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EU Outlines Key Steps for Managing Climate Risks to Protect People and Prosperity

Key policies: *European Green Deal, European Climate Law, National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs), European Climate Risk Assessment (EUCRA), Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), EU Solidarity Fund, Cohesion Policy, "Do No Significant Harm" Principle, Forest Monitoring Law and Soil Monitoring Law, Reflection Group on Climate Resilience Financing, Galileo Emergency Warning Satellite Service (EWSS), Nature Restoration Law*

On March 12, 2024, the European Commission published a **Communication on managing climate risks in Europe**, detailing comprehensive actions to enhance resilience and preparedness across the EU. This follows the first-ever **European Climate Risk Assessment (EUCRA)**, which highlighted growing risks and the urgent need for coordinated action.

Addressing the Climate Crisis

The EUCRA reveals that 2023 was the hottest year on record, with global temperatures exceeding 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Europe, warming twice as fast as the global average, is experiencing increasingly severe impacts, including extreme heatwaves, floods, droughts, and wildfires. Without proactive measures, the Commission estimates climate damages could reduce EU GDP by 7% by the end of the century.

Actions for Climate Resilience

The Communication outlines four key categories of action to manage climate risks:

1. **Improved Governance**
    - Member States must identify "risk owners" and ensure clear accountability for addressing climate risks.
    - Climate resilience must be embedded across all sectoral policies, including **National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs)**.
    - The Commission advocates for stronger collaboration between national, regional, and local authorities.
2. **Empowering Risk Owners**
    - Policymakers, businesses, and investors need tools to understand the links between climate risks, investments, and long-term strategies.
    - The **Galileo Emergency Warning Satellite Service (EWSS)** will launch in 2025 to enhance alert systems during emergencies.
    - New laws, including the **Forest Monitoring Law** and **Soil Monitoring Law**, will improve early warning systems for disasters like wildfires.
3. **Harnessing Structural Policies**

  - Enhanced spatial planning and the integration of climate risks into infrastructure projects are essential.
  - The **EU Solidarity Fund**, **Cohesion Policy**, and **Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)** will be aligned with national resilience measures to address disaster management comprehensively.

4. **Financing Climate Resilience**
  - Mobilizing public and private finance is critical. The Commission will integrate climate adaptation into EU programs under the **"do no significant harm" principle**.
  - A **Reflection Group on Climate Resilience Financing** will convene industry leaders and financial institutions to identify innovative funding solutions.

Sector-Specific Recommendations

The report identifies six major impact clusters requiring targeted action:

- **Natural Ecosystems**: Preserving biodiversity and restoring degraded ecosystems.
- **Water Management**: Addressing water scarcity and flood risks.
- **Health**: Protecting populations from heat-related illnesses and vector-borne diseases.
- **Food Security**: Ensuring sustainable agricultural practices.
- **Infrastructure and Built Environment**: Making transport and energy networks climate-resilient.
- **Economic Competitiveness**: Safeguarding industries against climate-related disruptions.

International Collaboration

The EU will extend its expertise globally, incorporating climate risk management into bilateral and multilateral discussions and allocating a significant share of international climate finance to adaptation measures.

A Call to Action

Commissioner for Climate Action Wopke Hoekstra emphasized, *"It makes far more economic sense to build climate resilience now than to pay for the costs of climate damage later. For our citizens and societies, we must get ahead of coming climate risks while continuing to tackle the root causes of climate change."*

Building a Resilient Future

The Communication reinforces the EU's commitment to the **European Green Deal**, ensuring that every euro spent on prevention delivers long-term benefits for citizens and the economy. By addressing climate risks holistically, the EU aims to protect lives, health, and prosperity while advancing toward climate neutrality.

For more information, visit the European Climate Risk Assessment page.

Source:

- *https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_1385*
- *https://commission.europa.eu/news/key-steps-manage-climate-risks-protect-people-and-prosperity-2024-03-12_en*

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