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**Report Name:** EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change

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**Report Highlights:**

On February 24, 2021, the European Commission published an updated EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change. With this Strategy, the Commission wants to foster EU adaptation to climate change throughout all sectors of the economy, including agriculture. This includes finding practical solutions to adapt to droughts, promote “nature-based” solutions and increase plants and crops resilience through better use of genetic diversity and non-harmful plant genetic resources for adaptation.

## **General Information:**

On February 24, 2021, the European Commission (EC) published an updated [EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change](#). Building on the [previous Strategy](#) published in 2013 and the European [Green Deal](#), the Commission wants to foster EU adaptation to climate change throughout all sectors of the economy. Speaking in Brussels after the release of the strategy, Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal, Frans Timmermans, [said](#): “The COVID-19 pandemic has been a stark reminder that insufficient preparation can have dire consequences. [...] The new climate adaptation strategy equips us to speed up and deepen preparations. If we get ready today, we can still build a climate-resilient tomorrow.”

The new Strategy sets out how the European Union can adapt to the impacts of climate change and become climate resilient by 2050. The Strategy has four objectives: to make adaptation smarter, swifter and more systemic in the EU as well as to step up international action on adaptation to climate change. On this last point, the Commission announces that the EU will increase support for international climate resilience and preparedness through the provision of resources, through the scaling up of international finance and through stronger global engagement and exchanges on adaptation.

## **How the EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change will Impact the EU Agricultural Sector?**

With regards to the agricultural sector, the Commission notes that climate change has adverse consequences on agriculture with an increase of the frequency and severity of climate and weather extremes. Notably, due to the changing climate, many European regions are facing more frequent, severe, and longer lasting droughts. Extreme droughts in western and central Europe in 2018, 2019 and 2020 caused considerable damage to European farmers. According to the Commission, in 2018, agricultural damages amounted to some EUR 2 billion in France, EUR 1.4 billion in the Netherlands, and EUR 770 million in Germany. As a solution, the Commission proposes to step up the sustainable (re-)use of water, soil management and vegetation cover, drought resistant crops, vertical farming, land use planning and restoration of damaged areas.

In its Strategy, the Commission stresses that adaptation strategies at all levels must be effective and based on the latest science. At the same time, the Commission wants to promote “nature-based” solutions for adaptation. For the EU executive, implementing nature-based solutions on a larger scale would increase climate resilience and contribute to multiple Green Deal objectives. For example, protecting and restoring wetlands, peatlands, coastal and marine ecosystems; developing urban green spaces and installing green roofs and walls; promoting and sustainably managing forests and farmland could help adapt to climate change in a cost-effective way. The Commission wants the EU to leverage more investments in nature-based solutions to generate gains for adaptation and mitigation of climate change. For the EC, eco-schemes and advisory services in the Common Agricultural Policy could be used to foster investments in nature-based solutions. Additionally, through support for carbon farming, the Commission wants to promote a new business model for land-based carbon removals, including financial incentives to rollout nature-based solutions.

On plants resilience to climate change, the Commission notes that trees and crops may not be able to keep up with climate change. According to the Commission, one solution is to make “better use of genetic diversity and non-harmful plant genetic resources for adaptation, based on the latest science”. The Commission announces that it will facilitate the broadening of the supply of suitable high-quality

plant reproductive material to support adaptation in agriculture, forestry, and land ecosystem management. To do so, the Commission will propose to amend the [Directive on the marketing of forest reproductive material](#) and the different marketing Directives on seed and other propagating material.

### **EU Farmers Representatives Welcome the Strategy**

Copa-Cogeca, the Brussels-based organization representing EU farmers and cooperatives, [welcomed](#) the release of the Strategy.

EU farmers support the Strategy's objective to develop a certification mechanism for carbon removals and the carbon farming initiative announced under the European Green Deal. Copa-Cogeca also notes that one of the key pillars of climate change adaptation in farming is to enhance crop resilience and underlines that new breeding techniques provide a wide palette of solutions. In that regard, Copa-Cogeca supports the Strategy's objectives on enabling a legislative environment for plant seed and propagating materials.

### **Attachments:**

No Attachments.