

The latest trends of EU's climate and environmental policy in the light of European Environment Agency's report

di Federica Notari*

18 aprile 2017

SUMMARY: 1. Climate change and environmental policy under the Trump Administration – 2. The EEA's report: policy context, consequences and possible solutions to climate change – 2.1 *The policy context* – 2.2 *The consequences of climate change on ecosystems, human health and economy* – 2.3 *The solutions to climate change: enhancing adaptation and knowledge* – 3. Beyond the report: the EU's commitment to environmental and climate policy.

1. Climate change and environmental policy under the Trump Administration

The Earth's climate change is one of the most debated by climate scientists issues¹ especially because it's already happening: land and sea temperatures are rising, precipitation patterns are changing, sea levels are increasing, glaciers and snow are melting and climate-related extremes² are becoming frequent and intense in many regions. As reported by NASA Global Climate Change website³, global climate has changed throughout history: indeed, just in the last 650,000 years there have been seven cycles of glacial advance and retreat caused by variations in Earth's orbit that change the amount of solar energy that planet receives. The phenomenon takes on even greater importance due new positions of environment, energy and climate assumed by Trump administration. Immediately after the swearing-in of the new President of the United States, on the website of the White House, the pages dedicated to the "harful and unnecessary"⁴ environmental policies of Obama as the *Climate Action Plan*⁵ have been deleted. Even during the election campaign, Donald Trump had expressed his position on environment and renewable energies. On climate, Trump - like many members of

* Cultrice della materia di Diritto dell'informazione e della comunicazione e collaboratrice stabile di @LawLab -Laboratorio sul Diritto del Digitale, LUISS Guido Carli.

¹ For a general analysis on the issue of climate change, see F. CHAMBERS, M. OGLE, *Climate Change: Critical Concepts in the Environment*, London, 2001; N. LEARY, C. CONDE, J. KULKARNI, A. NYONG, J. PULHIN, *Climate Change and Vulnerability*, London, 2008; A. BARRIE PITTOCK, *Climate Change: The Science, Impacts and Solutions*, Second edition, London, 2009.

² Such as, for example, heat waves, heavy precipitation and droughts.

³ For more information on this issue, see climate.nasa.gov/evidence/.

⁴ These are the words used by Donald Trump in *An America First Energy Plan* adopted by his administration. For a more detailed explanation on this plan, see www.whitehouse.gov/america-first-energy.

⁵ The *Climate Action Plan* was adopted during the second term of Obama, in 2014. It was considered the most revolutionary climate plan of American history and the first to establish limits on CO2 emissions at federal level.

his party and unlike the majority of scientists- has repeatedly questioned the real existence of global warming and has denied that it is an urgent threat to the survival of planet. As regards energy, the new President is committed to encourage economic growth through the oil industry and other forms of fossil fuels, freeing the United States from dependence on foreign oil. These positions have prompted many environmental organizations including Italian ones. They had expressed their concerns about the intentions of Trump already in election campaign through a letter launched on the platform *surpriseuspresidenttrump.net/*. During the presidential inauguration, the associations which signed the letter - including Legambiente, Lipu, Wwf Italia, Marevivo- have pointed out that the future of all humanity will depend on the environmental choices of the United States and other industrialized countries. Even exponents of American environmental association have criticized new policies: as the director of Sierra Club – one of the most important organization of the Country- who claimed that he Trump plan will make polluted water and air. On the other hand, the appointment of Scott Pruitt to the direction of Environmental Protection Agency (Epa) shows the choice taken by new President on the issue: Scott Pruitt, Attorney General of Oklahoma, is a denier of climate change and fossil fuel industry ally.⁶

On the contrary, in European Union, issues related to environment remain important and among the main actions e measures to develop. In line with these, last 25 January 2017, the European Environment Agency (EEA) has published a report entitled "*Climate change, impacts and vulnerability in Europe 2016*"⁷: it shows the latest trends and projections on climate change and its impacts across Europe and finds strategies, policies and measures will be crucial to reduce these impacts. The report - which will be analysed in the following pages- is an indicator-based assessment of past and projected climate change and its impacts on ecosystems and society. The report was developed by the EEA in collaboration with the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, the World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe and three European Topic Centres (ETC-CCA, ETC-BD, ETC-ICM). The EEA was established by Regulation adopted by European Union (EU) in 1990. It's an agency of EU and its task is to provide independent information on the environment⁸.

2. The EEA's report: policy context, consequences and possible solutions to climate change

⁶ However, in recent days, during a press conference, Scott Pruitt has contradicted both himself and Trump by admitting that the world is actually getting warmer and that climate change is a hoax.

⁷ This is the fourth "*Climate change, impacts and vulnerability in Europe*" report, which is published every four years. For the link of report, see www.eea.europa.eu/publications/climate-change-impacts-and-vulnerability-2016.

⁸ The EEA's mandate aims to: 1) help the Community and member countries make informed decisions about improving the environment, integrating environmental considerations into economic policies and moving towards sustainability; 2) coordinate the European environment information and observation network (Eionet).

Now, the EEA has 33 member countries, six cooperating countries and its main clients are the European Union institutions and our member countries. For more information on EEA, see the following link www.eea.europa.eu.

The report focuses on main elements that will be taken into account in the following paragraphs: in particular, actions and programmes relating to environment already in existence at international, European and national level; the consequences and the impact of climate change not only on environmental factors and the possible solutions in order to fight and stop this phenomenon.

2.1 *The policy context*

First of all, the report refers to political context in which it is inserted: a set of relevant policies at different governance levels.

At international level⁹, the most important act is the Paris Agreement¹⁰. Adopted by the member countries of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)¹¹ at the Paris climate conference (COP21) in December 2015, the central aim of the Paris Agreement is to enhance the global response to the threat of climate change. In this agreement, all countries agreed to work to limit global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius¹². On 5 October 2016, the EU formally ratified the Paris Agreement, thus enabling its entry into force on 4 November 2016.

In this perspective, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2020¹³ was adopted by UN Member States on 18 March 2015 at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai City, in 2015. It is a voluntary and non-binding agreement and the first major agreement of the post-2015 development agenda, with four priorities for action: understanding disaster risk; strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk; investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience; enhancing disaster preparedness.

At European level¹⁴, **the 7th Environment Action Programme (EAP)**¹⁵ – entitled “*Living well, within the limits of our planet*” – formulates a vision of the future

⁹ It should be noted that the report considers also the Kyoto Protocol, even if it doesn't explicitly mention. The Kyoto Protocol is an international agreement which commits Parties to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It was adopted in Kyoto, Japan, on 11 December 1997 and entered into force on 16 February 2005. Since then, the Kyoto Protocol has undergone several amendments and adjustments, two of the most important: the detailed rules for the implementation of the Protocol were adopted at COP 7 in Marrakesh, Morocco, in 2001 and the “*Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol*” that was adopted in Doha, Qatar, on 8 December 2012. For a deeper analysis on the Kyoto Protocol, refer to unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/items/2830.php.

¹⁰ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council COM(2015) 81 final/2, of 4 March 2015, The Paris Protocol – A blueprint for tackling global climate change beyond 2020.

¹¹ One of three Conventions adopted during the “*Rio Earth Summit*” in 1992, the UNFCCC entered into force on 21 March 1994. Today, 197 countries have ratified the Convention. Its ultimate aim is to prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system.

¹² For a more detailed on the progress of the Paris Agreement including the state of ratification, can be found at the following website unfccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9485.php.

¹³ For the full text of the Sendai Framework, see www.unisdr.org/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf.

¹⁴ At European level, also the European Multiannual Financial Framework (2014–2020) states that a minimum of 20 % of the EU budget contributes to climate-related expenditure (including adaptation).

¹⁵ The EAP is set out in Decision No 1386/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020, OJ L 354, 28.12.2013.

up to 2050: a low-carbon society, a green, circular economy and resilient ecosystems as the basis for citizens' well-being. The EAP – entered into force in January 2014– should lead European environmental policy until 2020 and focuses on three key objectives: to protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital; to turn the Union into a resource-efficient, green, and competitive low-carbon economy; to safeguard the Union's citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and wellbeing¹⁶.

From national perspective, countries have transposed European policies through national strategies and plans. In this way, 23 EEA member countries had adopted a national adaptation strategy and 12 had developed a national adaptation action in September 2016.

Even the transnational cooperation on adaptation to climate change is increased: in particular, report points out that adaptation plan and action develop within EU strategies for *“the Baltic Sea region and the Alpine region, the Danube and Rhine Commissions, the Carpathian and Alpine conventions, the Working Community of the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean Action Plan/ Barcelona Convention”*.

2.2 The consequences of climate change on ecosystems, human health and economy

The report highlights in depth the impacts of climate change on three main sectors: ecosystem, human health and economy.

Firstly, the climate change is the major driver of ecosystem and biodiversity change and, probably, this trend will become stronger in the future, depending on the environmental domain and geographical region¹⁷. With regard to oceans and marine environment, the main changes are ocean acidification, sea level rise, increase in sea surface temperature: it involves a variation in the distribution of marine species, including fish stocks. River flows have increased in winter and decreased in summer; the rise in water temperatures creates reflects on freshwater ecosystems: changes in phenology and in species distribution, the facilitation of species invasions and the deterioration of water quality. They may have implication also on energy production by reducing the availability of cooling water and by affecting hydropower potential. Furthermore, climate changes and increased CO₂ concentrations affect also forest ecosystem because they result in an increase in the risk of forest fires.

Secondly, climate variations have an impact also on human health: they are linked to extreme weather events -as floods and heat waves-, changes in the distribution of climate-sensitive diseases and in environmental and social conditions. In the last

For the full text of decision, see www.eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32013D1386&from=EN

¹⁶ Alongside these three objective, the EAP identifies four "enablers" will help Europe deliver on these goals (better implementation of legislation; better information by improving the knowledge base; more and wiser investment for environment and climate policy; full integration of environmental requirements and considerations into other policies) and two additional horizontal priority objectives complete the programme (to make the Union's cities more sustainable and to help the Union address international environmental and climate challenges more effectively).

¹⁷ In particular, the report highlights that climate change will experience more negative impacts in some regions that others. It refers to: southern and south-eastern Europe, coastal areas and floodplains in western parts of Europe and areas of Arctic.

decade, river and coastal flooding have caused the deaths of thousands of people in Europe; also heat waves that have become more frequent and intense have led tens of thousands of premature deaths in Europe. Without appropriate adaptation measures, this trend will increase and intensify. In addition, climate change is the leading cause of the recent expansion of the Asian tiger mosquito and a sandfly species in Europe, which can disseminate several diseases, such as dengue and chikungunya by the Asian tiger mosquito and leishmaniasis by the sandfly species.

Thirdly, economic cost connected to climate change can be very high; in this regard, since 1980 extreme events related to climate change in the AEA member countries have generated economic losses for almost EUR 400 billion. This trend has increased in recent decade¹⁸. It is expected that the costs due to damage related to climate change will be higher in the Mediterranean region. In addition, climate variation in Europe will have negative repercussions outside of its territory on trade, on infrastructure, on geopolitical risks, security and migration flows.

However, climate change has relatively minor effects on other sectors. One of these is certainly the agriculture because heat waves, droughts, extreme precipitation and hail have reduced the yield of some crops. The report's projections show that effects of climate variations will differ between crop types and livestock categories, and they are moderated by short- and long-term adaptation efforts. With regard to energy sector, the rise in temperatures, the change of precipitation patterns can have an impact on both renewable and conventional electricity energy generators. In general, many of variations of climate change will be adverse¹⁹ but may they have some positive effects, in particular related to hydropower production in northern Europe. Also with regard to transport and infrastructure, increased precipitation and melting of mountain permafrost may cause geological instability especially in mountain regions. Overall, report's projections suggest that rail transport will face particularly high risks from extreme weather events²⁰ although the report highlights how there is no comprehensive overview of climate-related risks for transport in Europe due to different methodological approaches in the currently available assessments²¹. Finally, climate change is causing consequences also for tourism and in particular for regions where tourism is an important economic sectors: the appropriateness of southern Europe for tourism will decline during the summer, but will improve in other seasons.

2.3 The solutions to climate change: enhancing adaptation and knowledge

¹⁸ The report specifies that the available estimates of future costs due to climate change in Europe consider only certain sectors and showed considerable uncertainty.

¹⁹ In this regard, the report deals with how further increases in temperature and droughts may limit the availability of cooling water for thermal power generation in summer.

²⁰ They relate in particular to increase in heavy rain events.

²¹ However, quoting the report on page 21: "According to a Joint Research Centre (JRC) study, climate-related damage to large investments and critical infrastructures could triple by the 2020s, could increase six-fold by the middle of the century and could increase by more than ten-fold by the end of the century, compared with the 1981–2010 baseline (Forzieri et al., 2015). The greatest increase in damage is projected for the energy and transport sectors, and for EU regional investments in environment and tourism. Southern and south-eastern European countries will be most affected."

According to report, the basis to combat the climate change are enhancing adaptation and knowledge. In recent years, there has been an improvement at European and global levels with respect to the length of time series for the geographical coverage of and the quality of climate change data and indicators such as the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS)²². Also atmospheric and ocean observations show an improvement but there is still no an integrated approach to terrestrial observation. In addition, in the last few years climate change impact indicators have also improved both national and EU level; however, it's necessary an improvement of indicators relating to climate change impact, vulnerability and/or risk assessments. Furthermore, the report shows an another loophole: the absence of agreed common methods of indicator sets across Europe, which makes it more difficult to make comparison of information across countries. In this regard, the report highlights that sectorial EU legislation and policies can be exploited to improve data and indicators on climatic variations impacts.

Certainly, there are improvements. Firstly, climate change services - such as the Copernicus Climate Change Service and the Joint Programming Initiative "*Connecting Climate Knowledge for Europe*"²³ - are established in EU and within individual Member States. They provide information on essential climate variables, observations, seasonal forecasts and long-term projections. Secondly, adaptation services are emerging and they give complementary information like vulnerability and cost-benefit assessments, policies, tools and case studies on climate change. The report hopes more knowledge and experiences could facilitate the development and the integration of adaptation policies into other policies. In this way, some countries are developing systems for monitoring and evaluation of adaptation policies; however, only a few States are adopting an approach that combines quantitative indicators and qualitative information such as process-based indicators. In this regard, there has also been a commitment from EU institutions: in fact, the European Commission has planned a process-based "*adaptation preparedness scoreboard*" to evaluate the progress of Member States, which will be included in its assessments of the EU Adaptation Strategy²⁴.

Overall, the report lists and regroups the main knowledge gaps into eight areas:

- 1) adaptation and climate services;
- 2) robust, integrated (across sectors and geographical and governance scales) impact, vulnerability and adaptation assessments;
- 3) ecosystem-based adaptation measures;

²² GCOS was established after the Second World Climate Conference held in Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992. Its aim is to make available to potential users the observations and information needed to address the issues of climate problems. GCOS reports regularly on the adequacy of the observation of the current climate systems to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and identifies the needs of the current climate observing system. For more information on GCOS, see the following link www.wmo.int/pages/prog/gcos/index.php?name=AboutGCOS.

²³ The Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) is the EU's hearth observation programme and its aim is to understand how human activities influenced our planet and its climate change. It consists of systems which collect data from earth observation satellites and, through them, provides for services that are addressed to six thematic areas (land, marine, atmosphere, climate change, emergency management, security). Instead, the Joint Programming Initiative "*Connecting Climate Knowledge for Europe*" (JPI Climate) is an intergovernmental initiative and it intends to coordinate climate research and fund new transnational research initiatives between Member states.

²⁴ The EU Adaptation Strategies will be published in 2018.

- 4) decision-making and policymaking support tools and assessments, including on the costs and benefits of impacts and adaptation;
- 5) knowledge on effective adaptation;
- 6) regional- and local-level adaptation;
- 7) interdependencies, synergies and trade-offs with other relevant goals;
- 8) monitoring systems and tools.

Although some of these gaps are included and tackled by EU funding and knowledge initiatives, the report highlights that many knowledge gaps should be addressed through national research programmes. However, it should be highlighted as Horizon 2020 programme has already addressed in its programmes from 2014 to 2017 some of knowledge gaps²⁵; the report recommends to continue in this way and believes that Horizon 2020 could facilitate innovation and structural change needed to transformative adaptation.

3. Beyond the report: the EU's commitment to environmental and climate policy

As explained above, climate change is a phenomenon that is already happening and European Union is trying to fight it also through adaptation policies and measures

First of all, the legal basis relating to more general environmental policy²⁶ - in which is included climate policy- and its general principles is provided for in Articles 11 and 191, 192 e 193 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The Article 11 – that should be read in combination with Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union²⁷ - provides that environmental protection requirements must be integrated into the definition and implementation of the Union's policies and activities, in particular to develop a sustainable development. In addition, Articles 191, 192 and 193 indicate, primarily, what are the objectives of EU environmental policy namely: preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment; protecting human health; prudent and rational utilisation of natural resources; promoting measures at international level to deal with regional or worldwide environmental problems, and in

²⁵ In particular, these programmes refer to the following thematic areas: climate services; decision support tools; effective adaptation and implementation; synergies; nature-based solutions for resilience; monitoring; governance, participatory processes and methods.

²⁶ For a more detailed explanation on environmental policies in the EU, refer to C. ADELLE, A. JORDAN, *Environmental Policy in the EU: Actors, Institutions and Processes*, Third edition, London, 2013 and J. GOLUB, *New Instruments for Environmental Policy in the EU*, London, 2013.

²⁷ The paragraph 3 of the Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union provides that: *“The Union shall establish an internal market. It shall work for the sustainable development of Europe based on balanced economic growth and price stability, a highly competitive social market economy, aiming at full employment and social progress, and a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment. It shall promote scientific and technological advance. It shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child.*

It shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States. It shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced.”.

particular combating climate change. They also add that EU policy on environment²⁸ shall be based on the precautionary principle²⁹ and on the principles of preventive action, that environmental damage should as a priority be rectified at source and that the polluter should pay, implemented by Directive 2004/35/CE on environmental liability with regard to the prevention and remedying of environmental damage³⁰.

Secondly, the legal basis on EU environment policy is complemented by environment action programmes, horizontal strategies³¹, environmental impact assessment³², international negotiation and measures concerning the monitoring and implementation of environmental policy³³: some of these were cited in the preceding paragraphs and mentioned in the EEA's report³⁴.

As emerged from report, the fight against climate change is an explicit objective of EU environmental policy, under Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. In this regard, the European Union undertakes to ensure the successful implementation of the aforesaid Paris Agreement and to implement EU Emissions Trading System (ETS). The ETS is one of the long-term climate change objective and

²⁸ The paragraph 2 of the Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union also specifies that EU policy on environment “shall aim at a high level of protection taking into account the diversity of situations in the various regions of the Union.”.

²⁹ The precautionary principle applies in cases of scientific uncertainty about a supposed risk to human health or the environment resulting from a particular action or policy.

³⁰ According to the principle that the polluter should pay, the operators engaged in professional activities such as the transport of dangerous substances are required to take preventive measures in case of imminent threat to the environment. If the damage has already occurred, they are obliged to take the appropriate measures to remedy the situation and to bear the costs. Subsequently, the scope of the Directive 2004/35/CE has been expanded in order to include the management of extractive waste, the operation of geological storage sites and the safety of offshore operations in the hydrocarbon sector. In addition, in April 2016, the Commission adopted a report on the Member States' implementation of Directive, under which is preparing an action plan. For the Commission report, see eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52016DC0204&from=IT.

³¹ With regard to these strategies, in 2001, the EU introduced Sustainable Development Strategy and it was renewed in 2006 in order to combine the internal and international dimension of sustainable development. In line with these objectives, the Europe 2020 the flagship initiative for efficient Europe Resource indicates the way forward for sustainable growth and suggests the shift towards efficient use of resources and low emission carbon. In addition, in 2011, the EU committed to stop the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services by 2020.

³² Some projects which are presumed to have significant effects on the environment subject to an environmental impact assessment; similarly, a series of public plans and programs (regarding i.e. transport, energy, waste and agriculture) are subjected to a similar process called Strategic Environmental Assessment.

³³ On this point, to fight inequalities among Member States as regards the level of implementation, in 2001 the European Parliament and the Council adopted minimum criteria for environmental inspections. In order to improve the application of EU environmental law, the Member States must provide effective, proportionate and dissuasive penalties for the most serious environmental crimes. In addition, in May 2016, the Commission launched the Environmental Implementation Review, a new instrument for achieving the full implementation of EU environmental legislation. For more information on review, see eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52016DC0316&from=IT.

³⁴ Among environment action programmes, the aforementioned 7th Environment Action Programme (EAP); as far as international cooperation on environment, as we have seen, EU establishes rules in international negotiations on climate within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Also regarding the monitoring of environmental policies, we have seen how the European Environment Agency (EEA) – editor of report analyzed- supports the development, implementation and evaluation of environmental policy and to inform the public on this issue.

was established to meet EU's commitments to comply with the Kyoto Protocol³⁵ by Directive 2003/87/EC³⁶: in this way, the EU has established a scheme for GHG allowance trading within the EU and each allowance represents the permission to emit 1 tonne of carbon dioxide (CO₂) or carbon dioxide equivalent over a specified period. The ETS represents a cornerstone of EU policy to combat climate change. In this direction, in 2008 the EU adopted first package of climate and energy measures that set targets for 2020³⁷: a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions; increasing the share of renewable energy to 20%; making a 20% improvement in energy efficiency. With a view to achieving the objectives and targets of the Europe 2020 strategy – but also of the 7th EU environment action programme and other relevant EU environment and climate change initiatives- the programme for the environment and climate action (LIFE) for 2014 to 2020³⁸ is the EU's main funding framework for environmental and climate change policy and focuses on concrete environmental and climate policy priorities as well as areas for action³⁹.

The EU's efforts are even more noticeable by long-term climate and energy policies. These include the EU policy framework for climate and energy from 2020 to 2030⁴⁰ which builds on the good progress made towards achieving the 2020 targets for greenhouse gas emissions⁴¹, renewable energy and energy savings. It contains measures and targets to make the EU's economy and energy system more competitive, secure and sustainable. In the same way, the Commission has presented a proposal for a broad review of the aforementioned EU ETS⁴²: it represents the first concrete legislative step towards implementing the EU's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030.

However, despite numerous measures, actions and policy on environment and climate change, the European Union is aware that the impacts of climate change are already tangible: the global warming will continue for decades and its consequences

³⁵ In particular, Under the Kyoto Protocol, the EU committed itself to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions between the years 2008 and 2012 by 8 % compared to the level in 1990. During a second commitment period between 2013 and 2020, it has undertaken to reduce its GHG emissions by 20 % by 2020 compared to 1990 levels.

³⁶ Directive 2003/87/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 October 2003 establishing a scheme for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Community and amending Council Directive 96/61/EC, OJ L 275, 25.10.2003.

³⁷ Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources and amending and subsequently repealing Directives 2001/77/EC and 2003/30/EC, OJ L 140, 5.6.2009.

³⁸ Regulation (EU) 1293/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013, on the establishment of a programme for the environment and climate action (LIFE) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 614/2007, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013.

³⁹ LIFE's main objectives include: use as a catalyst for changes in policymaking on environment and climate action; promoting implementation and integration of environment and climate objectives in other policies and EU countries' practice; better governance; specific link to EU priorities: resource efficiency, biodiversity loss and climate adaptation and mitigation.

⁴⁰ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions COM(2014) 015 final, of 22 January 2014 A policy framework for climate and energy in the period from 2020 to 2030.

⁴¹ In particular, a central element of the framework is the aim of reducing, by 2030, the internal EU emissions of greenhouse gases by at least 40% compared to 1990 levels.

⁴² Commission communication COM(2015) 337 final, of 15 July 2015, Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2003/87/EC to enhance cost-effective emission reductions and lowcarbon investments.

will be felt for centuries. For these reason, in April 2013 the European Commission adopted an EU strategy on adaptation to climate change in order to improve the capacity of all levels of government to respond to the impacts of climate change. The strategy focuses on three key objectives:

- promoting adaptation measures by Member States;
- “climate-proofing” action at EU level by further promoting adaptation in vulnerable sectors (i.e. agriculture, fisheries and cohesion policy);
- better informed decision-making by addressing gaps in knowledge about adaptation and further developing the European climate adaptation platform (Climate-ADAPT)⁴³.

Another adaptation initiative, adopted by the European Commission in 2014, was “*Mayors Adapt*”⁴⁴ within the Covenant of Mayors in order to encourage cities to undertake adaptation actions to climate change.

To sum up, all measures, policies and strategies mentioned - and among them in particular the Paris Agreement⁴⁵ - show the great effort by the European Union and its Member States want to fight climate change. However, these actions could stop by new environmental policy of Trump Administration, especially after that, on 28 March, released an executive order that touched every environmental action taken by the previous administration. This order, together with other measures adopted by Trump administration on environmental field, might have an impact also in Europe causing climate change wouldn't be considered a priority in decision making procedures.

⁴³ The European climate adaptation platform (Climate-ADAPT), launched in 2012, supports adaptation policy in Europe through, for example projects and case studies' database and information on adaptation action at all levels.

⁴⁴ For more information on “*Mayors Adapt*”, see www.covenantofmayors.eu/Adaptation.html.

⁴⁵ For the assessment of implication of the Paris Agreement, refer to eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52016DC0110&from=IT.