

Citizens' summary

Adapting to climate change: a framework for EU action

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

- Over the next 50 years climate change is likely to have profound effects on important economic sectors – particularly agriculture, energy, transport, tourism and health. It will accelerate ecosystem and biodiversity loss. It will affect households and businesses, and certain sectors of society, notably the elderly, the disabled and low-income households. Impacts will vary by region – coastal and mountain areas and flood plains are particularly vulnerable.
- Two types of response are needed to address climate change: **mitigation** (reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and **adaptation** (to deal with unavoidable consequences).

WHAT IS EUROPE DOING TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE?

The EU Commission has issued a policy paper on how Europe can improve its resilience to climate change. The paper establishes a framework for action, focusing on:

- **building a stronger knowledge base** on the risks and impacts of climate change.
- **taking account of climate change impact in key EU policies.**
- **combining different policy measures to best effect** – innovative funding (including market-based schemes) may be required to facilitate adaptation.
- **supporting wider international efforts on adaptation.**
- **working in partnership with national, regional and local authorities.**

WHAT EXACTLY WILL CHANGE?

- **Better access to a wider range of data** on climate impact will facilitate decision making.
- A **clearing house mechanism will be set up** (by 2011) to provide greater access to a wide range of information sources on the impacts of climate change, vulnerable areas and best practices.
- **Adaptation will be considered in key EU policies.**

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSALS?

- An integrated, EU approach will maximise effectiveness and improve cross-border cooperation.
- Many of the policies and actions developed could be shared with non-EU and developing countries.

WHY DOES ACTION HAVE TO BE TAKEN BY THE EU?

Most initiatives will be taken at national level, but a **joint EU approach can maximise the effectiveness of national efforts**, particularly in:

- 1) sectors that are closely integrated at EU level (e.g. agriculture, fisheries, water, biodiversity protection, transport and energy)

- 2) cross-boundary issues such as river basins and biodiversity management
- 3) disadvantaged regions and regions most affected by climate change.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Once the policy paper is approved by the Commission (April 2009), the proposals will be implemented in close cooperation with EU countries.