

Background document

Break-out group discussions - part 1 (6 June): Urban and social aspects of adaptation

Recent policy and knowledge developments

The [Urban Agenda for the EU](#), established in May 2016, identified twelve priority areas for action, including climate adaptation. The Partnership on Climate Adaptation has been agreed in April 2017. This partnership of EU institutions, national, regional and local bodies and city networks will aim to provide better regulation, better funding and better knowledge to EU citizens living in cities, as described in the Partnership's [orientation paper](#). EEA has joined the Climate Adaptation Partnership in January 2018 and is involved in the development of the Action Plan (due for submission to DG Regio in June 2018).

The EU adaptation strategy of 2013 included the support to cities to adapt to climate change as a key action. This led to the EU funded Mayors Adapt initiative, which was in 2015 merged with the Covenant of Mayors. The EU funded Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy initiative joined forces with the Compact of Mayors and became [Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy](#) in June 2016. It is an international alliance of cities and local governments with a shared long-term vision of promoting and supporting voluntary action to combat climate change and move to a low emission, resilient society. Globally, over 7,500 cities have signed up, representing over 7000 million people worldwide. The EEA has contributed to the ongoing work on convergence of reporting frameworks of the Covenant of Mayors and Compact of Mayors.

The EU region of the Covenant of Mayors have launched their [new website](#) in March 2018. The website is now available in national languages and contains substantial supporting information, including a page on [funding](#) available for adaptation and a [library](#) of adaptation-related resources. The signatories can also log in to access discussion forum on adaptation and upload and rate the items in the resource library. The website links out to [Urban Adaptation Support Tool](#) (hosted on Climate-ADAPT) which is branded as 'the main adaptation resource for the Covenant community'. EEA and Covenant of Mayors are collaborating on the management of the Urban Adaptation Support Tool (UAST).

The European Commission is currently evaluating the EU Adaptation Strategy, planned to be completed by the end of 2018. As a contribution to this evaluation, the EEA, supported by the ETC/CCA, has carried out an evaluation of Climate-ADAPT. The preliminary results of the evaluation indicate a high share of users working in the urban sector (a third of the user survey respondents). The urban tools (UAST and [Urban Adaptation Vulnerability Map Book](#)) are used by a relatively low number of respondents to the survey; however, the qualitative feedback emphasises their value to users. The ongoing EEA work within the Climate-ADAPT revision is also looking at improving the visibility, content and user-friendliness of these two tools.

Background information EEA and ETC/CCA activities

In January 2018, the ETC/CCA Technical Paper "[Social vulnerability to climate change in European cities – state of play in policy and practice](#)" was published. The paper explains the concept of social vulnerability to climate change and discusses social justice in the context of climate change adaptation. It also provides a review of the existing guidance documents for local authorities from the perspective of coverage of social issues. The paper concludes that the existing guidance does not address the social aspects of vulnerability sufficiently to address the unequal impacts of both of

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climate-related hazards and adaptation actions on different socio-economic groups. The paper also provides case studies of adaptation responses taking social aspects into consideration.

Following from the ETC/CCA Technical paper, an EEA report is currently being developed, under the working title “Europe's socio-environmental inequalities: linking socio-economic deprivation with environmental hazards”. The report concerns associations between socio-economic status of population in Europe (at NUTS2, NUTS3 and city level) and exposure of population to climate hazards, air pollution and noise. This work builds on evidence and data collated by the EEA climate adaptation group and EEA Group Air pollution, transport and noise.

The contents of the report are planned as follows:

- Overview of the state of knowledge on associations between social inequalities and environmental hazards in the European context (concerning both the exposure to hazards and their impacts on the different socio-economic groups)
- Overview of the European and member country policies on air pollution, noise and climate-related impacts, and to what extent they cover social aspects
- Quantitative and spatial analysis of the associations between social inequalities and air pollution, noise and climate change impacts, identifying spatial patterns and changes over time
- Case-studies presenting policy and practice responses to exposure of vulnerable groups to climate change impacts and air/noise pollution

The draft EEA report is planned to be sent for consultation to Eionet member countries and additional experts in June. The report should be published by October/November 2018.

As part of the ongoing revision of Climate-ADAPT, the ‘urban’ parts of the platform are being revised. The Urban Adaptation Support Tool is being improved in collaboration with the Covenant of Mayors and the [RESIN](#) Horizon 2020 project. The main improvements concern changes to the text describing the adaptation steps (taking practitioners’ views into account) and evaluation and prioritisation of the Climate-ADAPT resources within the tool. The Urban Vulnerability Map Book is also being improved. The comprehensive changes include changing the contents (to include the most recent relevant data); connecting better to the EEA climate adaptation indicators; revising the structure; improving look and feel; providing metadata for layers.

In 2017, EEA and ETC/CCA wrote a scoping paper on transformative urban adaptation. The paper will not be further developed into an EEA report or ETC/CCA Technical paper. This is due to the contentious character of the term ‘transformative adaptation’, the understanding of which depends on the expertise and the cultural setting of the audience, and associated difficulty with identifying examples of transformative adaptation. However, it is hoped that that contents of the paper will contribute to the SOER 2020 report. The scoping paper is available on request.

Finally, EEA co-organised with ICLEI Europe the [Fifth Open European Day at Resilient Cities 2018](#), in Bonn, Germany (25th April 2018). The event was focussed on the exchange of knowledge and experiences on adaptation among European cities, around the themes of incorporating adaptation into other local authority activities; collaborative adaptation, including engagement of citizens, private sector and all governance levels; and implementation and monitoring, among others focusing on financing and funding of adaptation.

Questions for the discussion

- 1) What are your views on the relevance, scope and timing of the EEA work on social inequalities and environmental hazards, including climate change risks?
- 2) How useful and relevant is the Urban Adaptation Support Tool for the cities' adaptation activities in your country? What changes would make it more useful?
- 3) How useful is the Urban Vulnerability Map Book for the adaptation activities at both the national level and for cities in your country?
- 4) Regarding urban and societal aspects of adaptation, what subjects could EEA and ETC/CCA address in the future?