



MAYORS ADAPT - QUESTIONS & ANSWERS (March 2014)

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The “Mayors Adapt” Initiative in a nutshell

What are the main goals of the “Mayors Adapt” Initiative and what key actions are planned?

The European Commission’s Directorate General Climate Action officially launches the *“Mayors Adapt - The Covenant of Mayors’ Initiative on Adaptation to Climate Change”* on 19 March 2014. The initiative is being launched within the framework of the Covenant of Mayors, the flagship European initiative for cities on taking action on climate change mitigation. The main aim is to inspire and support local authorities to show leadership and take action on climate change adaptation (besides mitigation). A series of tailored activities for local authorities are proposed in order to:

- **Inform** decision-makers, multipliers and other actor groups about the initiative and adaptation needs through the organisation of several dedicated awareness-raising events.
- **Mobilise** cities already leading in the field of climate protection and encourage others not yet so engaged to commit to the initiative through a process similar to the Covenant of Mayors.
- **Support** cities in their process of setting up and implementing local adaptation plans by providing first-class support to participating cities (Helpdesk) and quick access to existing expertise (Meta-Guidance platform).
- **Facilitate** networking and learning amongst cities on taking action through comprehensive city profiles.
- **Enable** signatory cities to showcase their activities and engagement in the initiative, raising the profile of climate change adaptation for the broader, general public.

Why introducing/initiating this initiative within the framework of the Covenant of Mayors?

Taking coherent action on mitigation and adaptation will benefit the local authorities. In parallel with reducing greenhouse gas emissions, local authorities also need to strengthen their resilience to the inevitable impacts of climate change. Taking effective action on mitigation will reduce the need to adapt. However, extreme weather events show that climate change impacts are already increasing vulnerabilities, and hindering social cohesion and economic development - therefore action on adaptation is also needed.

Mayors Adapt follows the model of the Covenant of Mayors initiative (e.g. voluntary commitment, political ownership) – it is a **parallel exercise for adaptation**. The objective is to support local authorities in taking coherent action on both mitigation and adaptation, by **promoting an integrated approach**.



Did the Commission involve stakeholders in the preparation of the initiative – and if so, how?

A consultation process was conducted to identify the needs and expectations of European cities towards the new EU initiative. Two Consultation Workshops gathered together diverse cities and city networks from across Europe, giving them the opportunity to actively shape the new initiative.

Valuable insight has been gathered on the main objectives and strategic orientations for the initiative, and helped with the identification of cities' support needs for developing adaptation strategies and concrete action at the local level. In addition, the draft political commitment document - to be signed by the joining mayors - has been developed in a participatory manner with the cities and local government networks.

What commitments do the Mayors Adapt Signatories have to fulfil?

By joining the initiative, mayors commit to contributing to the overall aim of the EU Adaptation Strategy and creating a more climate-resilient Europe. This means enhancing their preparedness and their capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change by:

- Developing a comprehensive local adaptation strategy for the local authority (1); **and/or***
- Integrating adaptation to climate change into their existing relevant plans (2).

** Note: Sufficient flexibility is given to the participating municipalities to choose the best way to integrate adaptation into their local policies and activities. They are invited to specify their desired option(s) in their Commitment document.*

What are the reporting requirements?

Regardless of the option(s) selected, Mayors Adapt Signatories commit to submit:

- A **local adaptation strategy** (1) or the **relevant adaptation documents** (2) within two years following the formal signing of the Commitment, including the results of the risk & vulnerability assessment, identifying the necessary (human/technical/financial) resources and outlining the adaptation actions, these documents within 2 years of signature ;
- An **Implementation Progress Report** every second year according to the framework of the initiative. This report will most likely be in the form of a simple self-assessment questionnaire, based on the guiding principles defined in the official Mayors Adapt Political Commitment. Signatories will also be invited to report on their best adaptation practices. The results will be used to feed the public city profiles visible on the initiative's website. This will facilitate networking with other cities working on the same steps and encourage experience exchange.

Note: In case of non-submission of the above-mentioned document(s) – the participating cities accept to be suspended from the initiative – subject to prior notice in writing by the Mayors Adapt Office.



Overview table:

Fulfil the following step-by-step approach:	And submit (within predefined time frames):
1. Get started: secure commitment and ensure management,	✓ A local adaptation strategy (1) or the respective relevant adaptation documents (2) , including the results of the risk & vulnerability assessment, identifying clear responsibilities and resources, and outlining the adaptation actions - <u>within two years</u> following the formal signing of the Commitment;
2. Assess risks and vulnerabilities as a basis to prioritise adaptation actions,	
3. Identify adaptation options,	
4. Assess adaptation options,	
5. Implement adaptation options,	✓ An Implementation Progress Report <u>every second year</u> according to the framework of the initiative (see the proposed self-assessment checklist in Appendix).
6. Regularly monitor and evaluate progress, and adjust the local adaptation strategy accordingly.	

What are the Mayors Adapt guiding principles and what is the link with the Reporting Framework?

Mayors Adapt Signatories are invited to report on their progress through a simple online questionnaire. The questions, directly arising from the below self-assessment checklist, are available under their own city profile factsheet. This list is based on the guiding principles defined in the full commitment document and is proposed as a basis for reporting. The key results are published on the initiative's website.

Guiding Principles	Self-Assessment Checklist
Strong political leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Tangible adaptation commitments well integrated into the local policy agenda ✓ Enabling political environment set
Establishment of long-term goals	✓ Clear priorities and long-term vision identified
Coordination of climate policy	✓ Coordinated action set between mitigation and adaptation
Integration of adaptation into plans and policies in a multi-sectoral way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Comprehensive mapping of the risks and vulnerabilities of the territory undertaken ✓ Specific adaptation actions identified and prioritised accordingly (including clear synergies and potential trade-offs with e.g. mitigation, environment and disaster risk management policies)
Strong multi-stakeholder collaboration	✓ Dialogue, cooperation and partnership set with relevant stakeholders (e.g. regular meetings, information events, communication campaigns, training)



Multi-level governance	✓ Relevant organisation and coordination in place (i.e. clear role and contributions assigned to the different departments)
Immediate action in order to realise the opportunities from adaptation ('no-regret' approach)	✓ Instruments in place for effective implementation (e.g. mainstreaming adaptation via existing policies and measures, developing new policies) and agreements with stakeholders in charge of implementation
Identifying and devoting financial resources	✓ Tangible financial resources allocated to adaptation actions
Regular monitoring of progress	✓ Monitoring mechanisms in place to assess state of play and identify future actions (e.g. monitoring provisions in line with adaptation action; key indicators on impacts, vulnerabilities and adaptation defined; stakeholders involved; frequency proposed)

Note: This list is mainly indicative. These elements can be progressively considered by the Mayors Adapt signatories; it is not required to cover all of them in the first progress report.

Adhesion procedure

Who can join?

The Mayors Adapt initiative is **open to all European local authorities**, whatever their size and whatever the stage of implementation of their climate policy.

The following eligibility criteria must be met:

- the interested body shall hold the official status of a "local authority" such as a "city" or an organised "agglomeration";
- the local authority must be democratically constituted with/by elected representatives;
- the local authority shall have an elected, political leader (e.g. a Mayor or similar) who can act on its behalf.

Note that similarly to what is proposed under the Covenant of Mayors, collaboration schemes with potential multipliers such as Coordinators (regions, provinces), Supporters (networks, associations) and Associated Partners will be proposed at a later stage.

Why should cities join?

Participating local authorities will find **multiple reasons** to join the initiative, and already signalled a variety of strong motivators to join during the consultation phase. The reasons for cities include:

- Showing political leadership in adaptation,
- Showcasing actions on adaptation,



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- Profiling their territory as a pioneer and raising its profile, including in and via the Mayors Adapt community and beyond thanks to the initiative's activities and website,
- Benefiting from the learning and experience of peers,
- Sharing the expertise developed in their own territory with others,
- Benefit from tailored and hands-on technical support.

How can cities join?

To join the Mayors Adapt initiative, local authorities should undertake the following process:

- Present the Mayors Adapt initiative and associated Political Commitment Document to the municipal council;
- Once an official resolution has been adopted by the council, mandate the mayor - or equivalent representative of the council - to sign the Mayors' Commitment (1st page of the Political Commitment Document);
- After signature, send the Political Commitment by email to: helpdesk@mayors-adapt.eu;
- Once the adhesion is confirmed, fill in the registration form available [here](#) on the website. It includes contact details as well as first information on the adaptation action status.

Interested local authorities can find out more about the benefits of joining the initiative, the reporting requirements and associated deadlines, the upcoming events etc. on the official website.

The helpdesk is available at any time should they require any further information.

Note: The Mayors Adapt initiative is a voluntary commitment. Hence joining is fully free of charge.

Support offered to Mayors Adapt Signatories

What is the Mayors Adapt Office and what does it offer to Mayors Adapt Signatories?

The Mayors Adapt initiative is being implemented on behalf of the European Commission by a consortium composed of:

- **Climate Alliance:** A European network of local authorities committed to climate protection
- **Ecofys:** A European consultancy in energy & climate policy, energy & carbon efficiency and energy systems & markets
- **Fresh Thoughts:** A consultancy linking scientific research to policy in the area of sustainable development
- **IFOK GmbH:** An international strategy and communications consultancy on issues of sustainable development

The key aims of the consortium implementing Mayors Adapt are to promote the initiative and to support local



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authorities in successfully undertaking their political commitments. The following will therefore be offered to signatories:

- Visibility and communication on cities' commitment to adaptation (website, signature ceremony, information events, materials for outreach by cities about their commitment, etc.),
- A helpdesk for operational questions, information and engagement with the initiative,
- Knowledge support (online platform with guidance materials, best practice examples, etc.),
- Synergies with the Covenant of Mayors and other relevant initiatives.

What EU instruments are available for local authorities to finance adaptation action?

The EU finances adaptation to climate change in Europe through a wide range of instruments, aligned with the Europe 2020 Strategy towards "smart, sustainable and inclusive growth". The Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 should ensure that at least 20% of the European budget is climate-related expenditure (to be approved by the European Parliament).

Climate change adaptation is integrated into EU sectoral policies, using, on one hand, the five European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds): the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), Cohesion Fund (CF), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). On the other hand, other instruments exist, such as Horizon 2020, which promotes research and development on climate change adaptation, the LIFE programme which finances a wide range of projects related to environment and climate mitigation and adaptation, or the EU Solidarity Fund for natural disasters.

Climate adaptation is also integrated into funding and loans offered by the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

More information: http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/adaptation/financing/funds/index_en.htm

More Information & Next Steps

Where can local authorities find out more about the Mayors Adapt Initiative?

For more information, interested local authorities are invited to contact the Mayors Adapt **Helpdesk** at: helpdesk@mayors-adapt.eu | +32 2 808 44 92.

The official <http://mayors-adapt.eu/> initiative website has been launched together with the initiative on the 19th of March by EU Commissioner for Climate Action, Connie Hedegaard. Local authorities are also invited to consult the Climate-Adapt platform. Hosted by the European Environment Agency, Climate-Adapt provides information



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on expected climate change in Europe, the current and future vulnerability of regions and sectors, national and transnational adaptation strategies, adaptation case studies on potential adaptation options, and tools that support adaptation planning.

What are the next steps?

The Mayors Adapt initiative has been officially launched on the 19th of March 2014 by EU Commissioner for Climate Action, Connie Hedegaard in Brussels. A symbolic **Signature Ceremony** with participating cities will take place **on the 7th of October 2014 in Brussels**.

Mayors Adapt – Policy Context

What is the EU context on Adaptation to Climate Change?

The EU Adaptation Strategy, adopted by the European Commission (EC) in April 2013, sets out the framework for contributing to a more climate-resilient Europe. It focuses on the following three key objectives:

- **Promoting action by Member States:** by encouraging all Member States to adopt comprehensive adaptation strategies; providing funding to help them build up their adaptation capacities and take action; and supporting adaptation action by cities along the Covenant of Mayors initiative.
- **Better informed decision-making:** by addressing knowledge gaps.
- **'Climate-proofing' action at EU level:** by further promoting adaptation in key vulnerable sectors (e.g. agriculture, fisheries and cohesion policy), ensuring that Europe's infrastructure is more resilient, and promoting the use of insurance against natural and man-made disasters.

Cities are given a central role to enhance the resilience of the EU to the adverse impacts of climate change. In this context, a new EU Adaptation Initiative for cities is currently being shaped "*through which local authorities [will] make a voluntary commitment to adopt local adaptation strategies and awareness-raising activities*" (Priority 1, Action 3). This initiative foresees the introduction of climate change adaptation in the framework of the Covenant of Mayors, building upon the results of the previous Commission (DG CLIMA)'s pilot project, EU Cities Adapt, and linking with the existing EEA platform Climate-Adapt.

Why develop adaptation strategies and actions?

- Climate change is now heavily supported by evidence. The EU is already facing unavoidable impacts.
- Impacts will affect the full EU territory, with regional differences.



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- Adapting to climate change is necessary, and goes hand-in-hand with an increase in the resilience of our social and economic systems and managing the negative impacts of climate change.
- Effective adaptation actions can reduce overall damage costs, save lives, and natural and human assets.

How/why does it concern EU Cities?

- Local authorities, in all socio-economic situations and geographical locations, are **vulnerable to the various impacts of climate change** – such as extreme weather events, like heat waves, storms, floods and droughts, as well as longer-term changes, like economic losses and public health problems – despite their emissions reduction efforts.
- Local authorities are **key drivers in the implementation of adaptation measures**, improving the overall resilience of local territories in policy fields – such as spatial planning, public health, civil protection, risk management, energy, water supply and the environment; and many initiatives are already in place to do so.
- Adaptation action brings **new opportunities** to enhance the quality of life of the citizens, promote sustainable urban development, stimulate investment and innovation, reinforce stakeholder participation and multi-stakeholder cooperation, and should therefore be integrated into urban development and planning practices. By adopting resilient thinking and investing in climate preparedness, EU Mayors and Political Leaders make their cities more attractive, healthier and safer.