

The effects of climate change, mitigation and adaptation on labour - what role for trade unions

The climate-security nexus conference

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Interrelated issues and trade-offs

- Transition to net-zero carbon economy is compelling necessity, climate emergency is broadly acknowledged by now
- Simultaneous process and impacts of `climate change` - `mitigation policies`, adaptation to climate change
- All these have effects on employment and inequality
- National Adaptation Plans <> National Climate and Energy Plans by MS
- Trade union role

Compelling necessity: Revision of growth model

A fundamental revision of previous growth model: transition to (net) zero carbon economy

This means: a restructuring of the entire economy

Main message after COP21: the world (and Europe) is far away from the 2C pathway: the emission gap is HUGE

Draft IPCC report (2018): 1.5C warming by mid 2040-s

Scientists find global sea level rise to double (66cm) by 2100

For the EU: twice as much GHG cuts needed between 2030 and 2050, then between 1990 and 2020

50,6% of EU final energy consumption (2015) is from fossil fuel (16.1% coal) and 13% from renewables

Energy (+residential) and transport sectors are main emitters

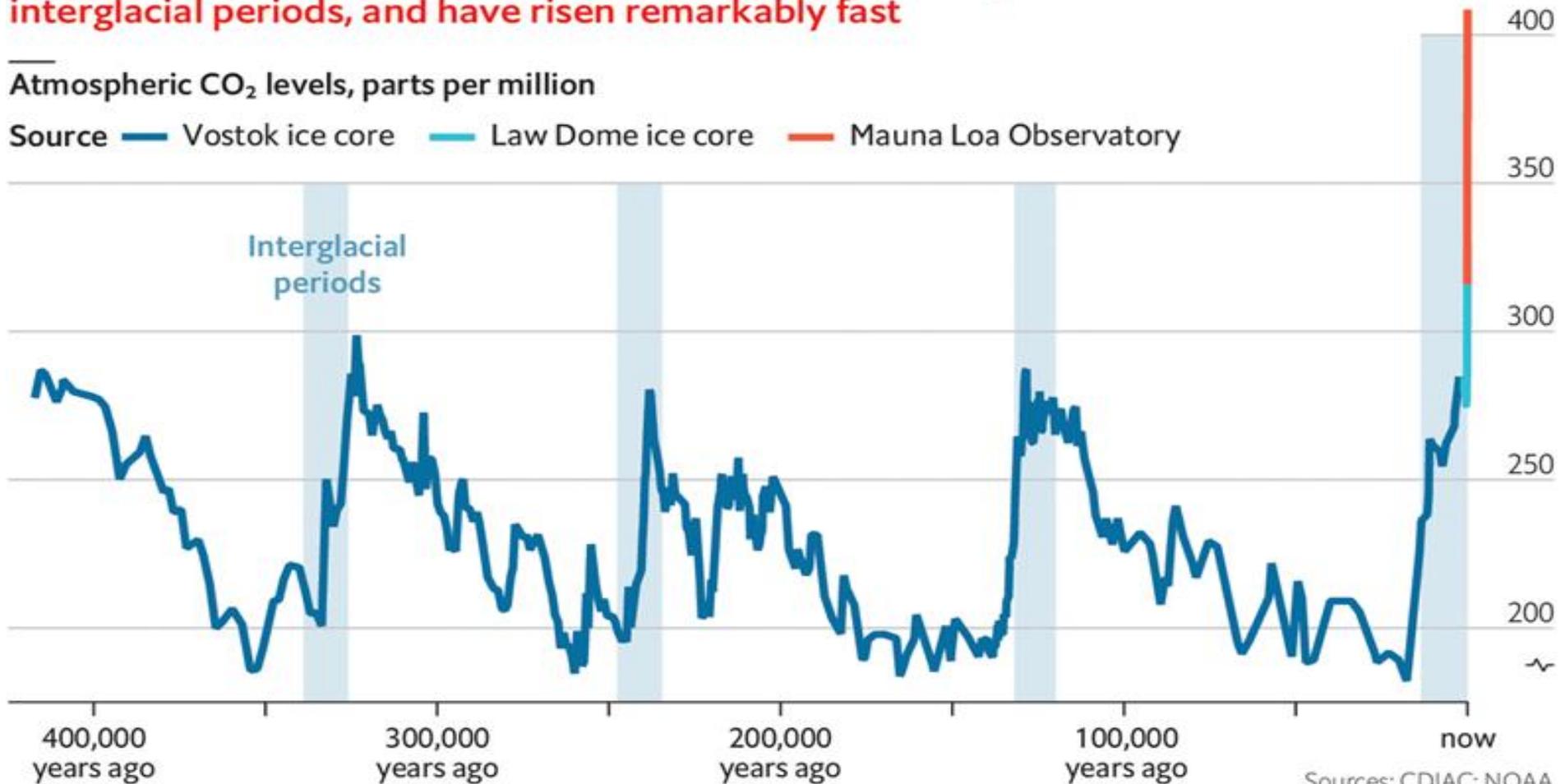
Clock is ticking to get climate change under control, but adaptation is also vital...

Climate emergency recognised by now

Like an ice age, in reverse; CO₂ levels are far higher than previous interglacial periods, and have risen remarkably fast

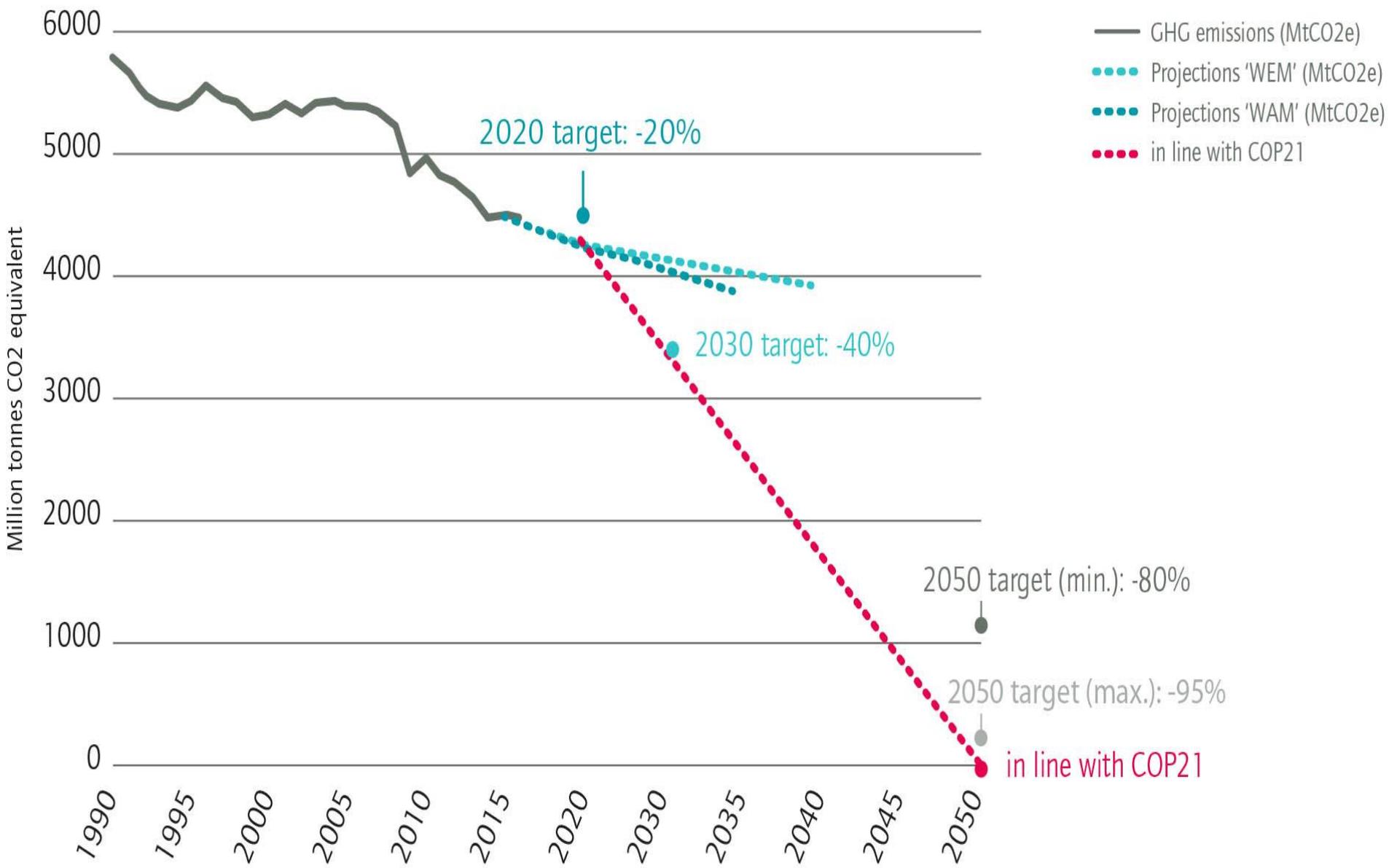
Atmospheric CO₂ levels, parts per million

Source — Vostok ice core — Law Dome ice core — Mauna Loa Observatory



Only climate models which include human activity can explain the warming seen—which already exceeds 1.5°C in some places

EU ghg emissions trajectories: radical correction needed



The adaptation challenge

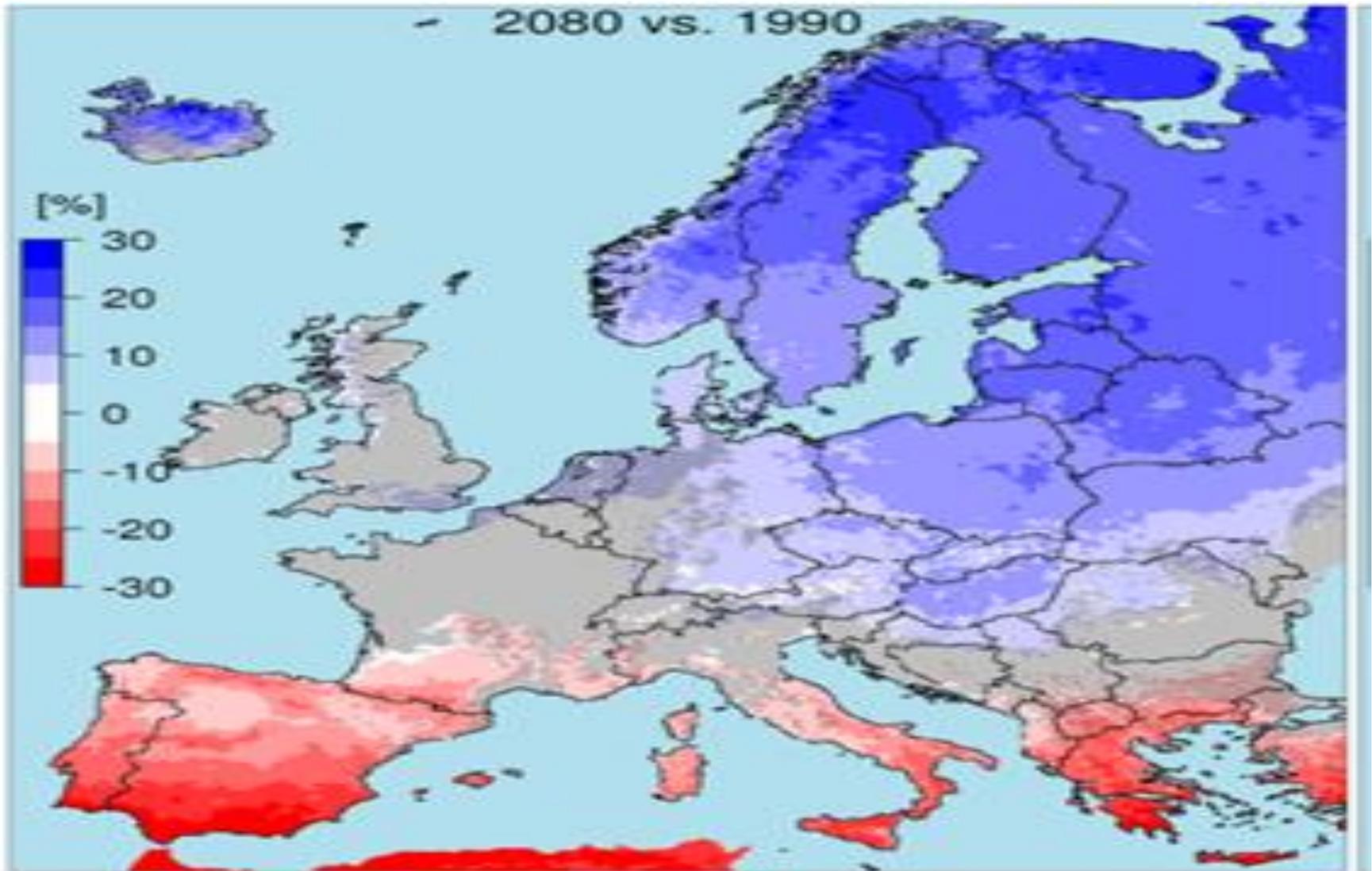
Climate change (CC) is a global phenomenon, but its effects appear locally. Adaptation measures need to be set up locally in co-ordination with regions sharing an ecosystem, based on specific climate change models for the region, vulnerability and risk assessment.

The average annual temperature over European land areas increased by 1.45 to 1.59 °C in 2006–2015 relative to the pre-industrial period, exceeding the pace of global warming (EEA 2017).

IPCC AR5 report:

- (1) Most warming is expected over eastern Europe in winter and over western and southern Europe in summer.
- (2) In mountainous areas warming to exceed the average continental trend
- (3) The temperature changes will be accompanied with increases in annual precipitation in northern Europe and decreases in southern Europe.
- (4) More volatility: intensity of daily precipitation projected to grow even in the areas with less average rainfall > flood (coastal areas and rivers); increasing spread of wildfires

Forecasted change of precipitation (2080 vs 1990)



Source: Alfieri et al. JCR 2017

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Most significant climate change effects for Europe

- more intense droughts (southern Europe + eastern Europe);
- more intense floods (coastal areas, central and eastern Europe), droughts and flood can occur simultaneously;
- heatwaves (southern Europe, eastern Europe);
- thawing permafrost (northern Europe);
- rising sea-levels (coastal areas).

Extreme weather events getting the `new normal`

- Floods (`hundred year floods` are likely to repeat yearly from next decade)
- Wildfires – once a phenomenon in the Mediterranean, now also appearing in Sweden and Germany

Floods

- Large areas have been affected by flooding in Europe 1500 flood events between 1980 and 2013, with more than half of these since 2000 (EEA 2017). Direct economic losses over EUR 150 billion.
- damages from climate extremes to critical infrastructures in the energy, transport, industrial and social sectors in the EU made up €3.4 billion in 2015, but projected to triple by 2025 and grow 10X by 2050
- The European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF) was created in 2002 (after Elbe and Danube floods) to provide funds to help MSs recover from natural disasters
- By 2030 exceptional flood events like the 2013 central European flood would occur each year regularly if no further action follows (Jongman et al 2016).

Does less mitigation mean more adaptation?

YES, but it cannot become an excuse

It must be very clear: adaptation cannot replace mitigation and not seen as a way to getting to terms with low(er) mitigation ambition. **All three – CC, mitigation and adaptation to CC have an effect on jobs, employment and inequality**

Climate change itself has a **devastating effect on jobs** and affects **the most vulnerable** (climate justice appears not only in global South/global North relation, but also within Europe and within nations and cities)

Mitigation has an overall effect on jobs (net positive effect, but massive restructuring and jobs losses in certain sectors and regions) with distributional effects

Adaptation itself has positive labour market effect (in two ways: diminish destructive effects of climate change and creates itself jobs (most adaptation investments have multiple returns) **etui.**

Challenge of measuring (estimating) the employment effects of the transition to a zero-carbon economy

The labour market is in permanent change, each year millions of jobs are being created and destructed

The effects of globalisation, tech change and the economic cycles are getting mixed up with those of climate policies

BUT even after the post-crisis rebound, 3 million industry jobs in EU were lost between 2008 and 2018

It is difficult to link employment change to individual policies

- Painting a `rosy` picture about green job creation not helpful and credible – most official forecasts are too optimistic
- potential and expected job losses should be addressed openly by accompanying employment policies (nobody left behind)
- The effect of climate change on employment is hard to measure
- Adaptation: double `employment benefit`

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Main areas of adaptation

- Strengthening and preservation of public infrastructure, particularly transport (roads, railways, ports)
- Water management (distribution, storage, irrigation)
- Buildings (retrofitting + more resistant to extreme weather)
- central and local government, social services, education, healthcare, public utilities (such as energy, water and waste management), disaster management, and emergency services (e.g. firefighters).
- Agriculture, forestry, tourism
- Massive investments needed and these also have a job creation effect

EU adaptation strategy

- 2009 White Paper *'Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action'*
- The 'EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change' package (European Commission 2013) including the platform 'Climate-ADAPT' as 'one-stop shop' for adaptation information.
- Member States are obliged to develop risk assessments at national or appropriate subnational level, but no binding criteria for national climate adaptation plans.
- National Adaptation Strategies (and Plans), NAS and NAP had to be set up by MSs
- Monitoring process, Adaptation scoreboard
- Commission evaluation of EU Climate Adaptation (2018)

- Ten Member States have adopted NASs since 2013, bringing the total to 25 out of the 28 Member States that have a NAS.
- Operational Objective 1b includes a target that, by 2020, all cities of more than 150 000 inhabitants have adopted an adaptation strategy (by the end of 2018, 40% had one).
- For ESIF Funding adaptation impact is part of evaluation criteria, but funding adaptation (ERDF, CF and EIB) did no increase since 2015 and remains at low level

EU adaptation strategy

Disaster risk management is a key element of local and national adaptation strategies and helps also to optimise available resources put into adaptation. For efficient disaster risk management institutional structures and management tools need to be responsive to weather-induced catastrophic events.

The UNDP's Global Risk Identification Programme (GRIP) has identified 62 disaster loss databases worldwide which collect data on mortality, morbidity and physical damage across the social, infrastructure and productive sectors of the economy, by 2015 Europe only had one.

In lack of common standards, there are hardly any comparable disaster damage and loss data available in the EU (JRC 2015)

BUT this would be a precondition for developing effective adaptation strategies

Involvement of stakeholders in NAs

Member States have mostly included stakeholders in planning their adaptation policy processes by involving national and subnational level government stakeholders and consultation of scientists and researchers.

In some cases, non-governmental institutions were also involved through consultation and information-sharing, as well as the general public through public consultation and dissemination of information.

There is however no specific reference to the involvement of social partners as such.

Social partners, including trade unions should be involved in the preparation, evaluation and monitoring of national adaptation strategies and plans

Just and balanced transition should also have relevance to adaptation

The concept of JT is **multi-faceted**, has different dimensions and contexts – and these **are cross-cutting each other**

JT is as much about **`just burden sharing`** of the costs of greening as of the **`costs`** of the transition + **managing job transitions with quality jobs and equity in the zero-carbon world**

Adaptation is also a way to reduce climate change induced inequalities, as it is the most vulnerable who are affected

- **Old people, children, structurally weak regions**
- **Lower income families are less likely to afford insurance against extreme weather events (inner cities more exposed than suburbs)**

Although there is no genuine trade-off between green-labour and social dimensions – in concrete cases these may appear (e.g. at decisions about adaptation investments and compensations)

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Trade union role: active policy role and social dialogue also in the field of adaptation

Trade unions are committed to more ambitious climate policy at the same time demand a framework that provides a balanced approach: **just green transition (differences by level and industry)**

AS the ILO puts it: JT is also a condition of success as it has a mobilising effect (or when missing: a blocking effect)

This makes a comprehensive policy approach necessary: climate change mitigation + adaptation + employment + training + social + industrial policy

For trade unions matching climate justice with economic and social justice is key

Two major aspects of trade union focus in adaptation:

- 1) Defending and improving working conditions in a warmer and more turbulent world: enhanced health and safety standards for vulnerable and exposed workers and citizens

Trade union role in adaptation

- Workers exposed to climatic conditions (construction, transport public services, military personnel)
- Meeting higher labour demand for health care, care, public services, emergency services

2) Playing an active role in formulating climate adaptation strategies at all levels (NASs, NAPs, regional level adaptation,, also being involved in monitoring and evaluation having a say in decisions about the allocation of resources

THIS is NOT the CASE now!!

Building coalitions with environmental and social NGO-s