advantage of addressing the specific climate change threats at the respective levels (e.g. for transportation infrastructure, land use planning and urban design). However, regional approaches also risk being ineffective and costly if they are developed and implemented in isolation. Planning is often difficult due to uncertainty in small-scale climate change projections and in how natural systems will respond to the change. Local and regional administrators need guidance on setting priorities and distributing resources - as well as information on what policies are likely to generate solutions.

Against this background, the [Committee of the Regions](#) [2] commissioned a study with the aim of identifying good practices on adaptation to climate change in large European cities and metropolitan areas to provide guidance to local and regional administrators and interested stakeholders. To this end case studies of adaptation strategies in 20 different European regions were conducted. To make extensive use of first-hand information, the case studies were essentially based on a survey of local and regional

administration representatives who have been involved in the development and/or implementation of adaptation strategies. A first round of questionnaire-based interviews focused on the adaptation strategies as a whole while a second round served to analyse individual adaptation measures in more detail. Ecologic Institute led the study and was responsible for the development of the research design, the coordination and part of the case studies, and the documentation of results.

The [resulting report](#) [3] contains a literature review, descriptions of the adaptation strategies of 20 European cities and metropolitan areas, an inventory of adaptation measures, and recommendations. It is available for download in [English](#) [4] [pdf, 1.5 MB] and [French](#) [5] [pdf, 1.7 MB]. Hard copies in both languages can be obtained from the [Committee of the Regions](#) [6]. See also [CoR Publications website](#) [7] and [EU Bookshop](#) [8].

### **Main Link**

<https://www.ecologic.eu/4454>

### **Related Articles**

- Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategies (RCCAS)
- Regional Adaptation Strategies for the German Baltic Sea Coast (RADOST)

### **Further Links**

- Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on the 'White Paper — Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action'
- "Resilient Cities" - World Congress on Cities and Adaptation to Climate Change (ICLEI)
- Adaptation website of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Climate Action
- Scoping Study of the European Topic Centre on Air and Climate Change: "Urban Regions: Vulnerabilities, Vulnerability Assessments by Indicators and Adaptation Options for Climate Change Impacts"
- Research programme "KLIMZUG - Managing climate change in the regions for the future"
- Project "Future Cities - urban networks to face climate change"
- Project "Adaptation and Mitigation - an Integrated Climate Policy Approach" (AMICA)
- Council of Europe, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities: "Climate change: building adaptive capacity of local and regional authorities" (2008) - Resolution
- Council of Europe, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities: "Climate change: building adaptive capacity of local and regional authorities" (2008) - Recommendation
- Council of Europe, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities: "Climate change: building adaptive capacity of local and regional authorities" (2008) - Explanatory memorandum
- Handbook on urban climate of the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia (German)

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**Links**

[1] <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0147:FIN:EN:PDF>

[2] <http://www.cor.europa.eu%20>

[3] <https://www.ecologic.eu/4454>

[4] <https://www.ecologic.eu/sites/files/project/2013/climatechangeen.pdf>

[5] <https://www.ecologic.eu/sites/files/project/2013/climatechangefr.pdf>

[6] <mailto:studies@cor.europa.eu>

[7] <http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/DocumentTemplate.aspx?view=folder&id=5a988cbb-f36a-45e7-b0ec-6c03884f6f97&sm=5a988cbb-f36a-45e7-b0ec-6c03884f6f97>

[8] <https://publications.europa.eu/new-bookshop/?target=/en/adaptation-to-climate-change-pbQG3210426/>