

## **The Climate Alliance response to the Green Paper on Adaptation to Climate Change**

For more than 15 years, the members of Climate Alliance across Europe have engaged in local level climate protection activities, committed themselves to voluntary greenhouse gas emission targets and set up action programmes to combat climate change. However, the weather extremes make it only too apparent that decision makers – in all levels – need to be aware of the risks and to be able to appropriately consider possible impacts and consequences of the changing climate. Therefore Climate Alliance welcomes the EU Green Paper on Adaptation to Climate Change (launched in June 2007) and the start of a European debate on the issue.

During the last two years Climate Alliance has been coordinating a pioneering European project titled AMICA (Adaptation and Mitigation - an Integrated Climate Policy Approach). The attached response to the Green Paper is largely based on the experiences gained through the project. We emphasise in particular the importance of developing coherent approaches to mitigation and adaptation. Integrated strategies can bring benefits for example through increased energy efficiency and lower energy costs, improved environmental performance and air quality, better quality of life, lower health costs, as well as opportunities for new employment. The response highlights three policy fields where synergies for adaptation and mitigation are present: urban planning, construction and decentralised energy production.

The European level has a great potential for encouraging the integrated mitigation and adaptation approach for example through awareness raising; integrating climate issues in their existing and new policy initiatives and in supporting future research and concrete projects in this field. Ensuring a good cooperation between the different levels of government is also essential. The national level has an important role in coordination of the responsibilities in local and regional levels as well as in creating an enabling environment for climate mitigation and adaptation actions.

The climate is changing and adaptation strategies are necessary. However, mitigation should still be the central pillar of European climate policy. The Energy and Climate Package agreed by the heads of state and government in March this year is a strong signal for ambitious European policy in this field. Reaching the 20-20-20 targets by 2020 will require cooperation of all relevant actors – including cities, municipalities and regions. We would therefore call upon the European Commission to invite local government organisations to participate in the planned advisory group on adaptation to climate change and to establish a group with a long term mandate and clear objectives.

### **Background:**

On 29 June 2007 the European Commission adopted the EU Green paper on Adaptation to Climate Change. The green paper started the European debate on

adaptation to climate change and will be followed up by a White Paper in Autumn 2008. Further information:

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/adaptation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/adaptation/index_en.htm)