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Longer-term strategic objectives for the European Climate and Health Observatory: towards climate-prepared health systems and resilient populations in Europe by 2030

The ongoing climate crisis has started to impact on our health and well-being. It is therefore only consequent that the climate-health nexus has moved up in the last few years to take a more central position in both climate and health policy-making and practice.

Initiated in March 2021, the [European Climate and Health Observatory](#) partnership sets out to better understand, anticipate and minimise the health threats caused by climate change, based on the One Health approach and fully considering the human-animal-climate-environment nexus. So far, it has been collating and developing knowledge on climate change impacts on human health, with a particular focus on heat and climate-sensitive infectious diseases, according to the [Observatory workplan 2021-22](#).

This document aims to guide the activities of the Observatory partners and the development of the Observatory portal in the years to come by specifying five longer-term and strategic objectives. Each objective describes a desired endpoint, to be reached by 2030, and outlines how the Observatory partners plan to help achieve it.

These five objectives respond to recent policy developments:

- [The new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change](#), which states the need for a deeper understanding of the climate risks for health, and triggered the launch of the [European Climate and Health Observatory](#)
- The [European Climate Law](#), which makes climate adaptation mandatory (Article 5) and states that the Observatory was launched to *'better understand, anticipate and minimise the health threats caused by climate change'*
- [The European Health Union](#), and the EU4HEALTH programme, which support not only the Observatory but also a project to develop a stress-test methodology for national health systems, which includes climate among the stressors
- [The EU Mission Adaptation to Climate Change](#) Mission on adaptation which, under the Horizon Europe research and innovation programme, sets out to accelerate a smart and systemic transformation to climate resilience – including health aspects - in at least 150 European regions and communities by 2030
- the [proposed EU Regulation on serious cross-border threats to health](#) and the setting up of the European Health Emergency and Preparedness Response Authority (HERA)
- the [activities on climate change and health of WHO Europe](#), including the *'Zero Regrets'* initiative which calls for open-source information sharing through existing platforms, including the European Climate and Health Observatory, to support peer-to-peer learning and support
- The [G7 Health Ministers' Communiqué](#) adopted on 20 May 2022 that commits the G7 members to addressing the health impacts of climate change and to building climate-resilient, sustainable and climate-neutral health systems
- the [IANPHI Roadmap for Action on Health and Climate Change](#), which encourages increased collaboration of national public health institutes with each other and with the Observatory.

In addition, key stakeholders have emphasized the need for better education and training of the health professionals as outlined in the joint statement '[Climate action through public health education and training](#)' of the EU Health Policy Platform's thematic network, endorsed by 96 global, European and country-level organisations.

In this context, the Observatory aims to become the authoritative source of actionable knowledge on the past, current and projected climate change risks to health at all life stages and in all settings, as well as on policies and actions addressing them. The Observatory partners will therefore aim to make a significant contribution to the following objectives by 2030, in collaboration with stakeholders from public administration at all governance levels and from various sectors, civil society organisations, and the research community:

Objective 1. Observatory users can monitor key climate-related health risks, impacts and adaptive responses through robust indicators

To help reach this objective, the Observatory partners will continue to collate, develop and spread knowledge on key climate change related health risks, impacts and adaptive responses in a format that allows distinguishing regional differences across Europe and changes over time.

This includes, in particular, the joint development of indicators in the domains of:

- trends and projections (until the end of the 21st century) of the geographical distribution and intensity of climate hazards relevant to health;
- exposure of population and health systems to those climate change hazards;
- vulnerability of population and health systems to climate hazards;
- impacts of weather- and climate-related hazards on the population and on the health systems;
- adaptive capacity, preparedness and resilience of the population and health systems to climate change.

These indicators will be updated regularly and will be provided on the national or sub-national level, over time strengthening the One Health approach. They will form the basis of regular reports and other periodical assessments, and help in the evaluation of progress towards climate resilience and adaptive capacity in relation to health.

Objective 2. National and sub-national health policies and systems can integrate adaptation more systematically and consistently

The Observatory will build and promote knowledge on climate risks and solutions for national and sub-national health systems. To do so, the Observatory could:

- contribute to, and support, networking, knowledge exchanges and collaboration between all relevant actors, including national health administrations, public health institutes, and decision makers, to promote greater integration between climate change and health in policy and action;
- periodically provide analyses, risk assessments, or stress tests at national and sub-national levels, building on the [2022 national policy assessment](#);
- support climate-aware policy development, health sector planning, and health system preparedness for climate change, amongst others drawing on the lessons learnt by the regions and communities participating in the [Mission on Adaptation](#).

Objective 3. Public authorities have greater capacity to anticipate and prevent climate-related threats to health in a timely manner

Observatory partners will support the development of suitable mechanisms – such as public surveillance, forecasting and early warning systems - to enable timely detection and response to climate-sensitive health risks.

Observatory partners will also periodically assess the geographic and thematic coverage, possible gaps and the effectiveness of these mechanisms in Europe.

The Observatory work under this objective will be done in close cooperation with the relevant organisations, including the [European Health Emergency and Preparedness Response Authority \(HERA\)](#), to improve Europe’s readiness for climate-related health emergencies.

Objective 4. The health community in Europe is climate-literate and better involved into adaptation decision-making

Observatory partners will carry out capacity building, education, training, knowledge sharing and outreach activities to:

- improve the climate change awareness and literacy, and the related professional development and practice, of health care and public health professionals;
- integrate health aspects more strongly into the work of those working on adaptation policy and practice in general;
- Allow other professions - spatial planners, urban developers, civil engineers, land managers and other - to consider relevant health aspects in their adaptation-related work.

These activities can be delivered in a variety of formats – such as webinars, conferences, ‘training the trainers’ activities or newsletters – depending on the purpose and preferences of the specific target groups.

Objective 5. Evidence-based efficient, effective and inclusive adaptation solutions and public health and healthcare interventions are widely known

The Observatory will continue to collect and promote examples of effective, cost-efficient and inclusive solutions for adaptation to climate change of health at various spatial scales and by a broad range of entities. This could be done by:

- reaching out to the Partners’ and other stakeholders’ networks;
- closely following the implementation of actions by regions and communities participating in the [Mission on adaptation](#);
- engagement with EU-funded research and implementation projects.

In addition, periodical assessments of the effectiveness of policies and actions could be carried out.