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78. Agrees with the Commission that the EU's cultural and linguistic diversity is a major competitive asset; reminds the Member States that language teaching and educational and cultural exchange programmes within and outside the European Union need continuous support; recalls the role of television broadcasting in the field of intercultural exchange;

79. Calls on the Commission to support cultural initiatives in regional cooperation projects, including at town level, especially in small and medium-sized towns, inter alia by means of the Interreg IV C programme, and to incorporate a cultural dimension into the regions for economic change initiative;

80. Calls on the Member States to support culture in the regions by investing in cultural infrastructure, making use of structural funding, and to draw up regional cultural development programmes in consultation with the cultural and education sectors and with civil society;

81. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to lay down straightforward, transparent and clear rules for the implementation of PPPs, so that they may become an effective means of funding cultural ventures in the regions and may facilitate more active involvement on the part of SMEs;

82. Welcomes the Commission's proposal to set up an EU-ACP Cultural Fund as an EU contribution to the distribution of ACP and OCT cultural goods; takes the view that similar arrangements should be put in place for neighbourhood policy countries in particular,

83. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States, and to Unesco and the Council of Europe.

Adapting to climate change in Europe — options for EU action

P6_TA(2008)0125

European Parliament resolution of 10 April 2008 on the Commission Green Paper on 'Adapting to climate change in Europe — options for EU action' (COM(2007)0354)

(2009/C 247 E/08)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission Green Paper on Adapting to climate change in Europe — options for EU action (COM(2007)0354) (Green Paper on Adapting to Climate Change),
- having regard to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and, in particular, Article 2 and Article 4(1)(b), (e) and (f) thereof, the Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC and the procedures for its implementation,
- having regard to the Commission Communication entitled 'Strategy for the Outermost Regions: Achievements and Future Prospects' (COM(2007)0507),
- having regard to the Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and, in particular, the contribution of Working Group II to that report,
- having regard to the United Nations Security Council debate of 17 April 2007 on the impact of climate change on peace and security,
- having regard to the thirteenth Conference of the Parties (COP 13) to the UNFCCC and the third Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP 3), held in Bali, Indonesia, from 3 to 15 December 2007,

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- having regard to its previous resolutions regarding climate change, and in particular those of 16 November 2005 on winning the battle against global climate change ⁽¹⁾, 18 January 2006 on climate change ⁽²⁾, which dealt with the outcome of the Montreal Conference (COP 11-COP/MOP 1), 4 July 2006 on reducing the climate change impact of aviation ⁽³⁾, 14 February 2007 on climate change ⁽⁴⁾, and 15 November 2007 on limiting global climate change to 2 degrees Celsius — the way ahead for the Bali Conference on Climate Change and beyond (COP 13 and COP/MOP3) ⁽⁵⁾,
 - having regard to Oral Question B6-0014/2008 by the Temporary Committee on Climate Change, tabled pursuant to Rule 108 of its Rules of Procedure, and to the statements in that context by the Council and the Commission,
 - having regard to the Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels European Council of 8 to 9 March 2007,
 - having regard to the Commission Work Programme for 2008,
 - having regard to Rule 108(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, according to the contribution of Working Group II to the IPCC AR4, it is expected that nearly all European regions will be negatively affected by future impacts of climate change; whereas these impacts will present challenges to many economic sectors, but will also pose a further threat to European biodiversity and interfere with social development,
- B. whereas regional scientific observation from all continents and many oceans provides evidence that nature is being affected by climate change mostly due to temperature rise but also to other changing climate impacts; whereas that observed temperature rise is caused by human activity and influences physical and biological systems,
- C. whereas the EU should consider to what extent adaptation to climate change can pave the way for a new model for economic growth and development that protects the environment, enhances employment and gives a new dimension to social policies,
- D. whereas climate change is a problem that concerns modern societies as a whole and all levels of governance, from the EU level and public authorities to individual citizens, can and should thus play an important role in adaptation measures,
- E. whereas adaptation measures to prevent damage are not only needed to respond to the future impacts of climate change inside and outside Europe, but also have to be developed and applied now to respond regionally and locally to consequences of current levels of global warming because of historical greenhouse gas emissions; whereas such adaptation measures require a truly cross-cutting approach and the inclusion of social, economic and environmental aspects in the broad sense,
- F. whereas numerous studies and models exist, of a regional or local scale, on the likely impact of climate change; whereas, in many such studies, there is no equivalent examination of the socio-economic dimension and the predictable consequences for the populations concerned,
- G. whereas, at the EU level, the monitoring of climate change and the coordination of measures to tackle it should be a priority in order to facilitate a common strategy as regards the problem,
- H. whereas investment, both public and private, in research and development activities for climate change will be paramount in ensuring that adaptation and mitigation efforts are as effective as possible in limiting the consequences of climate change,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 280 E, 18.11.2006, p. 120.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 287 E, 24.11.2006, p. 182.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 303 E, 13.12.2006, p. 119.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 287 E, 29.11.2007, p. 344.

⁽⁵⁾ Texts Adopted, P6_TA(2007)0537.

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- I. whereas national research into climate change needs to be coordinated with research conducted under the Seventh Framework Programme,
- J. whereas adaptation to climate change has been less in the focus of public debate following a clear emphasis on the necessary mitigation measures to limit global warming,
- K. whereas meeting the EU target to halt global warming at 2 °C would still mean a warming scenario for Europe marked by extreme regional climate changes, with a number of consequences for the populations concerned, the local and regional economy and the environment, leading to a further increase in existing inequalities and regional disparities regarding resources and assets in Europe,
- L. whereas research into the preconditions for, and understanding of, extreme weather events should be stepped up as a necessary basis for preventive measures, including the implementation of early-warning systems, and actions in the future to avoid casualties and harm to people, property, biodiversity and the environment, and whereas tools to evaluate the effectiveness of such measures have to be developed,
- M. whereas an approach towards adaptation mechanisms which is based solely on a cost-benefit analysis does not seem appropriate, as it is foreseeable that in Europe too the poorest will be hardest hit, because they generally lack sufficient insurance, information and mobility to respond to a changing environment,
- N. whereas a bottom-up approach, with communities experiencing the negative consequences of climate change presenting the techniques they have found successful in combating those consequences, would be a helpful indicator for the EU to work as an umbrella in promoting strategies, developing relevant support programmes and leading policy coordination through scientific, regional or local networks and partnerships,
- O. whereas a key component of responding to the impact of climate change is to increase and improve professional and public education regarding adaptation action,
- P. whereas it is evident that climate change affects development achievements and threatens successful development in Europe, but has a much stronger impact on developing countries; whereas the issue of financing adaptation measures has to be further assessed both within the EU and in terms of providing support to developing countries,
- Q. whereas, according to the concept of mainstreaming, adaptation to climate change has to be included in the decision-making process on questions such as how and where to invest; whereas debates during that decision-making process have to involve local and regional stakeholders and decision makers alike,
- R. whereas the Green Paper on Adapting to Climate Change neither specifically recognises the geographic, climatic and developmental exceptions represented by the EU's outermost regions, which are likely to be vulnerable in different ways from those to be expected for mainland Europe, nor specifically examines the climate conditions of urban areas or highly populated parts of Europe,
- S. whereas climate change is likely to affect those regions which, given their topographical features, are particularly dependent on the dynamics of nature (inter alia glacial zones and mountainous regions), thereby exposing the local economy, culture and the population as a whole to great pressures and adaptation costs, while potentially further increasing regional disparities,
- T. whereas southern Europe and the Mediterranean basin are two of the most vulnerable areas in Europe which are already coping with water scarcity, droughts and forest fires,
- U. whereas successful adaptation strategies to meet unavoidable climate change will require the support of education and communication through the involvement of the mass media and of citizens' participation in environmental issues,

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- V. whereas the World Health Organisation estimates that 60 000 deaths per year are already attributable to climate-related natural disasters; whereas the IPCC AR4 highlights the impact of climate change on public health; whereas there are serious concerns about the propagation of tropical diseases and their vectors to temperate regions; whereas, as a particular consequence of this, health care facilities targeted on the most vulnerable sections of society are likely to have to adapt to climate change to the greatest extent,
- W. whereas climate change will cause further serious damage to already vulnerable and threatened ecosystems and will impact on European biodiversity; whereas such damage will be most severely felt indirectly through the degradation of ecosystems fundamental to human wellbeing; whereas the protection of ecosystems must therefore be the basis for an EU adaptation strategy; whereas soil is the largest terrestrial pool of organic carbon and unadapted soil management practices are contributing to reducing that pool; whereas it is necessary to reverse that trend and ensure that appropriate measures to maintain and, where possible, increase soil organic carbon form an integral part of an EU adaptation strategy,
1. Welcomes the Green Paper on Adapting to Climate Change and the stakeholder consultation process;
 2. Underlines the importance of strong interconnectivity between adaptation and mitigation efforts to use synergies for limiting the consequences of climate change; calls on the Commission to examine how to balance both efforts mutually in order to improve their effectiveness with a view to developing a clear holistic strategy;
 3. Recognises that, although issues are presented in the Green Paper on Adapting to Climate Change on a sectoral basis, many of the sectors referred to therein are strongly interdependent; considers that impacts on, and adaptation decisions made in, one sector will often have an effect on other sectors, and therefore asks the Commission to take into account those interactions in implementing adaptation measures;
 4. Affirms the need for further scientific modelling and studies on a risk-based approach to better analyse, understand and predict the human and social impacts of climate change in relation to the EU mitigation target of 2 °C and the dimension of necessary local or regional adaptation;
 5. Asks the Commission to carry out a study on the economics of adaptation, to develop scenarios establishing a balance sheet of adaptation costs and benefits and to stimulate and anticipate economic action; underlines the importance of using a sectoral bottom-up approach taking into account the differences in Europe's natural habitats such as mountainous areas or island regions; calls on the Commission to chart the shifts in employment in both growing and shrinking sectors;
 6. Invites the Commission to coordinate and support the scientific preparation of a common European database on vulnerabilities so as to understand how societal groups and the European cultural and national heritage would be affected and how societies could react to the consequences of climate change in the future; believes that databases including other important information on adaptation activities and policies, such as indices, policies and measures, should also be established;
 7. Calls on the Commission to coordinate the existing environmental data monitoring networks and, where appropriate, to combine them with new structures, with a view to compiling databases containing homogeneous measurements that can be used to produce models enabling the action most urgently required at continental, regional and local level to be identified;
 8. Invites the Commission to examine how to further develop and support a pan-European network of universities, social partners, civil society organisations, operational organisations, in particular national weather-forecasting organisations, which have extensive data resources, and local or regional decision makers in order to promote cross-sector partnerships on adaptation for the exchange of knowledge and policies as well as for the development of tools measuring the success of measures adopted and communication or dissemination of scientific findings and scenarios on necessary adaptation to climate change to the public;

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9. Considers that, in order to make research into the impact of climate change more effective, research conducted under the Seventh Framework Programme should be coordinated with research conducted at national level (particularly space-based Earth observation programmes);
10. Considers that the EU has to undertake substantial efforts to increase technological development in adaptation measures in order to support its economy and transfer those technologies to the developing world; believes that development of effective, safe and cheap technologies is an essential way in which to adapt to climate change and considers that the next Conference/Meeting of the Parties in Poznan (COP 14) should focus on that issue;
11. Asks the Commission to include adaptation when drawing up and modifying existing and all forthcoming legislation, strategies and funding projects with a spatial impact, so as to limit the effects of climate change; calls on the Commission to carry out a comprehensive analysis of existing European financial instruments and their use for climate change adaptation measures in their original fields of application and to indicate where additional funding would be needed;
12. Strongly urges the Council to reach a decision, without further delay, on the proposal for a regulation establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF), bearing in mind that Parliament adopted its position as long ago as on 18 May 2006 ⁽¹⁾; believes that the proposed regulation, which, along with other measures, lowers the thresholds for the mobilisation of the EUSF, will make it possible to address damage caused by natural or man-made disasters in a more effective, flexible and timely manner; insists that such financial instrument is very important, especially since natural disasters are also expected to increase in the future because of climate change;
13. Invites the Commission to consider including financial measures for adaptation in the next long-term financial framework for regional policies and structural funds, as well as to propose that additional resources be allocated to finding innovative solutions to address climate change;
14. Points out that strategic guidelines for EU cohesion policy explicitly spell out the need to strengthen synergies between the environment and growth; states that regional policy programmes invest in infrastructure in the areas of water, waste and air, biodiversity, promotion of land-use planning, and public transport; underlines the fact that they contribute to meeting climate commitments and fostering risk prevention measures through innovative public management policies including, for example, preventative monitoring; points also to the need for the Commission and the Member States to step up the coordination of civil protection organisation and contingency planning; points, in this respect, to the work of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Programme;
15. Stresses the need for Member States to use rural development funds to enhance adaptation to climate change in agriculture and forestry; recalls the role that soil organic matter plays in terms of soil fertility and water retention capacity and as a carbon sink and invites the Community to adopt and support appropriate soil management practices that maintain soil organic matter levels across European soils as an effective way for adapting to increasing temperatures and changes in rainfall patterns; underlines the need for adequate crisis prevention and risk management measures at the Community level as well as at national and regional levels, as the number of crises will clearly rise in the future, with particular reference to a systematic land management effort ensuring longer water retention times and a lower fire burden on forests; believes that risk management should be made an integral and explicit part of EU cohesion policy;
16. Calls for the Commission to propose an EU-wide framework for adaptation planning and preparedness; emphasises the need to take due account of the subsidiarity principle in tackling the consequences of climate change through concrete adaptive measures, as regions and local authorities in Europe will be more able to respond with political answers to their own experiences; underlines, however, the need for coherence and coordination as regards adaptation plans at EU level;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 297 E, 7.12.2006, p. 331.

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17. Underlines the key role which local communities play in fighting climate change; calls, therefore, for the implementation of integrated sustainable urban, regional and rural development strategies which take full account of mitigation and adaptation measures, and for scientific studies to be conducted to analyse the infrastructures most suited to addressing climate change;
18. Calls for closer cooperation and exchanges of best practises between European institutions and regional and local authorities and among those in the development of construction, utilities and services aiming to achieve a carbon-neutral status in their respective areas, such as district heating schemes, improved recycling services, integrated public transport, energy-efficient and water-efficient buildings, increased production and use of alternative energy, and more provision of public information on energy consumption;
19. Underlines the fact that the agricultural sector is one of the most vulnerable to climate change but has at the same time been accused of causing environmental damage; believes that adaptation measures in this sector must work towards reducing vulnerability and increasing sustainability from both an environmental and an economic perspective;
20. Underlines the fact that gradual adaptation of the agricultural sector to the new needs resulting from climate change should be examined as part of the 'health check';
21. Emphasises that the agricultural sector can adapt to climate change and mitigate the effects by implementing legislation that steps up sustainability and promotes new ways to use and manage water and other natural resources;
22. Stresses the importance of Member States and the Commission in identifying the transport infrastructure which could be most affected by changing climate conditions and where additional efforts and investments are needed to ensure continued and safe functioning;
23. Applauds the significant outcome of MOP 3 in Bali to put into operation the Adaptation Fund, bringing together concrete adaptation projects with funds from a levy on Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects undertaken in developing countries that are parties to the Kyoto Protocol; underlines the fact that this breakthrough decision to finance adaptation in developing countries independently of donors was taken before the Bali Action Plan was adopted;
24. Stresses the need to ensure that, as part of environmental impact assessment, all building permits and urban plans take into account different adaptation scenarios to prevent investments in incompatible infrastructure; points out that in many cases it would be more appropriate not to develop vulnerable areas, or to renaturate already developed areas, than to construct defences to prepare for adverse climate effects;
25. Regards cooperation to support the poorer parts of Europe and the developing world as imperative, since those areas are likely to be the worst hit by climate change but least able to deal with its consequences; regrets that the Green Paper on Adapting to Climate Change does not sufficiently address the need for cooperation on adaptation between the EU and developing countries; highlights in particular the need for technology transfer and capacity building; in this context welcomes the Commission's initiative to launch a Global Climate Change Alliance, but stresses that it is currently grossly underfunded;
26. Recognises a conditional link between development goals and both mitigation and adaptation to climate change; emphasises that climate change must be mainstreamed into all EU development cooperation, including existing partnership programmes such as the EUROMED dialogue or the EU-Africa energy partnership; emphasises also the great importance of strengthening partnerships with developing countries to enhance efforts to avoid deforestation, providing both mitigation and adaptation benefits;
27. Calls for significant and predictable financial instruments to be developed in the framework of EU policies, such as the Emission Trading Scheme, in order to assist developing countries to adapt to the impacts of climate change as well as to provide funds for adaptation policies within Member States;

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28. Points out that climate change could accelerate diminishing access to natural resources; invites the Commission to consider further measures for adapting to new challenges in ensuring security of food and energy supplies;
29. Invites the Commission to examine on a European level, and in the international context, how to incorporate necessary adaptation in response to climate change into development plans and budget negotiations; invites the Commission to investigate how to apply such measures to sectoral policies to steer public and private funding and investments; underlines the fact that such incorporation efforts must cover the fields of science, mainstreaming, awareness raising, information, cooperation and monitoring, clearly following criteria checked regularly for compliance to justify further support and with reporting back to Parliament and the Council;
30. Stresses the importance of an increased need for rational use of water by means of 'water demand management', since water is becoming a scarce resource; calls on the Commission and Member States to adopt integrative measures to ensure the availability, accessibility, use and conservation of water, and to promote innovative technologies and practices, including pilot projects, which will help to reduce drought damage and flooding risks; in this context, recognises the importance of an ecosystem approach in preventing and absorbing the impacts of soil erosion, flooding, desertification, rising sea levels and invasive alien species, and in increasing resistance to forest fires;
31. Recognises that climate change contributes to the global burden of disease and premature deaths by affecting, in particular, the most vulnerable population groups; invites the Member States to consider measures to strengthen the capacity of health systems to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change; invites the Commission to set up an EU-wide system for the monitoring and surveillance of the effects of climate change on health; calls on the Commission to ensure that the threats posed by climate change to human health are at the centre of EU adaptation and mitigation policy;
32. Stresses the need for a differentiated climatic and developmental approach regarding areas and regions particularly vulnerable to climate change, such as mountainous or coastal areas, islands or, for example, the seven outermost regions of the EU, which, given their topographical features and their structural disadvantages, are especially dependent on the dynamics of natural events; calls in this context on the Commission to expand the list of most vulnerable areas and to cooperate with existing regional initiatives, such as the Alpine Convention and the Carpathian Convention, in order to make the best possible use of existing knowledge gained through such initiatives;
33. Calls on the Commission to consider the vital role that healthy ecosystems can play in adaptation policy; highlights the fact that existing EU legislation (i.e. the Birds Directive ⁽¹⁾, the Habitats Directive ⁽²⁾, Natura 2000 and the Water Framework Directive ⁽³⁾) can help to address this issue in Europe; calls on the Commission and Member States to attach the highest priority to implementation of this policy, so as to ensure rapid and efficient adaptation to climate change;
34. Welcomes the Commission's initiative to establish a European Advisory Group for Adaptation to Climate Change and stresses the need for this expert group to provide capabilities for realising coherent intersectoral strategies at EU level as well as for enhancing policy frameworks that could provide incentives for investing in climate change adaptation and mitigation activities;
35. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission as Parliament's contribution to the stakeholder consultation process on the Green Paper initiated by the Commission.

⁽¹⁾ Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 2 April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds (OJ L 103, 25.4.1979, p. 1). Directive as last amended by Directive 2006/105/EC (OJ L 363, 20.12.2006, p. 368).

⁽²⁾ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7). Directive as last amended by Directive 2006/105/EC.

⁽³⁾ Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1). Directive as last amended by Directive 2008/32/EC (OJ L 81, 20.3.2008, p. 60).