



European information on climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation

A. Jol and S. Isoard

European Environment Agency, Copenhagen, Denmark

Vulnerability to natural and technological disasters is increasing due to a combination of intensifying land use, increasing industrial development, further urban expansion and expanding infrastructure and also climate change. At EU level the European Commission's White Paper on adaptation to climate change (published in 2009) highlights that adaptation actions should be focused on the most vulnerable areas and communities in Europe (e.g. mountains, coastal areas, river flood prone areas, Mediterranean, Arctic). Mainstreaming of climate change into existing EU policies will be a key policy, including within the Water Framework Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Nature protection and biodiversity policies, integrated coastal zone management, other (sectoral) policies (agriculture, forestry, energy, transport, health) and disaster risk prevention. 2010 is the international year on biodiversity and the Conference of Parties of the biodiversity convention will meet in autumn 2010 (Japan) to discuss amongst other post-2010 strategies, objectives and indicators. Both within the Biodiversity Convention (CBD) and the Climate Change Convention (UNFCCC) there is increasing recognition of the need for integration of biodiversity conservation into climate change mitigation and adaptation activities. Furthermore a number of European countries and also some regions have started to prepare and/or have adopted national adaptation plans or frameworks.

Sharing of good practices on climate change vulnerability methods and adaptation actions is so far limited, but is essential to improve such plans, at national, sub national and local level where much of the adaptation action is already taking place and will be expanding in future, also involving increasingly the business community. The EU Clearinghouse on CC impacts, vulnerability and adaptation should address these needs and it is planned to be operational end of 2011. The EEA is expected to have a role in its development in 2010 and is likely to manage the system after 2011. The European Commission in its Communication in 2009 on disaster risk prevention also calls for improving and better sharing of data on disasters, disaster risk mapping and disaster risk management, in the context of the EU civil protection mechanism. Such information might also be linked to the planned EU Clearinghouse on climate change adaptation.

The activities of EEA on climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation (including disaster risk reduction) include indicators of the impacts of climate change; a regularly updated overview of national assessments and adaptation plans on the EEA web site and specific focused reports, e.g. on adaptation to the challenges of changing water resources in the Alps (2009) and on analysis of past trends in natural disasters (due in 2010) and regular expert meetings and workshops with EEA member countries.

The ECAC presentation will include the latest developments in the EU Clearinghouse on adaptation and progress in relevant EEA activities.