

Brussels, 17 December 2024
(OR. en)

16991/24

CLIMA 461
ENV 1237
ENER 610
TRANS 552
SAN 724
AGRI 893
FORETS 274
FIN 1133
ECOFIN 1508

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
On:	17 December 2024
To:	Delegations
No. prev. doc.:	16579/24 + COR 1
Subject:	European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 15/2024 entitled "Climate adaptation in the EU - Action not keeping up with ambition" - Council conclusions

Delegations will find in the Annex the Council conclusions on the abovementioned subject, as approved by the Council at its 4071st meeting held on 17 December 2024.

**European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 15/2024 entitled
'Climate adaptation in the EU - Action not keeping up with ambition'**

- Council conclusions -

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING its conclusions on improving the examination of special reports drawn up by the Court of Auditors in the context of the discharge procedure¹;

1. WELCOMES the Special Report No 15/2024 by the European Court of Auditors entitled 'Climate adaptation in the EU - Action not keeping up with ambition';
2. TAKES NOTE of the conclusions and recommendations of the Special Report as well as of the replies of the Commission thereto;
3. EXPRESSES its deep concern about the increasing intensity and frequency of extreme weather events in the EU and across the globe, including heat waves, wildfires, droughts and floods; RECOGNISES the increasing importance of improving adaptive capacity, building resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change in line with the Paris Agreement;
4. HIGHLIGHTS the importance of climate change mitigation to alleviate the impacts of climate change and RECALLS the EU's emissions reduction target of a net domestic reduction of greenhouse gas emissions of at least 55% compared to 1990 levels by 2030 and its commitment to achieve climate neutrality by 2050;

¹ 7515/00 + COR 1

5. WELCOMES the finding of the Special Report that the EU has a sound and comprehensive framework for climate adaptation, comprising notably the EU Adaptation Strategy² as well as relevant provisions in the European Climate Law³ and the Energy Union Governance Regulation⁴; UNDERLINES the continued efforts by the EU and its Member States to prevent and reduce climate-related risks, as reflected in the implementation of the EU Adaptation Strategy and of the Member States' adaptation strategies and plans, and the promotion of the European Mission on Adaptation;
6. WELCOMES the first European Climate Risk Assessment (EUCRA) report⁵ and the Commission Communication on Climate Risk Management⁶ and CONSIDERS that they will support the identification of adaptation-related policy priorities in Europe and policy development in climate-sensitive sectors; WELCOMES also the Niinistö report focusing on preparedness and readiness for future crises;
7. STRESSES the need to promote the systemic nature of adaptation by mainstreaming adaptation, climate risks, resilience and climate preparedness and CALLS on the Commission to integrate adaptation to climate change and resilience into all relevant legislation and policies, with a view to ensuring integrated and more effective and proactive action on climate risk management; EMPHASIZES that such mainstreaming is crucial to counteract the growing threats of climate change and to avoid maladaptation; LOOKS FORWARD to the upcoming publication of the European climate adaptation plan and INVITES the Commission to actively collaborate with Member States in its development;

² 6521/21

³ Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 June 2021 establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulations (EC) No 401/2009 and (EU) 2018/1999 ('European Climate Law'), OJ L 243, 9.7.2021, p. 1.

⁴ Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action, OJ L 328, 21.12.2018, p. 1.

⁵ EEA report 1/2024 (<https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/european-climate-risk-assessment>)

⁶ 7732/24

8. RECALLS that, pursuant to the Treaties, the Commission is the institution overseeing the application of Union law under the control of the Court of Justice of the European Union; HIGHLIGHTS also that the Commission provides regular assessments of collective progress of Member States on climate adaptation and resilience in the EU Climate Action Progress Report;
9. RECALLS moreover that while the EU provides a common general framework on climate adaptation, it is up to the Member States to decide on the concrete adaptation measures; UNDERLINES the central role of holistic, inclusive, and effectively implemented national adaptation strategies and plans; STRESSES that local and regional levels should be at the centre of adaptation planning; ENCOURAGES the Commission to continue to provide complementary knowledge, education and information on good and best practices and innovative solutions for local and regional authorities, in consultation with the Member States;
10. WELCOMES the Court's recommendation to improve reporting on climate adaptation and ENCOURAGES cooperation between the Commission and Member States to address existing weaknesses; INVITES the Commission, together with Member States, to develop efficient tools to monitor progress towards risk preparedness at the EU and national levels; CONSIDERS that monitoring should be based on clear indicators developed in close coordination with Member States to ensure that they reflect regional and local specificities as well as taking account of work on common indicators at multilateral level, particularly in the framework of the United Arab Emirates–Belem work programme;
11. NOTES furthermore the Commission's commitment to reviewing existing governance processes; AGREES on the importance of promoting synergies with existing processes and reporting obligations at Union or international level while building on national experience and practice; STRESSES the need to prevent any duplication of processes or requirements and to minimise administrative burden;

12. WELCOMES the Court's recommendation on making better use of EU tools, such as the Climate-ADAPT portal, Copernicus and the EU Covenant of Mayors, with the goal of better reaching local communities; ENCOURAGES the Commission to progressively make the Climate-ADAPT portal available in all EU official languages and to work with the Member States to better link existing EU and national tools and processes to ensure synergies and coordination between them; ENCOURAGES the sharing of knowledge and INVITES the Commission and Member States to work together to improve communication and dissemination of good and best practices on adaptation and to promote regional and local authorities' access to existing adaptation-related data and tools both at EU and national level;
13. UNDERLINES the need to ensure coherent and adequate financing from both public and private sources in order to accelerate adaptation action; INVITES the Commission to provide solutions and examples of good and best practices in the context of financing of adaptation measures in the public and private sector; ENCOURAGES the Commission to assess policy options to reduce the climate protection gap.
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