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Policy Brief

# How can the European Union adapt to climate change?

A stronger adaptation governance framework would benefit adaptation efforts.

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Europe must increasingly deal with the harmful impacts of climate change, regardless of its success in reducing emissions. These impacts have significant cross-border effects and

defined.

We give an overview of how climate change might change Europe and how it might affect people and the economy. We also discuss what sort of adaptation policies are being pursued at EU level and on what grounds. We argue that a stronger adaptation governance framework would benefit adaptation efforts.

We formulate three ideas to strengthen adaptation. First is a three-layered governance framework based on intensive cooperation to establish binding adaptation plans. Second is an EU-level insurance scheme against damages from climate change, with the size of national contributions tied to the achievement of self-chosen targets in adaptation plans. Our final suggestion is to increase ex-ante adaptation funding by targeting more spending under EU regional and agricultural policies specifically to adaptation in the most vulnerable regions.

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### About the authors

#### Klaas Lenaerts

Klaas worked at Bruegel as a Research Analyst until August 2022. He holds a Master in Economics from the KU Leuven and in European Economic Studies from the College of Europe. Additionally, he spent one semester at Uppsala University.

Klaas has a broad background in economics and European affairs. Before joining Bruegel he did a traineeship at the Permanent Representation of Belgium to the EU, where he worked on enlargement discussions, and at the European Securities and Markets Authority in Paris, where he contributed mainly to the work of the Risk Analysis and Economics department on such topics as crypto regulation and sustainable finance.

His fields of interest include European climate policy and Eurozone governance, as well as external relations and trade. He is fluent in Dutch and English and advanced in French and German.

#### Simone Tagliapietra

He is also a Part-time professor at the Florence School of Transnational Governance (STG) of the European University Institute and an Adjunct professor at the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) Europe of The Johns Hopkins University.

His research focuses on the EU climate and energy policy, and on its industrial and social dimensions. With a record of numerous policy and scientific publications, also in leading journals such as Nature and Science, he is the author of Global Energy Fundamentals (Cambridge University Press, 2020) and co-author of The Macroeconomics of Decarbonisation (Cambridge University Press, 2024).

On the basis of his policy and scientific production, Dr. Tagliapietra regularly supports EU and national institutions in the development of their public policies in the field of climate and energy, also through regular interaction with public decision-makers in EU and national institutions, as well as through regular parliamentary testimonies in the European Parliament and various national parliamentary assemblies inside and outside Europe, such as the French Senate, the UK House of Lords and the US Senate. His columns and policy work are widely published and cited in leading international media.

Dr. Tagliapietra also is a Member of the Board of Directors of the Clean Air Task Force (CATF) and Senior associate of the Payne Institute at the Colorado School of Mines in Golden. He holds a PhD in International Political Economy from the Catholic University of Milan, where he previously graduated under the supervision of Professor Alberto Quadrio Curzio and where he also served as an Assistant professor (tenure-track) until 2024. Born in the Dolomites in 1988, he speaks Italian, English and French.

#### **Guntram B. Wolff**

Guntram Wolff is a Senior fellow at Bruegel. He is also a Professor of Economics at the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB).

From 2022-2024, he was the Director and CEO of the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) and from 2013-22 the director of Bruegel. Over his career, he has contributed to research on European political economy, climate policy, geoeconomics, macroeconomics and

*Finance*. His co-authored book "The macroeconomics of decarbonization" is published in *Cambridge University Press*.

An experienced public adviser, he has been testifying twice a year since 2013 to the informal European finance ministers' and central bank governors' ECOFIN Council meeting on a large variety of topics. He also regularly testifies to the European Parliament, the Bundestag and speaks to corporate boards. In 2020, Business Insider ranked him one of the 28 most influential "power players" in Europe. From 2012-16, he was a member of the French prime minister's Conseil d'Analyse Economique. In 2018, then IMF managing director Christine Lagarde appointed him to the external advisory group on surveillance to review the Fund's priorities. In 2021, he was appointed member and co-director to the G20 High level independent panel on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response under the co-chairs Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Lawrence H. Summers and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. From 2013-22, he was an advisor to the Mastercard Centre for Inclusive Growth. He is a member of the Bulgarian Council of Economic Analysis, the European Council on Foreign Affairs and advisory board of Elcano. He is also a fellow at the Kiel Institute for the World Economy.

Guntram joined Bruegel from the European Commission, where he worked on the macroeconomics of the euro area and the reform of euro area governance. Prior to joining the Commission, he worked in the research department at the Bundesbank, which he joined after completing his PhD in economics at the University of Bonn. He also worked as an external adviser to the International Monetary Fund. He is fluent in German, English, and French. His work is regularly published and cited in leading media.

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