

#EURegionsWeek



“Building a climate resilient Europe: Lessons from frontline communities”

Wednesday 15th October 2025 at 16:30 – 18:00 CEST

Organized at the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), Brussels (Room JDE 70)

Europe is the [fastest-warming continent](#) in the world, and is now struggling with the impacts of climate change. According to Copernicus, the European Union’s (EU) climate observatory, 2024 was the [hottest year](#) on record, with high temperatures persisting into the first months of 2025. As a consequence, 2024 has been marked by a [series](#) of extreme weather events in Europe.

Extreme weather and climate-related events are taking a heavy human, economic and environmental toll in Europe. According to the European Environment Agency (EEA), between 1980 and 2022, the cost of weather- and climate-related extremes amounted to [EUR 650 billion](#), of which EUR 52.3 billion was in 2022. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts that most climate change impacts and risks in Europe will become [more severe](#) in a warmer world, which could affect multiple sectors and cause systemic failures across Europe, resulting in greater economic losses. Climate-related events pose major [challenges](#) throughout Europe for food and water security, energy security, financial stability and the health of the general population, affecting social cohesion and stability. Climate change is also negatively impacting biodiversity and terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems. The [European Environment Agency](#) predicts that hundreds of thousands of people would die from heatwaves, and economic losses from coastal floods alone could exceed EUR 1 trillion per year.

Despite the progress made, Europe remains largely [unprepared](#) for the impacts of climate change and must act now to adapt to rising temperatures. The [IPCC](#) notes that, although adaptation is happening across Europe, it is not implemented at the scale, depth and speed needed to avoid the risks. The recent [European Climate Risk Assessment \(EUCRA\)](#) also highlights that societal preparedness is still low, as policy implementation is lagging substantially behind quickly-increasing risk levels. Most of the climate risks are co-owned by the EU and its Member States. Therefore, coordinated and urgent additional action is required at all governance levels. Furthermore, closing the adaptation gap will require moving beyond short-term planning and ensuring timely and adequate implementation.

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The success of adaptation will depend on leadership and/or involvement of local actors, as well as local knowledge, experience and understanding of which adaptation options are feasible and effective in their local context. Adaptation decisions are often made [far away from local contexts](#), missing vital insights and innovation and risking maladaptive solutions that waste money, resources and time. Although not all adaptation actions should take place at local level, evidence shows that without [local people's involvement](#), “adaption will be less effective and more likely to produce maladaptive outcomes”. The EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change therefore emphasizes that adaptation strategies should be further developed by national, regional and local authorities and identifies local adaptation action as a cross-cutting priority.

Under pressure and in need of transformative approaches, European actors can learn from countries and communities around the world with decades of experience on climate change impacts and adaptation measures. This is in fact recognised in the EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change [“Forging a climate-resilient Europe”](#): “The EU can also learn from others: many of our international partners have long been on the frontlines of climate change and have valuable experience that can help Europe become more climate resilient.” Furthermore, this strategy also notes that “The EU is well equipped to conduct structured dialogues to share solutions, and is keen to learn from others” and that “there are significant knowledge gaps and innovative approaches where the EU could benefit from existing experience, for instance on community-led and nature-based adaptation”.

Additionally, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) recognises the key role of local and regional governments in implementing the EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change, and [calls for the assistance to cities and regions](#) to effectively support the implementation of this strategy. Recognising the importance of international cooperation in this domain, the CoR has recently signed a [Joint Action Plan](#) with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to strengthen the capacities and boost the international cooperation of local and regional authorities under CoR with subnational governments worldwide to address the triple planetary crisis (climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss).

In this context, bringing valuable local experiences and insights from adaptation pioneers at the frontline of the impacts of climate change to European actors can inform and drive ambition for a climate-resilient Europe. Therefore, this event will showcase and share locally led adaptation (LLA) solutions and insights from communities at the frontline of the impacts of climate change with European stakeholders, and will create a space for a dialogue on the challenges, barriers and opportunities for local and regional leadership for climate resilience in Europe.

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FINAL AGENDA

*Event moderated by **Ilias Grampas**, Deputy Director, European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD) – Secretariat of the MEP Group on ‘Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development’*

16:30 – 16:35: Welcome and introduction by **Ilias Grampas**, Deputy Director, European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD) - Secretariat of the MEP Group on ‘Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development’

16:35 – 16:50: Presentation by **Alexandre Fernandes**, Director, International Institute for Environment and Development Europe (IIED Europe)

16:50 – 17:00: Intervention by **Elina Bardram**, Director for ‘Climate Resilience and Information Management’ (Dir. E), DG CLIMA, European Commission

17:00 – 17:10: Intervention by **Tanya Hristova**, Mayor of Gabrovo (Bulgaria), Member of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and Member of the Covenant of Mayors Political Board

17:10 – 17:50: Q&A session with the audience, including interventions by:

- **MEP Dimitris Tsiodras** (EPP), Co-Chair of the MEP Group on ‘Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development’ (video-message)
- **MEP Sakis Arnaoutoglou** (S&D)

17:50 – 18:00: Closing remarks by speakers & moderator