


Environment and health

# Number of countries that have adopted a climate change adaptation strategy/plan



Indicator	EU indicator past trend	Selected objective to be met by 2020	Indicative outlook of the EU meeting the selected objective by 2020
Number of countries that have adopted a climate change adaptation strategy and/or plan	N.A. <sup>(1)</sup>	Make decisive progress in adapting to the impact of climate change — 7th EAP	
<p>There has been an increase in the number of countries that have adopted a national adaptation strategy and/or plan and this is expected to continue. However information on the 'decisive progress' of these policies towards reducing vulnerability and enhancing resilience to climate change is limited, preventing firm conclusions with respect to the 2020 outlook</p>			

The Seventh Environment Action Programme (7th EAP) calls for decisive progress to be made in adapting to the impact of climate change. Climate change has had and will have many impacts on the environment, human health and the economy. Adaptation of Europe's society to climate change is necessary to address the adverse impacts of climate change and complement efforts to mitigate climate change. Action to mitigate climate change and adapt to it will increase the resilience of the EU's economy and society, while stimulating innovation and protecting the EU's natural resources. To date, 20 EU Member States have adopted a national adaptation strategy (NAS) and nine have developed a national adaptation plan (NAP). There has been an increase in the number of countries that have adopted national adaptation strategies and/or plans and this is expected to continue and to deepen, with additional countries adopting follow-up adaptation policies and implementation plans. However, information on the progress of these policies in reducing vulnerability and enhancing resilience is limited, so the outlook towards 2020 for this 7th EAP objective remains uncertain.

For further information on the scoreboard methodology please see Box I.1 in the [EEA Environmental indicator report 2016](#)

### Setting the Scene

The 7th EAP calls for decisive progress to be made in adapting to climate change to make Europe more climate resilient (EU, 2013). Climate change impacts can be seen in global sea level rise, changes in precipitation (e.g. increases in northern and north-western Europe and decreases in southern Europe), decreasing snow cover, glaciers, sea ice and ice sheets. These changes lead to a wide range of often adverse impacts on environmental systems, economic sectors, and human health and well-being in Europe (EEA, 2012 and 2016; IPCC, 2014). Climate change adaptation addresses the adverse effects of climate change and builds resilience to reduce vulnerabilities and risks to the environment, human health and the economy (including infrastructure).

### Policy targets and progress

The European Commission's White Paper (EC, 2009) and EU strategy on adaptation to climate change (EC, 2013) encourage all Member States to adopt comprehensive adaptation strategies. The strategy promotes action in cities and the mainstreaming of adaptation in relevant EU policies and programmes. In addition, it provides funding for actions, enhances research under the Horizon 2020 programme for environment and climate action, and promotes information sharing through the European Climate Adaptation Platform. In 2017, the European Commission will assess whether or not the action being taken in the Member States is sufficient. If it deems progress to be insufficient, by reference to the coverage and quality of the national strategies, the Commission will consider proposing a legally binding instrument (EC, 2013). That 2017 report will include an adaptation preparedness scoreboard, with key process-based indicators for measuring Member States' levels of readiness.

NASs usually address overarching issues that allow them to position adaptation on the policy agenda. These strategies recognise the importance of expected climate change impacts and the need to adapt, and they facilitate the process of coordinating the adaptation response, increasing awareness of adaptation and stakeholder involvement, assessing risks and vulnerabilities, and identifying knowledge gaps.

NAPs usually aim to implement NASs and to organise activities for achieving their objectives, typically through sectoral implementation. Although adaptation implementation at national level is still at an early stage, adaptation planning work is under way in most countries.

### Country level information




Table 1 provides an overview of progress with the adoption of national and sectoral climate change adaptation strategies and plans by EEA member countries. To date, 20 EU Member States and three other EEA member countries have adopted NASs. In addition, nine EU Member States and three other EEA member countries have developed NAPs. Table 1 shows that over the last 5 years there has been a steady increase in the number of NASs and NAPs being adopted by EU Member States and other EEA member countries, and this is expected to continue towards 2020, with additional countries adopting strategies and plans as well as implementing more specific adaptation policies and actions in line with their strategies and plans.

## Annual Indicator Report Series (AIRS)

**Table 1. Overview of national and sectoral climate change adaptation strategies and plans, by country**

EEA Member countries	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Austria											
Belgium											
Bulgaria											
Croatia											
Cyprus											
Czech Republic											
Denmark											
Estonia											
Finland											
France											
Germany											
Greece											
Hungary											
Ireland											
Italy											
Latvia											
Lithuania											
Luxembourg											
Malta											
Netherlands											
Poland											
Portugal											
Romania											
Slovakia											
Slovenia											
Spain											
Sweden											
United Kingdom											
Iceland											
Liechtenstein											
Norway *											
Switzerland											
Turkey											

\* Norway had a NAP before a NAS

	National adaptation strategy (NAS) in place
	National adaptation strategy (NAS) and national and/or sectoral adaptation plans (NAP/SAP) in place
	No policy

**Source:**

EEA, 2014, information reported by EU Member States under the European mechanism for monitoring and reporting information relevant to climate change (Regulation (EU) No 525/2013) and for other EEA Member countries information provided on a voluntary basis to the EEA as of May 2016.

## Annual Indicator Report Series (AIRS)

Regarding the implementing of adaptation policies and actions, most progress has been reported for freshwater management, flood risk management, agriculture and forestry. The adaptation actions in these sectors have mostly consisted of mainstreaming adaptation priorities into these national sectoral policy areas. Several countries have also developed national health strategies and action plans, including early warning systems for heatwaves and enhanced surveillance of infectious diseases (EEA, 2014).

A limited number of countries have started to monitor and report on adaptation policies and actions at national level (EEA, 2014). So far, even fewer countries evaluate adaptation policies at national level; there are various reasons, including the fact that implementation of adaptation has only just begun (EEA, 2015). The countries that monitor these use mainly 'process-based' methods, assessing to what extent agreed stages in the process of taking actions have taken place. Very few countries use 'outcome-based' approaches, assessing if and how vulnerability has decreased and/or resilience has increased, because this is methodologically very complex and also resource intensive. It will therefore not be possible to determine with any certainty whether or not decisive progress in adapting to the impact of climate change can be achieved by 2020.

Transnational cooperation in adaptation to climate change has increased with the recognition of the importance of adaptation as a cross-cutting policy area. Adaptation actions take place, for example, within the EU Baltic Sea region strategy, the Danube Commission and the Carpathian and Alpine conventions. Adaptation action is often linked to the sharing of natural resources such as transboundary water catchments (EEA, 2016).

Adaptation policy will receive new EU financial resources in the coming years. Of the EU budget for 2014–2020, 20 % will be used for climate-related actions (i.e. adaptation and climate change mitigation).

## Outlook beyond 2020

Because of expected future climate change impacts, efforts to adapt to climate change and to make Europe more climate resilient need to be strengthened in future. NASs and NAPs, together with the EU's 2013 adaptation strategy, are expected to be further implemented, and mainstreaming of climate change adaptation in policies is expected to continue. Key global agreements that can also enhance action on adaptation in Europe include the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC, 2015), which requires countries to take adaptation action, complementary to climate change mitigation action, and the 2015 UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR, 2015), which acknowledges climate change as one of the drivers of disaster risk and requires countries to take risk prevention and reduction measures.

### About the indicator

This indicator shows the number of Member States that have adopted an adaptation strategy and/or plan and indicates how many countries have made progress on adapting to climate change by setting this issue on the policy agenda (through strategies). Many of these action plans have been in place for only a few years (see Table 1), so implementation has started rather recently. There is limited quantitative information available, and in only a few countries, on the effectiveness of adaptation strategies and plans regarding enhanced resilience and reduced vulnerabilities and risks. This indicator is therefore not yet able to show the effectiveness of these strategies and plans in making Europe more climate resilient. More information on this is expected to become available in future when more countries implement monitoring, reporting and evaluation adaptation schemes.

### Footnotes and references

(1) N.A. It is not possible to measure a trend, since this is a binary measure, i.e. whether or not a policy has been adopted.

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