

Background document

Break-out group discussions - part 1 (12 June): Urban adaptation

Recent policy and knowledge developments

In 2018 the European Commission evaluated the [2013 EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change](#). The [evaluation report](#) estimates that across the EU, only around 40% of cities with more than 150,000 inhabitants have adopted adaptation plans; the progress on local adaptation has been slower than envisaged in 2013. Nonetheless, without the [Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy](#), EU cities would be more vulnerable¹. The Strategy, if reviewed, could promote more strongly the adoption and monitoring of local adaptation strategies and action. In particular the role of EU funding in helping to build capacity in municipalities so that they can design adaptation policies that are socially just is emphasised. The report also highlights the need for enhanced EU-wide monitoring framework of adaptation strategies at all levels, including cities.

Under the [Urban Agenda for the EU](#), the Partnership on Climate Adaptation (which EEA is a part of), developed its [Action Plan](#) in 2018. This partnership of EU institutions, national, regional and local bodies and city networks will aim to provide better regulation (e.g. through analysis of national multilevel urban development and planning regulations), better funding (e.g. through development of guidelines and toolkit for the economic analysis of adaptation projects) and better knowledge (e.g. through promoting open access to insurance data for climate risk management). The timeframe for the completion of this set of actions is from January 2019 until mid-2020.

Background information EEA and ETC/CCA activities

In February 2019, the EEA report '[Unequal impacts and unequal exposure: social vulnerability to air pollution, noise and extreme temperatures](#)' was published. In relation to urban adaptation, the report draws attention to the coincidence of high temperatures and low socio-economic status in many European cities, potentially increasing the risks to population. The report also highlights the actions undertaken by European cities in addressing the problems posed by high temperatures to vulnerable populations, including urban greening or development of warning systems.

As part of the revision of Climate-ADAPT in 2018, the urban-themed parts of the platform were improved. The contents and structure of [Urban Adaptation Support Tool](#) were reviewed in collaboration with the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, also using the outputs of the [RESIN](#) Horizon 2020 research project. [Urban Adaptation Map Viewer](#) was developed to replace the discontinued Urban Vulnerability Map Book. The viewer includes selected climatic variables to show spatial distribution of past trends and future projections, drawing on the EEA indicators. These are combined with data on land use, land cover and demographic and socio-economic aspects relevant to the exposure and vulnerability of cities to different climate hazards. The viewer also maps cities participating in various research and knowledge exchange projects and signatories to Covenant of Mayors and other adaptation initiatives. Finally, the viewer includes 'city factsheets', which provide information on climate hazards, exposure, vulnerability and adaptation activities for cities included in Eurostat's City Statistics database (formerly Urban Audit, covering nearly 900 cities across Europe).

The major part of the EEA's activities on urban adaptation in 2019 is concerned with developing the draft of the report 'Urban adaptation to climate change in Europe 2020'. The publication of the report is envisaged for Q3 of 2020, with Eionet consultation tentatively planned for March 2020. The report will assess the climate impacts on European cities and present the status of urban adaptation planning

¹ As of April 2019, over 900 local authorities across the EEA member and collaborating countries have signed up to Covenant of Mayors on adaptation and 240 adaptation action plans have been submitted.

and implementation across Europe. In order to do so, the assessment utilises a wide range of available evidence, including a systematic literature review; [country fiches](#) developed for the evaluation of the [2013 EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change](#); country reports under Article 15 of the [Monitoring Mechanism Regulation](#); spatial data from the Urban Adaptation Map Viewer, plus new spatial data developed by ETC/CCA and ETC/ULS²; analysis of Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans submitted by signatories to Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy; analysis of Climate-ADAPT urban case studies; outputs of recent major research projects on urban adaptation to climate change; et cetera. The contents of the report are planned as follows:

1. Climate change and extreme weather impacts on European cities – the attempt at quantification of damages and losses in urban areas, based on evidence review;
2. Vulnerability and exposure of European cities to climate change, considering their physical characteristics, socio-demographic and economic aspects;
3. Responding to climate hazards in European cities – an assessment of effectiveness of various adaptation options and case studies;
4. Urban adaptation policy in Europe: the impact of international, EU, national and sub-national actors and regulations on adaptation planning at urban level
5. Urban adaptation planning in Europe: number and status of urban adaptation plans; involvement of stakeholders; types of actions planned and implemented
6. Opportunities and challenges for urban adaptation in Europe: knowledge, finance, monitoring
7. Adaptation as an essential aspect of sustainable urban development – mainstreaming adaptation; co-benefits of adaptation and mitigation; socially-just adaptation.

There are no foreseen major changes to Urban Adaptation Support Tool and Urban Adaptation Map Viewer within Climate-ADAPT during 2019; however, the contents are being updated and complemented with new data and information as it becomes available. Also, we are considering development of use cases, showing how the contents of the Urban Adaptation Map Viewer can be applied by various actors.

Finally, EEA co-organises with ICLEI Europe [European Urban Resilience Forum](#) (previously Open European Day), in Bonn, Germany (25th June 2019). The event is focussed on the exchange of knowledge and experiences on adaptation among European cities, around the themes of nature-based solutions; improving governance for inclusive and effective climate action; and implementing, financing and monitoring strategies for urban resilience.

Questions for the discussion

1. What are your views on the relevance, scope and timing of the EEA assessment on urban adaptation to climate change in Europe?
2. For your country, can you recommend case studies, research projects or publications illustrating the climate and weather impacts on cities (in a quantitative manner), effectiveness of adaptation responses, or other aspects of urban adaptation?
3. How could Urban Adaptation Map Viewer be used for the adaptation activities at both the national level and for cities in your country? How could the Viewer be improved?
4. What topics on of urban and social aspects of adaptation could EEA address in the future?

² European Topic Centre on Urban, Land and Soil systems