

Extreme weather events raise awareness of adaptation needs

October 14 2014



Adapting to climate change has reached the political agenda in most European countries, according to the most comprehensive analysis of adaptation in Europe published to date. Extreme weather events and EU policies were the most common reasons for beginning to address adaptation. The Finnish Environment Institute took part in preparing the report with the experts from the EEA, the Austrian Environment

Agency, Alterra (Netherlands), CMCC (Italy) and UKCIP (UK).

Climate change adaptation is an issue on the political agenda in more than three quarters of countries, according to the survey.

"This is a dramatic increase from 2005, when Finland was the first country in Europe to launch a national adaptation strategy" says Dr Mikael Hildén, Director of the Climate Change Programme in SYKE.

Almost all countries stated that [extreme weather events](#) have triggered adaptation responses. The second most cited reason for developing national adaptation policies was European Union policies integrating [climate change](#) adaptation, followed by damage costs and scientific research.

Most countries identified barriers to taking action – more than three quarters of countries cited a lack of resources such as time, money or technologies as a barrier. 'Uncertainties about the extent of future climate change' and 'unclear responsibilities' were both seen as barriers by a large number of countries.

Despite these difficulties, half the countries reported a high or very high willingness to develop policies and to adapt at the national level.

Willingness to adapt may be linked to a growing awareness of climate change, which has increased over the last five years in two thirds of the countries covered, according to respondents.

Despite a widespread awareness among politicians – 21 countries have National Adaptation Strategies – concrete action is still at an early stage in many European countries. So far 13 countries are already implementing adaptation policies, according to the survey. Finland has progressed to a second generation of its national adaptation strategy, the government is expected to approve the new strategy in October 2014.

Providing information was the most commonly-mentioned type of adaptation policy instrument, while water management was the most commonly prioritised sector for adaptation.

Several countries have already put in place schemes to monitor, evaluate or report on their progress, while more than half are planning or working on such a scheme, the survey shows.

More information: "National adaptation policy processes in European countries—2014" is available online: [www.eea.europa.eu/publications...ion-policy-processes](http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/ion-policy-processes)

Provided by Finnish Environment Institute

Citation: Extreme weather events raise awareness of adaptation needs (2014, October 14)
retrieved 9 April 2024 from
<https://phys.org/news/2014-10-extreme-weather-events-awareness.html>

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