



## **CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARATIONS IN THE EU:**

AN ANALYSIS OF EU, NATIONAL  
AND LOCAL LEVEL GOVERNANCE

Candice Howarth, Ina Drouven,  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The world has seen a proliferation of climate emergency declarations as political statements acknowledging the scientific consensus on the state of climate change and the need for urgent action to address the issue. In November 2019, the European Parliament declared a climate emergency, acknowledging the existing scientific and political information relating to climate change and of the 27 member countries of the EU, nine have declared a climate emergency.

In this report, we assess the landscape of the climate emergency narrative across the EU in 2020 and reflect on how multi-level governance on climate action at the EU, national and local levels is reflected and represented in the declaration of emergencies.

### **European nations declaring a climate emergency**

Our analysis of declarations made in France, the UK, Spain and Ireland demonstrate that these have a similar purpose, to be a political declaration of support for accelerating action to tackle climate change. Nonetheless, the declarations themselves do not legislate for an 'emergency response' to tackle climate change in the same way that governments have responded to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Some declarations (e.g. France, Spain) were part of a wider effort to advance legislation and plan to tackle the twin ecological and climate crises whereas others (e.g. Ireland, UK) were not accompanied by explicit policy changes.

Who made the motion for a declaration also varied. The French, Spanish and Irish declarations were proposed by members of the incumbent governments, while the UK's declaration was tabled by the Labour opposition. In France's case, the first climate emergency declaration that was proposed was rejected by the National Assembly. In contrast to the rejected French declaration, the UK, Irish and Spanish declarations do not contain any explicit criticism of the incumbent government's ability to tackle the climate crisis.

Our analysis of the United Kingdom, the first nation to declare a climate emergency, highlighted a call for more ambitious action on climate change. Over 400 local councils have declared a climate emergency, and many of these featured an acknowledgement of the disconnect between local and national government ambition, recognition of the need for resources by local governments, a stronger role for networks to support implementation, calls for public consultation and participation, and in a minority of cases, incorporation of adaptation measures.

Our deeper analysis of France's emergency declaration landscape revealed that, in addition to the national declaration, 25 local councils in France have declared a climate emergency.

Many of the local climate emergency declarations exhibited similar themes to those found in the UK, such as promoting local partnerships, and focusing on CO<sub>2</sub> reduction as well as adaptation and mitigation measures. Adaptation to climate impacts was more prominent throughout French declarations with 48% of local declarations referencing adaptation directly.

### **European nations with no declaration of a climate emergency**

Of those that have not declared a climate emergency, our analysis focused on Finland, Lithuania and Germany which exhibit relatively different levels of ambition and engagement on climate policy while all decided not to declare a climate emergency.

Whilst some countries, such as Finland have not declared an emergency, the level of ambition represented by their 2035 net zero target suggests the government has opted for 'deeds' over 'words'. In comparison, Lithuania faces the challenge of integrating ambitious climate policy with social and economic development. Meanwhile, Germany has ratcheted up its ambition and action on climate change, however, it has not complemented the increasingly ambitious climate action throughout

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the EU with its own national climate emergency declaration.

Our deeper analysis of Germany showed that although it has not declared a national climate emergency, over 100 climate emergency declarations have been made by local councils. These declarations exhibited some of the same themes (local focus, few local to national or regional demands, disconnect in local and national ambitions) found in the local declarations throughout the UK and France. Specifically mentioned as part of these was an intention to limit greenhouse gas emissions going forward, with few including any adaptation measures.

However, few local regions mentioned the implementation or release of a climate strategy based on the declaration.

### **A lack of focus on adaptation**

Climate emergency declarations and subsequent plans prioritise mitigation and reduction of emissions, compared to adaptation to the physical risks of global warming. Despite increasing global awareness, emissions are predicted to keep rising for the foreseeable future, suggesting that adapting to climate change will also need to be part of a comprehensive plan to tackle it.

Failure to account for adaptation risks restricting adaptation-related funding and can lead to public awareness issues.

The context in which some climate emergency declarations were passed appears to correlate with references to adaptation where in some countries (e.g. Spain and France) it is mentioned directly as part of wider efforts to advance environmental regulation, whereas the declarations made by the UK and Ireland do not reference adaptation in their motion texts.

## Policy recommendations: Framing of climate emergency declarations

- The climate emergency declaration texts could be **more ambitious in setting (or calling for) legally binding goals** with accompanying dates by which these targets are achieved, alongside precise indicators by which to measure progress.
- To facilitate **consistency** within countries, the important role that local leadership plays in forming local partnerships and helping to drive national ambition could help drive further and future action.
- **Climate adaptation** needs to be considered in an appropriate way to mirror the level of ambition on mitigation in the climate emergency declarations and related targets, with this in mind declarations should give greater attention to addressing climate adaptation than they currently do.
- **More clarity on funding sources** is needed in the motion texts in order to support climate action plans and targets and ensure a sustainable and just process.

## Policy recommendations: Ramping up ambition to deliver declaration targets

- Identify tools and processes to ensure **accountability** for achieving sub-goals (e.g. through working with stakeholders and end-users) and monitor and evaluate progress periodically.
- Allow space for **public discussion, engagement and involvement** throughout the planning and delivery process of climate action targets.
- Keeping **plans locally focused**, with equal opportunities for partnership to create political support as well as facilitating input from national governments.
- Recognise that a **lack of climate emergency declaration**, or lack of consistency between national, regional and local targets does not mean lack of or ineffective plan.
- Look **beyond national borders** for sources of funding.
- **Acknowledge and address issues around data access and availability** to inform climate action plans.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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The world has seen a proliferation of declarations of climate emergencies as political statements acknowledging the scientific consensus on the state of climate change and the need for urgent action to address the issue. The first emergency declaration was made in 2016 in Darebin, Australia, followed by Hoboken, New Jersey and Berkley, California in 2017. Events in late 2018 and throughout the Spring and Summer of 2019 contributed to the conditions which led many European member states, and the European parliament itself, to declare a climate emergency.

In late 2018, UNEP<sup>1</sup> and IPCC<sup>2</sup> reports laid bare the extent of international inaction on climate change and showed that staying within 1.5°C of warming would require an unprecedented mobilisation of resources. The declaration of climate emergencies nationally and locally often makes reference to this scientific evidence and the ambition to act on this evidence varies across the declarations. In particular there appears to be greater emphasis on targets to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions (mitigation) compared to responding to the physical risks of climate change (adaptation). We explore this in greater detail in the report particularly as, in recent years extreme weather events such as heatwaves and floods have increased across Europe and climate change is impacting lives today, calling for more ambitious efforts on adaptation.

The narrative around climate emergencies has grown and this has often helped steer dialogue on the need and recognition for more climate action at the local, regional and national levels. Nevertheless the lack of a climate emergency declaration is not necessarily synonymous with no or little climate action. While the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a re-deployment of resources originally designated for climate action to respond to climate emergency declarations, energy continues to build to address the climate emergency.

In this report we assess the landscape of the climate emergency narrative across the EU in 2020 and reflect on how multi-level governance on climate action at the EU, national and local levels is reflected and represented in the declaration

of emergencies. We present analysis of the landscape of climate emergency declarations at three levels of governance: the EU, national and local scales (see Annex for detail of approach undertaken). The report has three interwoven foci:

**Focus 1 (Section 3):** Presenting analysis of the landscape of climate emergency declarations across the EU.

**Focus 2 (Section 5):** Deep dive of three nations with a focus on the scope and ambition of their declarations with a selection of local case studies highlighting the link between local, regional and central government.

**Focus 3:** Exploring where adaptation fits in climate emergency declarations and action.

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1 <https://www.unep.org/emissions-gap-report-2020>

2 <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

## 2. LANDSCAPE OF CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARATIONS IN THE EU

### The emergence of climate emergency declarations

All EU member states are covered by the EU commission climate emergency declaration (28/11/2019) and the incoming 'EU Climate Law'<sup>3</sup> envisions that the EU block will be net-zero by 2050. Of the 27 member countries of the EU, nine as well as the European Parliament, have declared a climate emergency. Table 1 summarises commitments to climate change made by individual countries within the EU in 2020 and below we provide an overview of a selection of countries that have declared an emergency and others that haven't. Emergency declaration texts from the European Parliament, the UK, Ireland, France and Spain were examined at a high level followed by a deeper analysis into the landscape in France, Germany and the UK. Net-zero dates are included where they are enshrined in law, and separately, where they are yet to be formalised in legislation, but are at least in a policy document yet to be ratified. Breaking climate change ambitions down in this way helps to understand the level of commitment that member states have made to tackling climate change, irrespective of the broader target set by the EU.

**Table 1:** List of climate Emergency Declarations made by EU member states as well as the EU parliament and the UK with their associated targets, plans and strategies

<sup>3</sup> European Commission, European Climate Law, (2020) [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/eu-climate-action/law\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/eu-climate-action/law_en)

Country	Declaration	Date of declaration	Net-Zero target (in law)	Net-Zero target (proposed)	Adaptation strategy (most recent)
Italy	Yes (by the senate)	11.06.2020	No	No	Plan produced in 2017, <a href="#">link</a> .
Eu Parliament	<a href="#">Yes</a>	28.11.2019	No	2050	Plan produced in 2013, <a href="#">link</a> . This page also includes a list of evaluations of each member state's NAP.
Austria	<a href="#">Yes</a>	26.09.2019	No	2040	Plan produced in 2012, <a href="#">link</a> .
France	Yes	27.06.2019	2050	NA	Plan produced in 2014, <a href="#">link</a> .
Ireland	Yes	10.05.2019	No	2050	Plan produced in 2020, <a href="#">link</a> .
Lithuania	Yes	3.07.2019	No	No	Plan produced in 2013, <a href="#">link</a> .
Spain	Yes	21.01.2020	No	2050	Plan produced in 2006, <a href="#">link</a> .
Malta	Yes	22.10.2019	No	No	Plan produced in 2012, <a href="#">link</a> .
Portugal	Yes	07.05.2019	No	2050	Plan produced in 2015, <a href="#">link</a> .
United Kingdom	Yes	01.05.2019	2050	NA	England: <a href="#">link</a> ; Scotland: <a href="#">link</a> ; Wales: <a href="#">link</a> ; Northern Ireland: <a href="#">link</a>
Belgium	No	No	No	No	Plan produced in 2010, <a href="#">link</a> .
Bulgaria	No	No	No	No	Plan produced in 2019, <a href="#">link</a> .
Croatia	No	No	No	No	Plan produced in 2017, <a href="#">link</a> .
Cyprus	No	No	No	No	Plan produced in 2019, <a href="#">link</a> .
Czech Republic	No	No	No	No	Plan produced in 2015, <a href="#">link</a> .
Denmark	No	No	70% by 2030, net-zero by 2050	NA	Plan produced in 2012, <a href="#">link</a> .
Estonia	No	No	No	No	Plan produced in 2020, <a href="#">link</a> .
Finland	No	No	No	2035	Plan produced in 2014, <a href="#">link</a> .
Germany	No	No	No	2050	Plan produced in 2015, <a href="#">link</a> .
Greece	No	No	No	No	Plan produced in 2016, <a href="#">link</a> .
Hungary	No	No	2050	NA	Plan produced in 2018, <a href="#">link</a> .
Latvia	No	No	No	No	Plan produced in 2019, <a href="#">link</a> .
Luxembourg	No	No	No	No	Plan produced in 2018, <a href="#">link</a> .
Netherlands	No	No	No	No	Plan produced in 2016, <a href="#">link</a> .
Poland	No	No	No	No	Plan produced in 2013, <a href="#">link</a> .
Romania	No	No	No	No	Plan produced 2016, <a href="#">link</a> .
Slovakia	No	No	No	No	Plan produced 2018, <a href="#">link</a> .
Slovenia	No	No	No	2050	Plan produced in 2016, <a href="#">link</a>
Sweden	No	No	2045	NA	Plan produced in 2017, <a href="#">link</a> .

## A lack of focus on adaptation

The analysis presented in this report highlights a prioritisation of efforts in the climate emergency declaration and subsequent plans on mitigation and reduction of emissions, compared to adaptation to the physical risks of climate change. Within the broader context of climate action, in order to stay within a 1.5 or 2 degree warming, and to reach net zero by 2050, urgent ambitious action on mitigation is required. As a result, political attention has primarily focused on this and ambitious net zero targets have been set. There is no indication that emissions have peaked yet and, despite increasing global awareness, emissions are predicted to keep rising for the foreseeable future<sup>4</sup>, suggesting that adapting to climate change will also need to be part of a comprehensive plan which includes both mitigation and adaptation action. This will need to be addressed in the climate emergency declarations as many declarations fail to mention adaptation. Declarations in many cases have resulted in subsequent projects and failure to reference adaptation risks leading to consequences such as restrictions on funding and public awareness issues.

## Overview: The European Parliament

On the 28th of November 2019, the European Parliament declared a climate emergency with the declaration passing with 429 votes in favour, 225 against and 19 abstentions. The declaration begins by acknowledging the existing scientific and political information relating to climate change. Following this, declaration makes three notes:  
“A. whereas immediate and ambitious action is

crucial to limiting global warming to 1,5° C and avoiding massive biodiversity loss;  
B. whereas this action must be science-based and must involve citizens and all sectors of society and the economy, including industry, in a socially balanced and sustainable way; whereas it must support the competitiveness of our economies and be accompanied by strong social and inclusive measures to ensure a fair and equitable transition that supports job creation, while respecting the need for a high standard of welfare and high quality jobs and training;  
C. whereas no emergency should ever be used to erode democratic institutions or to undermine fundamental rights; whereas all measures will always be adopted through a democratic process.”<sup>5</sup>

These notes situate the climate emergency declaration in the existing scientific, social, economic and political conditions. Point C is unique to the European Parliament declaration, and explicitly acknowledges that the climate emergency declaration itself does not justify the use of extraordinary powers to address the climate emergency. In combination with the declaration, the parliament calls on the European Commission, Member States and global actors to take the necessary actions to tackle climate change. It does not specify how this will be addressed and the balance of focus and action on mitigation or adaptation measures. Furthermore, the declaration urges the European Commission to align all policies with 1.5°C of warming and points to the need for the European Parliament to reduce its own operational carbon footprint (mostly generated from emissions created by representatives travel between the parliaments’ seats in Strasbourg and Brussels)<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Environment Programme, Emission Gap Report 2019, (2019)

<sup>5</sup> European Parliament, European Parliament resolution of 28 November 2019 on the climate and environment emergency, (2019), [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2019-0078\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2019-0078_EN.html)

<sup>6</sup> The Parliament, MEPs reiterate call for single seat for Parliament, (2019), <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/news/article/meps-reiterate-call-for-single-seat-for-parliament>

## Overview: United Kingdom

In May 2019, the UK became the first nation to declare a climate emergency, although the devolved governments in Scotland and Wales had made declarations on in April respectively. The declaration was tabled in the Houses of Parliament by the Labour party, on an 'opposition day' that was dedicated to environmental issues. At the time, Extinction Rebellion (XR) protests were widespread across towns and cities in the UK and XR representatives gained an audience with ministers in the incumbent Conservative government. At the meeting, the then Environment Secretary, Michael Gove MP, refused to declare a climate and ecological emergency or name a date that the government would reach net-zero by. However, the meeting gained attention in the press<sup>7,8,9,10</sup> leading to the motion passing without opposition<sup>11</sup>.

The declaration text itself is relatively short, and refers to both the climate emergency and the environmental or ecological emergency but contains no legally binding actions for the government. First the text bases the decision to declare a climate emergency in the most recent scientific evidence, specifically, the IPCC Special Report on 1.5°C, then, the report 'recognises' the impacts that climate change will have on the UK and criticises the state of funding for environmental protection. Following this, the text 'calls' on the government to adopt a series of actions to tackle both the climate crisis and ecological decline. This includes a call to raise ambition on climate above the 2050 target more specifically to support the rollout of green technologies. Lastly, the text calls for production of a plan to restore the UK's natural environment and shift to a circular economy. Although the declaration text recognises the impact of climate change such as diminished water availability, flooding and wildfire damage it does not make any reference to climate adaptation; its focus is exclusively on mitigation (similarly, declarations by Scotland, Wales and

Northern Ireland do not mention adaptation). In May 2019, the UK's Committee on Climate Change (CCC) recommended that the UK should increase the ambition of its net-zero target<sup>12</sup> and subsequently, on the 27th June 2019, the UK raised its ambition to be net-zero by 2050 instead of reducing 1990 emission levels by 80% by 2050<sup>13</sup>.

## Overview: Ireland

On the 9th May 2019, Ireland became the second country in the world to declare a climate emergency. The motion was tabled at the Oireachtas by the Conservative Republican party Fianna Fail and was passed without a vote. The declaration was announced and made with very limited media attention. In part, the decision to make a climate emergency declaration was informed by the Climate Action Report from the 2016 Ireland citizens assembly<sup>14</sup>. The Irish declaration includes no content or peripheral information, does not mention adaptation and the text contains no legally binding

7 ITV News, ITV News - Apr 30th - Extinction Rebellion meets Environment Secretary Michael Gove in London, (2019), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wpahet-KZxQ&ab\\_channel=ExtinctionRebellion](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wpahet-KZxQ&ab_channel=ExtinctionRebellion)

8 BBC News, BBC News - Apr 30th - Clare Farrell talks about Michael Gove MP meeting - Extinction Rebellion, (2019), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijeA-21Xb2Z0&ab\\_channel=ExtinctionRebellion](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijeA-21Xb2Z0&ab_channel=ExtinctionRebellion)

9 Good Morning Britain, Was Michael Gove Right to Meet Members of the Extinction Rebellion?, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHgHc7wwKDo&ab\\_channel=GoodMorningBritain](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHgHc7wwKDo&ab_channel=GoodMorningBritain)

10 The Independent, Climate change activists speak out on Gove meeting, (2019), <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/extinction-rebellion-climate-change-london-protests-michael-gove-meeting-a8893336.html>

11 The Guardian, MPs endorse Corbyn's call to declare a climate emergency, (2019), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/may/01/declare-formal-climate-emergency-before-its-too-late-corbyn-warns>

12 CCC, Net Zero The UK's contribution to stopping global warming, (2019), <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Net-Zero-The-UKs-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming.pdf>

13 UK Government, UK becomes first major economy to pass net zero emissions law, (2019), <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-becomes-first-major-economy-to-pass-net-zero-emissions-law>

14 BBC, Climate change: Ireland declares climate emergency, 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-48221080>

action for the Irish government to enact. Instead, the act enshrines ‘climate emergency’ into law with amendments to Irish law (new text underlined):

“The Dail Eareann declares a climate emergency and accepts and endorses the report of the Joint Committee on Climate Action entitled ‘Climate Change: A cross party consensus on climate action’, copies of which were laid before Dail Eareann on 29th of March 2019 and declares a climate emergency and calls for the Citizens’ Assembly to examine how the State can improve its response to the issue of Biodiversity loss”

Ireland is in the process of enshrining net-zero by 2050 into law, and a draft bill was published on the 7th October 2020<sup>15</sup>. In addition to this, the bill sets carbon budgets running from 2021-2035, mandates an annually revised climate action plan and improves the input of advice and introduces political accountability to meet climate change targets. Additionally, the bill recognizes the need for adaptation by mandating the climate action plan to include both mitigation and adaptation measures and advocating for “provisions to streamline the preparation of future Sectoral Adaptation Plans”. The relationship between Ireland’s decision to raise ambition to tackle climate change and their climate emergency declaration is not direct or clear. However, the 2019 climate emergency declaration was followed by the promise from the Irish government to implement a significant revision of its strategy to tackle climate change.

## Overview: France

On the 28th June 2019, the French National Assembly voted to pass an Energy-Climate bill, within which, Article 1 declares a climate and ecological emergency. The Energy-Climate bill also enshrined a 2050 net-zero target into French law, and raises France’s ambitions in terms of reducing consumption and developing hydrogen within a ‘green budget’ and a 5-year climate planning law.

The declaration followed a spring and summer of climate action in France and an earlier climate emergency declaration, proposed to the National Assembly on the 14th of May 2019 which did not pass. Notably, this declaration made explicit criticisms of President Macron for an apparent contradiction between ambitious environmental plans and his relationship with large multinational corporations.

References to climate change adaptation can be found throughout the bill, demonstrating an acknowledgement of the importance of adaptation by the French government. Testament to this is the inclusion of climate change adaptation and resilience experts in the formation of the new ‘Haut Conseil du Climat’. However, in comparing climate emergency declarations it is worth noting that the declaration is part of an extended document rather than a declaration in its own right which may leave more room for adaptation to be addressed.

The Minister of Ecological Transition, Francois de Rugy described the climate emergency declaration in France as “a political declaration” and situated the decision to emphasise new-found urgency to tackle climate change in support for the climate emergency declarations from the Pope and the UN<sup>16</sup>. Since the declaration, France has legislated on a “multi-year energy programme” and a national “low carbon strategy” which outline France’s priorities for reaching net-zero before 2050<sup>17</sup>.

15 Government of the Republic of Ireland, Government publishes new climate law which commits Ireland to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, (2020), <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/aecb3-government-publishes-new-climate-law-which-commits-ireland-to-net-zero-carbon-emissions-by-2050/>

16 Novethic, 2019. Projet de loi Energie-Climat: Les Députés Décretent à L’Unanimité L’Urgence Écologique et Climatique. Retrieved from: <https://www.novethic.fr/actualite/environnement/climat/isr-rse/projet-de-loi-energie-climat-les-deputes-decretent-a-l-unaninite-l-urgence-ecologique-et-climatique-147384.html>

17 Grantham Research Institute, 2020. France’s Integrated Energy and Climate Plan. Retrieved from: <https://climate-laws.org/geographies/france/policies/france-s-integrated-energy-and-climate-plan>

## Overview: Spain

In September 2019, Spanish political parties debated and approved declaring a climate emergency in Spain's Congreso De Los Diputados and on the 21st of January 2020, Spain's executive formalised the declaration of a climate emergency<sup>18</sup>. The final declaration addresses both climate change mitigation and adaptation and among the five actions to be implemented within the first 100 days it mandates the government to produce a second national adaptation plan with a series of indicators to measure the impact of climate change.

The January 2020 declaration was accompanied by the announcement of Spain's steps to reach net-zero, including a 2050 net-zero target<sup>19</sup>. Furthermore, the declaration was combined with the first 100 days of action under the new coalition government between Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) and Unidas Podemos. The declaration included the commitment to fulfill 5 of 30 actions within the first 100 days of office which include setting a plan, increasing public participation, ensuring a just transition and addressing Spain's relative vulnerability to climate change impacts. On 19 May 2020, the Council of Ministers approved the Bill on Climate Change and the Energy Transition, and the Spanish government approved the bill on the 3 June 2020<sup>20</sup>.

18 Congreso de Los Diputados, 2019. El Pleno acoge la sesión de control al Gobierno, con las preguntas y debate de interpellaciones urgentes. Retrieved from: [https://www.congreso.es/web/guest/notas-de-prensa?p\\_id=notasprensa&p\\_p\\_lifecycle=0&p\\_p\\_state=normal&p\\_p\\_mode=view&notasprensa\\_mvcPath=detalle&notasprensa\\_notaid=337](https://www.congreso.es/web/guest/notas-de-prensa?p_id=notasprensa&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&notasprensa_mvcPath=detalle&notasprensa_notaid=337)

19 Gobierno de España. (2020). ACUERDO DE CONSEJO DE MINISTROS POR EL QUE SE APRUEBA LA DECLARACIÓN DEL GOBIERNO ANTE LA EMERGENCIA CLIMÁTICA Y AMBIENTAL.

20 Mourenza, J.R. (2020). The Spanish Government approves a Bill on Climate Change and the Energy Transition: analysis of the main aspects. Herbert Smith Freehills. Retrieved from: <https://hsfnotes.com/energy/2020/06/03/the-spanish-government-approves-a-bill-on-climate-change-and-the-energy-transition-analysis-of-the-main-aspects/>

21 For one council the original motion text could not be found. To ensure a conservative estimate this declaration was counted as not referencing adaptation.

## Analysis and comparison of national climate emergency declarations

Between the four European nations as well as the European Parliament that have declared climate emergencies, the declarations serve the same purpose: as a political declaration of support for an acceleration in action to tackle climate change. The declarations themselves do not legislate for an 'emergency response' to tackle climate change in the same way that governments have responded to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The French and Spanish declarations were part of a wider effort to advance legislation and plans to tackle the twin ecological and climate crises. By comparison, the Irish and UK declarations were not accompanied by explicit policy changes. In the case of the UK, the government had already legislated to raise its ambition to meet net-zero by 2050, instead of 'at least' by 80%. The context in which these declarations were passed also appears to correlate with references to adaptation. Spain and France who declared a climate emergency as part of wider efforts to advance environmental regulation address adaptation directly. In contrast to this, the free standing declarations made by the UK and Ireland do not reference adaptation in their motion texts. In Germany, 19%<sup>21</sup> of local declarations referenced adaptation compared to the 48% in France and 12% in the UK. With this in mind, domestic frameworks for adaptation are likely to impact this: in the case of the UK, its Climate Change Act lays the groundwork on adaptation as framework legislation whereas Spain, for example, does not yet have a framework law and France's Climate and Energy transition law does not address adaptation.

The French, Spanish and Irish declarations were both proposed by members of the incumbent governments, while the UK's declaration was tabled by the Labour opposition.

## Select analysis of European nations that have not declared a climate emergency

### Overview: Finland

Finland has not declared a climate emergency, however, the incumbent government is working towards formalising the EU's most ambitious net-zero target (see Table 1). Upon being elected, Sanna Marin's government set out a programme of actions which promises to change Finland's existing climate change legislation from 80% reduction in emissions on 1990 levels by 2050 to a new target of net-zero by 2035. The legislation was reviewed and consulted on over the summer of 2020 and is due to be proposed to Finland's parliament in Spring 2021<sup>22</sup>. This target will make Finland the most ambitious nation for climate action in comparison to its Scandinavian neighbours, Europe, and with other OECD nations worldwide.

However, Finland did not elect to declare a climate and environment emergency alongside the government's decision to raise ambition to tackle climate change. By comparison, both Spain and France's governments made the decision to declare a climate emergency in tandem with the promise to raise ambitions on tackling the climate and environment emergencies. The Finnish Prime Minister, Sanna Marin, does not refer to climate change in emergency language in major speeches on climate change suggesting<sup>23</sup> the Finnish government may instead be focusing on action through the 2035 target.

The local climate action movement among regional or local governments in Finland is not well established, however, there are examples of local leadership in action to tackle the climate and environment emergencies. The local government of Finland's capital city, Helsinki, declared a climate emergency in September 2020<sup>24</sup>, and the City of Turku has committed to net-zero by 2029 with a specific focus on using a circular economy approach to support this shift<sup>25</sup>. Furthermore, smaller towns in

Finland are pioneering ambitious schemes such as, the town of Il, which has cut emissions by 80%<sup>26</sup>, and Lahti, where the local government has introduced an app 'CitiCAP' which allows residents to track their CO2 emissions and earn financial rewards for their efforts<sup>27</sup>.

### Overview: Lithuania

The previous Lithuanian government, which governed between December 2016 and December 2020, did not declare a climate emergency. The centre-right coalition government, which entered office in December 2020, has not indicated whether it will declare a climate emergency. Currently, Lithuania's 2030 emissions reduction targets (on 2005 emissions) are (i) to reduce emissions from EU ETS industry by 43%, in line with EU policy, and (ii) to reduce emissions outside the EU ETS by 9%, EU policy is to reduce emissions in this area by 30%<sup>28</sup>. Lithuania's current emissions trajectory suggests that without major changes, the nation will miss this target by 15%, leading to a rise in emissions by

22 Ympäristöministeriö Ministeriet, 2020. Reform of the Climate Change Act. Retrieved from: <https://ym.fi/en/the-reform-of-the-climate-change-act>

23 Finnish Government, (2020). Prime Minister Sanna Marin's speech at the Climate Ambition Summit 12.12.2020. Retrieved from: <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-/10616/prime-minister-sanna-marin-s-speech-at-the-climate-ambition-summit-12.12.2020>

24 Helsinki Government, 2020. Helsinki declared climate emergency. Retrieved from: <https://www.hel.fi/uutiset/en/kaupunginkanslia/helsinki-declared-climate-emergency>

25 ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability), 2021. Circular Turku. Retrieved from: [https://www.iclei.org/en/Circular\\_Turku.html](https://www.iclei.org/en/Circular_Turku.html)

26 Prudent Press Agency, 2021. Finland: Climate protection in miniature. Retrieved from: <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.prudentpressagency.com/finland-climate-protection-in-miniature-tagesschau-de/&sa=D&source=editors&u-st=1612716596430000&usq=AOvWaw2eq7tOglYerYxYNHLYAKq1>

27 Urban Innovation Actions, 2020. CitiCap: City Cap and Trade co-created. Retrieved from: <https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/lahti>

28 Lithuanian Government, 2020. National Energy and Climate Action Plan. Retrieved from: [https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/lt\\_final\\_necp\\_main\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/lt_final_necp_main_en.pdf)

6% by 2030 based on 2005 levels<sup>29</sup>. The Lithuanian government has indicated that more ambitious policy is dependent on funding from the EU and national sources, meaning that a fundamental shift in focus is uncertain<sup>30</sup>.

### Overview: Germany

Germany has not declared a climate emergency, however, it does have national legislation to tackle climate change, 'Klimaschutzgesetz', a National Energy and Climate Plan and has a proposed emissions reductions target of 55% by 2030 on 2005 levels<sup>31</sup>. Germany's original 2030 emissions reduction target was to reduce emissions by 38% on 2005 levels by 2030<sup>32</sup>. However, Germany's existing policies and measures outlined in the Germany's National Energy and Climate Action Plan are not on track to achieve this target<sup>33,34</sup>. However there are signs of progress to phase out coal by 2038 wehre, in 2020, coal's share of the energy mix fell sharply by 6 points to 17.5%<sup>35</sup>.

### Analysis and comparison of selection of countries without national climate emergency declarations

Finland, Lithuania and Germany possess relatively different levels of ambition and engagement on climate policy while sharing the common policy to not declare a climate emergency. In Finland, the level of ambition represented by the 2035 net zero target suggests the government's approach has opted for 'deeds' over 'words'. In comparison, Lithuania faces the challenge of integrating ambitious climate policy with social and economic development. Consequently, a step change in Lithuania's ambition to tackle climate change is uncertain, and to some extent dependent on support from the European Union. Similarly to the other EU major economies, since 2019, Germany has ratcheted up its ambition and action on climate change. However, unlike France, the UK, Italy and Spain, Germany has not complemented the increasingly ambitious climate action throughout the EU with a national climate emergency declaration, which could match EU ambition and the multi-level relationships involved.

29 European Commission, 2020. Lithuania: Summary of the Commission assessment of the draft National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030. Retrieved from: [https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/necp\\_factsheet\\_lt\\_final.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/necp_factsheet_lt_final.pdf)

30 Ibid

31 Bundesregierung, 2021. Climate Action. Retrieved from: <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/issues/climate-action>

32 European Commission, 2020. Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan. Retrieved from: [https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/de\\_final\\_necp\\_main\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/de_final_necp_main_en.pdf)

33 European Commission, 2020. Germany: Summary of the Commission assessment of the draft National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030. Retrieved from: [https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/necp\\_factsheet\\_de\\_final.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/necp_factsheet_de_final.pdf)

34 Climate Action Tracker, 2021. Germany: Summary. Retrieved from: <https://climateactiontracker.org/countries/germany/>

35 Fraunhofer ISE, 2020. German Net Electricity Generation in First Half of 2020: Renewables Reach Record Share of 55.8 Percent. Retrieved from: <https://www.ise.fraunhofer.de/en/press-media/press-releases/2020/net-energy-production-first-half-of-2020.html>

### 3. NATIONAL LEVEL ANALYSIS

#### Case study 1: The United Kingdom

Local government declarations in the UK featured several of the following five themes: (i) acknowledgement of the disconnect between local and national government ambition; (ii) need for resources by local governments; (iii) networks of other organisations to support implementation; (iv) public consultation and participation; (v) incorporation of adaptation measures. Three local governments in the UK, found to be representative of the many local declarations where explored: Nottingham, Glasgow, and Cardiff. While each of these local government declarations are unique in how they set out local plans and strategies, one overall key theme was present in each of their declarations: focus on local issues and plans. Furthermore, only some of the initiatives called for greater collaboration or powers from national governments, with most focussing on local issues and solutions. Additionally, out of the 327 councils that have declared climate emergency, just under 12% reference adaptation<sup>36</sup>. However, this does not necessarily imply a disinterest for adaptation (many councils have local adaptation plans in place) but rather demonstrates a disproportionate focus on mitigation compared to adaptation within emergency declarations.

#### Nottingham City Council

Nottingham City Council (Nottingham) declared a climate emergency on January 13, 2020 and subsequently released a carbon neutral plan in June 2020<sup>37</sup>. Its declaration and plan featured each of the key themes mentioned above. Although the declaration does not mention adaptation directly, the carbon neutral plan dedicates a whole section to resilience and adaptation. Like many local declarations in the UK, Nottingham's declaration and subsequent carbon neutral plan featured a carbon neutral target of 2028<sup>38</sup>. This highlights a disconnect

in ambition between local government and national ambition, with the UK government's 2050 carbon neutral target. This is further highlighted throughout Nottingham's carbon neutral plan, where it focuses on five areas of carbon reduction, either through measures of carbon removal or resilience and adaptation. Under each of its five areas of carbon reduction, it features asks or ways in which the national government can help the city in meeting its goals. These center around increased support or funding, such as reviewing existing regulations, implementing additional policies, or providing funding for an initiative.

The city's carbon neutral plan also focuses on collaboration and stakeholder involvement throughout the report. The launch of the city's plan was closely tied with its Green Partnership, involving organisations across private and public sectors<sup>39</sup>. Under each of the report's objectives and actions, it also features actions which the city could take in partnership, such as working with universities, businesses and citizens, and key partners to facilitate the development of initiatives and plans for meeting its objectives. Public consultation and citizen and business consultation was also used to inform the development of its carbon neutral plan with a citywide consultation running from January to March 2020<sup>40</sup>. Objectives and actions in the city's plan also focused on public participation and consultation, such as commitments for continued information sharing from the city and working alongside citizens. Incorporation of adaptation measures can be found throughout the report, as for each of its five carbon reduction objectives the city also considered both carbon removal (carbon sequestration, capture and offsetting) and adaptation measures.

36 <https://pcancities.org/trends-local-climate-action-uk>  
37 Nottingham City Council, Carbon Neutral Nottingham, (2020)  
38 Nottingham City Council, Carbon Neutral Nottingham, (2020)  
39 Nottingham City Council, Carbon Neutral Nottingham, (2020)  
40 Sam Mehmet, "Nottingham launches public consultation as it declares climate emergency", Intelligent Transport, January 15, 2020, [intelligenttransport.com](https://www.intelligenttransport.com)

The report's section on resilience and adaptation, states both play a key role going forward and must be considered alongside actions to reduce carbon emissions. For example, the report states a key objective going forward is to "ensure adaptation to climate change has a strong foundation in future policies"<sup>41</sup>.

### **Glasgow City Council**

Glasgow City Council (Glasgow) declared a climate emergency in May 2019, becoming the third council in Scotland to do so<sup>42</sup>. In August 2019, Glasgow released its carbon neutral commitment for 2030 or sooner, 20 years ahead of the UK government commitment and 15 years ahead of Scottish government's commitment. Like Nottingham, this declaration is a representation of local ambition coming ahead of national ambition.

Prior to its declaration, Glasgow established a Climate Emergency Working Group, which featured representation from all four political groups at the council, citizen activist groups and the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce<sup>43</sup>. The working group released a report with 61 recommendations for actions the city can take which were used by the city to inform its Climate Emergency Implementation Plan (CEIP). The city opened public consultation via online questionnaire on the CEIP, demonstrating efforts for public consultation and participation.

The CEIP features five key themes and 52 action items for it to meet its carbon neutral goal, with a local focus on many of the action items. However, many of the objectives also identify proposed partners who could support the development of actions, including the Scottish government, city stakeholders, universities, and non-government organisations. These are viewed as potential partners and not necessary partners upon which the success of the plan depends on. For example, action seven involves the establishment of a framework of engagement with local energy co-

operatives, and identifies the proposed partners as the Scottish Government and Sustainable Glasgow<sup>44</sup>.

Finally, the CEIP does not only focus on reducing CO2 and mitigating climate change but also advocates for adaptation measures in order to improve the city's resilience to climate change and address its unequal impacts on vulnerable communities. The climate emergency declaration in Glasgow is the only one of our three case studies in the UK that explicitly references adaptation in its motion text<sup>45</sup>. Though the CEIP does not include a separate section on adaptation, it is embedded throughout the plan and 5 out of the 52 actions directly relate to climate adaptation (e.g. item 42 which prescribes developing an "early warning system to prepare for extreme weather events", or item 47 which aims ensure resiliency of historical buildings).

### **Cardiff City Council**

Cardiff City Council (Cardiff) declared a climate emergency on March 28, 2019 and approved its initial strategy, One Planet Cardiff, on October 15, 2020<sup>46</sup>. At a high-level, the initial strategy seeks to establish a roadmap and action plan for the city and its citizens to meet the city's carbon neutral goal of 2030, identify opportunities for reframing the local economy, and define immediate opportunities and programmes to be addressed. It identifies seven areas of focus: housing and the built environment, energy, transport, green infrastructure and biodiversity, food, waste, and water.

41 Nottingham City Council, Carbon Neutral Nottingham, (2020), 47.

42 Elle Duffy, "Glasgow City Council declares climate emergency", Herald Scotland, May 16, 2019, [www.heraldsotland.com](http://www.heraldsotland.com)

43 Glasgow City Council, Climate Emergency Group sets out a path to carbon neutral Glasgow, 2019

44 Glasgow City Council, Climate Emergency Implementation Plan, 2020, 48

45 Glasgow City Council, Minutes of Glasgow City Council: Glasgow, 16 May 2019, 2019

The initial strategy provides an early idea of what could be contained in its final strategy and plan, due in Spring 2021. The initial strategy is locally focused, resulting in few mismatches and disconnects between local and national ambitions, and few identifications of what resources and additional powers are required to meet its plans. While the implementation of its final plan may require additional resources, it is not yet clear if the additional resources will be required from the city council or from the national government. The identification of and focus on seven local areas in its initial strategy highlights a focus on CO2 reduction/removal and mitigation. For example, the implementation of its 'District Heating System' will both reduce CO2 emissions and mitigate future emissions from buildings. Notably, the strategy only identifies few adaptation or resilience measures which coincides with a lack of reference to adaptation in the declaration text. Like other UK cities, however, Cardiff's carbon neutral goal of 2030 represents a more ambitious target than both the UK and Welsh government's carbon neutral targets.

Following the launch of its initial strategy, Cardiff launched a public consultation (October - December 2020) to seek feedback, hosting engagement events with key stakeholders throughout the consultation period<sup>47</sup>. Also identified in the strategy were initiatives focused on working with other stakeholders and partners, such as the Welsh government, schools and local authorities. Both of which demonstrate two other key themes identified: public consultations and networks of public, private and third sector organisations in the fulfillment of its strategy.

## Case study 2: France

As of December 2020, 25 local councils have declared a climate emergency in France. Many of the local climate emergency declarations exhibited several similar themes to those found in the

UK, such as promoting local partnerships, and focusing on CO2 reduction as well as adaptation and mitigation measures. Adaptation to climate impacts was more prominent throughout French declarations with 48% of local declarations referencing adaptation directly. This is possibly due to the incorporation of adaptation in the national declaration and the Senate's adaptation report published in May 2019 which is often referenced by the local declarations in support of declaring a climate emergency.

With regards to commitments and scope, local French declarations tended to focus less on public consultation to inform local decisions and initiatives and more on commitments to keeping the public informed and incorporating climate impacts in policies. However, little details were offered in the declarations as to how localities were to do either. Key differences were also found for the level of and approach to interaction and asks between local, regional and national governments. Several declarations, such as Mulhouse City Council's, focused their commitments to local initiatives and made no reference to regional or federal governments. In other declarations, councils such as Perpignan Municipal Council, committed to adopting the PCAET (translated to Territorial Plan for Climate, Air and Energy), a national policy focused on adaptation, reduction and mitigation measures mandatory for any authority with more than 20,000 inhabitants<sup>50</sup>. Other declarations, such as Strasbourg City Council's, focused more on the interaction between local and regional governments (or a 'metropole'), framing many of their commitments, scope and asks at a regional level rather than locally

<sup>46</sup> Cardiff City Council, Cabinet Meeting: 15 October 2020, 2020

<sup>47</sup> Cardiff City Council, Cardiff residents called on to join the 'One Planet' Challenge, 2020

<sup>48</sup> Based on data provided by 'climateemergency.uk' and cedamia.org"; excludes council declarations in French overseas territories

<sup>49</sup> For four councils the original motion text could not be found. To ensure a conservative estimate these were counted as not having references to adaptation.

and nationally. Overall, however, local French declarations made less requests and focused less on interaction with the federal government, compared to, for example, those in the UK.

### **Perpignan Municipal Council**

Perpignan Municipal Council (Perpignan) declared a climate emergency on September 19, 2019 and, alongside it, made several commitments, such as being carbon neutral by 2050, adopting the PCAET, and integrating the climate emergency into all of its public policies<sup>51</sup>. The adoption of the PCAET demonstrates some level of interaction between local and national government, albeit minimal and with few opportunities for additional interaction. Notably, the declaration demonstrates a commitment to adaptation and resilience planning. As such, the supporting evidence of the declaration includes the recent Senate report on climate adaptation in France which requires the forthcoming action plan to identify actions both to reduce CO2 emissions and adapt to climate change.

Following its declaration, Perpignan released the action plan for 2020-2023 in November 2019, featuring actions on: low carbon and resilient city; efficient public heritage; eco-responsible administration; associate and support local stakeholders in energy and climate initiatives<sup>52</sup>. Each key area involves many tasks or actions items and for each a timeline, budget, progress indicators and partners, a number of which keep a local focus, only sometimes looking to partner at a regional level or above. For example, several initiatives, such as those focusing on urban renewal and environmental planning mention partnering with national agencies (the ANRU) or regional departments (the DDTM). Unlike other local French declarations, the combination of adopting the PCAET and the opportunities for partnership through its climate plan provides more avenues for interaction between local and national governments.

The partners listed for initiatives in the climate plan include local partners, such as schools or third party organisations, creating more opportunities to reflect local ambitions and for involvement and dialogue. The plan and its initiatives are also to be audited by Cit'ergie (a management and labeling tool that helps local authorities with the implementation of climate-air-energy policies), raising the profile of the plan and its ambition. Lastly, one of the action items of the plan is to set up a working group which will develop a separate adaptation and resilience strategy for the city.

### **Strasbourg City Council**

Strasbourg City Council's climate declaration and climate plan demonstrates an interesting dynamic and interaction between local, regional and national governments. Strasbourg City Council (Strasbourg) declared a climate emergency on July 4, 2020 and, like many other cities, called for greater action and involvement from citizens, businesses and organisations<sup>53</sup>. Similarly to Perpignan, the declaration references the need for climate adaptation directly and calls for more financial resources to be dedicated to climate mitigation as well as adaptation, indicating a strong commitment to an inclusive approach to the climate emergency. The declaration was made following two years of consultations and thematic meetings (2017-2019), and the release of the 2030 climate plan ("Plan Climat 2030") by the 'eurometropole', the regional body consisting of the city and surrounding regions,

50 Government of France, Plans climat air energie territoriaux (PCAET), no date.

51 Perpignan Municipal Council, Adoption of a motion to declare a state of climate emergency (translated), 2019

52 Perpignan Municipal Council, Adoption de la stratégie climat-air-énergie 2020-2023 de Perpignan et demande de renouvellement de son label Cit'ergie, n.d. Retrieved from: <https://www.mairie-perpignan.fr/fr/download/file/fid/147986>

in December 2019<sup>54</sup>.

Strasbourg's climate declaration and the region's climate plan demonstrate a similar level of interaction with other French declarations, where local and regional (eurometropole) government's interact or are represented by a declaration or plan. The two allow for Strasbourg's declaration to make broader commitments and goals, and the plan to provide more concrete goals. For example, alongside its declaration, Strasbourg committed to gain greater understanding of climate change and its impacts, whereas the 2030 plan provides initial commitments such as developing a low emission vehicle zone and being powered by 100% renewable energy.

The combination of the declaration and the plan also incorporate different opportunities for cooperation and goals between levels. For example, alongside its declaration, Strasbourg stated a goal of cooperating with neighbouring territories to build regional resilience, but did not provide details on how it planned on achieving this<sup>55</sup>. In the eurometropole's climate plan, it makes several references to a united region or the region working together. These can be seen in both specific initiatives and as part of its evaluation scheme for the plan, where high-level goals and objectives at an international, national, regional and city level are outlined<sup>56</sup>.

At a national level, these evaluations consist of promoting regional goals and initiatives, and evaluating its PCAET against national trajectories.

### **Mulhouse City Council**

Mulhouse City Council (Mulhouse) declared a climate emergency in May 2019<sup>57</sup>. Alongside the declaration, the city made four future-oriented commitments, such as taking into account the impact on the climate and the environment in all of its activities and using the IPCC's reports as a guide for decision-making. Similar declarations, with a few commitments, can be commonly found in local

French declarations, but offer limited prospects for interaction between levels of government. Mulhouse, however, went further than most local declarations by calling on the french government to provide the public with comprehensive information on climate change, its causes and effects, as well as for national action to combat climate change<sup>58</sup>.

This additional request it made from the French government provides an initial avenue for asks and discussions between local and national governments. However, the declaration makes little mention of commitments for mitigation measures, does not address adaptation and does not set out further action through a climate plan or strategy. Furthermore, it provides little opportunity for discussion with or involvement of the public and regional governments.

### **Case study 3: Germany**

Although Germany has not declared a climate emergency on a national level, 106 climate emergency declarations have been made by local councils. These declarations exhibited some of the same themes (local focus, few local to national or regional demands, disconnect in local and national ambitions) found in the local declarations throughout the UK and France. Many declarations stated the intention to align with guidance set out by the IPCC in limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees

53 Aseniya Dimitrova, "Strasbourg declares climate emergency", July 7, 2020, The Mayor, <https://www.themayor.eu/de>

54 Strasbourg Metropole, Plan Climat 2030, n.d.

55 Strasbourg Metropole, Communication au conseil municipal du Samedi 4 juillet 2020, 2020

56 Strasbourg Metropole, Diagnostic et évaluation environnementale stratégique: Plan Climat 2030, 2019

57 Action non-violente COP21: Mulhouse / Sud-Alsace, [URGENCE CLIMATIQUE] [MULHOUSE] [Facebook], 2019

58 Mulhouse City Council, DEROULE ORDRE DU JOUR DU CONSEIL MUNICIPAL DU 9 MAI 2019, 2019, p. 57

Retrieved from: <https://www.mulhouse.fr/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2019-05-09-GLOBAL.pdf>

Celsius. Specifically mentioned as part of these was an intent to limit greenhouse gas emissions going forward, with few including any adaptation measures. German declarations also exhibited a focus primarily on local initiatives and scope, with many providing commitments around local projects, targets and initiatives. Many declarations featured similar wording in their commitments to incorporating the impacts of climate change in new policies and government initiatives, with an evaluation on whether they were thought to be contributing positively, negatively, or neutrally to climate change. However, few local regions mentioned the implementation or release of a climate strategy off of the declaration.

Unlike in France and the UK, many German declarations featured very similar wording, likely due to them being put forward by the same political party in different localities, leading to similar commitments and focus being found throughout Germany. This was also evident in the asks and requests of local governments to regional and national governments, where declarations asked other municipalities, regions and the federal government to take action, for the federal government to implement climate laws, and for modification of existing federal law to provide municipalities with greater autonomy in their climate policies. In addition, the federal environment ministry is providing funding and support to municipalities wanting to reduce their emissions through its “master plan guideline”, with 41 municipalities implementing their own climate strategies.

### **Kiel City Council**

Kiel City Council (Kiel) declared its climate emergency in May 2019 and, like others throughout Germany, the declaration provided a narrative and context as to why it was being made and the efforts needed going forward. The declaration committed to acts such as taking the impact on the climate into consideration in all its actions and resolutions going forward, and incorporating the findings of the IPCC into the city’s efforts, with the goal to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The declaration also referenced its previous climate efforts, including its 2050 carbon neutral target, and committed to increasing the implementation of measures in its previously released climate strategy (“100% Climate Protection”) and Green City Plan. No mentions of climate adaptation were found in the declaration text.

The incorporation of both Kiel’s climate strategy and city planning strategy into its declaration was an uncommon feature in its declaration when compared to others throughout Germany. It provides an opportunity for more commitment and initiatives, in addition to those made in the declaration, for example, Kiel’s climate strategy includes a 23-point plan with priority measures being taken from the 250 initiatives<sup>62</sup>. These initiatives cover an array of local projects and commitments, such as more sustainable procurement, its guidelines for incorporating climate targets, reducing power consumption, and greenhouse gas reduction efforts. Similarly, its Green City Plan features over 40 initiatives for sustainable planning and emissions-free transport<sup>63</sup>. The majority of Kiel’s master plan focuses on mitigation and CO2 reduction efforts, such as increased energy efficiency in buildings and lighting and the development of sustainable communities but addresses adaptation to a much lesser extent.

59 Based on data provided by ‘climateemergency.uk’ and ‘cedamia.org’; city-state declarations were manually added.

60 The Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Master plan municipalities, n.d.

61 Kiel City Council, Drucksache 0443/2019, 2019

In its declaration, Kiel also called for greater climate action from both the federal government and regional governments and a reworking of the current powers provided to local authorities so that they are better able to take measures to curb climate change<sup>64</sup>. The city does not call for greater opportunities for collaboration or funding between local and regional or national governments, despite having already developed significant strategies and plans. It is important to note, however, that funding and support for its climate strategy was provided under the federal government's master plan guideline initiative.

### **Düsseldorf City Council**

Düsseldorf City Council (Düsseldorf), like many of the other local climate declarations throughout Germany, declared a climate emergency in summer 2019<sup>65</sup>. The declaration was one of many put forward throughout Germany by Germany's Green Party ("Bündnis 90/Die Grünen"). The declarations put forward by these parties featured many of the same commitments, initiatives and asks, resulting in there being a greater focus on a few specific climate initiatives. There was, however, no direct reference to adaptation.

Similarly to Kiel, Düsseldorf committed in its declaration to refining its climate policies and targets outlined in its master plan, and committed to being a carbon neutral city by 2035 (15 years before the federal government's target). The city also committed to review future policies and city projects, keeping their climate impacts in consideration. The commitments and future timelines it proposes, however, make little specific mention of any adaptation or mitigation measures, as those are primarily featured in the city's master plan. The city's declaration also featured similar asks from the national government to that of Kiel, and very similar to other declarations from the Green Party. Specifically, the city asked for greater action from

federal and state governments and for them to remove policies in place that are preventing cities from implementing their own climate policies. Like Kiel, however, no further demands or asks were made of the federal government for additional funding or partnership on initiatives.

### **City of Lubeck**

The City of Lubeck (Lubeck) declared a climate emergency in May 2019<sup>66</sup>. Like Kiel and many other declarations throughout Germany, it provided context and narrative as to why the declaration was necessary, citing the impacts of climate change and the city's previous efforts to combat climate change. Alongside this narrative, the city also committed to several initiatives, such as seeking to reduce CO2 emissions and providing citizens with yearly updates. While the initiatives and commitments outlined in the declaration only focused on the reduction of CO2 emissions, Lubeck committed to releasing a climate strategy by the end of year and creating a steering committee for environmental protection.

Lubeck released interim targets for 2020 and 11 climate protection measures covering area management, energy supply, mobility, and disposal<sup>67</sup>. Many of the measures maintain a local focus, with little mention of any federal or regional involvement. The measures focus on both mitigation and adaptation. The city also plans to release its Climate Change Master Plan in 2021, with a primary goal of halving Lubeck's CO2 emissions by 2030, again demonstrating evidence of some disconnect between some local and national governments.

62 Kiel City Council, Become climate-neutral faster - Climate Emergency, no date.

63 Kiel City Council, Green City Plan für die Landeshauptstadt Kiel [Translated], no date

64 Kiel City Council, Drucksache 0443/2019, 2019

65 Düsseldorf City Council, TOP Ö 53.6: Antrag der Ratsfraktion von BÜ90/GRÜ: Düsseldorf erklärt den „Climate Emergency“ / Klimanotstand, 2019

Nevertheless, the first paragraph of the declaration calls for the national government to reform the powers offered to cities. Lubeck specifically makes reference to the reduction of existing subsidies for fossil fuels, CO2 pricing, and traffic restrictions in this paragraph as actions that are required by cities but currently not possible for them to fully implement. Despite this wording being similar to other declarations in Germany, such as Kiel's, Lubeck does not call on greater action from the state or federal government.

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66           Hansestadt Lubeck, Excerpt - SPD/ CDU/ BM Lothar Möller (BfL)/BM Thomas Misch (FW): AT application for "Declaring a climate emergency in Lübeck" VO/2019/07727 [Translated], 2019

67           Hansestadt Lubeck, Klimaschutz konkret [Translated], no date  
Retrieved from: <https://www.luebeck.de/de/stadtentwicklung/klimaschutz/klimaschutz-konkret.html>

## 4. SUMMARY AND GAPS

This report presented an analysis of the landscape of climate emergency declarations at three governance scales at the EU, national and local levels with the aim of assessing the way climate action has emerged from these declarations. The range of climate emergency declarations made across the countries explored in this report, demonstrates clear differences in the substance of the declarations, their targets, and their link to national, regional and local action. We summarise here some of the key findings from the report with a view to formulate areas for further work on how climate emergency declarations and the way they are translated (or not) into climate action plans could be further enhanced.

### Framing of climate emergency declarations

1. The climate emergency declaration texts could be **more ambitious in setting (or calling for) legally binding goals** with accompanying dates by which these targets are achieved, alongside precise indicators by which to measure progress.
2. To facilitate **consistency** within countries, the important role that local leadership plays in forming local partnerships and helping to drive national ambition could help drive further and future action.
3. **Climate adaptation** needs to be considered in an appropriate way to mirror the level of ambition on mitigation in the climate emergency declarations and related targets, with this in mind declarations should give greater attention to addressing climate adaptation than they currently do.
4. **More clarity on funding sources** is needed in the motion texts in order to support climate action plans and targets and ensure a sustainable and just process.

### Ramping up ambition to deliver declaration targets

5. Identify tools and processes to ensure **accountability** for achieving subgoals (e.g. through working with stakeholders and end-users) and monitor and evaluate progress periodically.
6. Allow space for **public discussion, engagement and involvement** throughout the planning and delivery process of climate action targets.
7. Keeping **plans locally focused**, with equal opportunities for partnership to create political support as well as facilitating input from national governments.

**8.** Recognise that a **lack of climate emergency declaration**, or lack of consistency between national, regional and local targets does not mean lack of or ineffective plan.

**9.** Look **beyond national borders** for sources of funding.

**10. Acknowledge and address issues around data** access and availability to inform climate action plans.

**Areas for future work:** The project was limited in scope but analysis that would be important to explore further includes:

- Exploring the relationship between declarations made in individual EU countries and the wider EU-level declaration in order to reflect on the communications and engagement processes between different governance levels.
- Further research on trends in local climate action in EU countries, with a particular focus on Eastern European countries and/or the role of grassroots and non-governmental organisations.
- Understanding why different countries have different ambitions for local climate action on mitigation and adaptation and how lessons can be extrapolated to other geographical and governance settings.
- Deeper analysis on how (if at all) regional networks across the EU affects implementation of local climate action.

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## ANNEX:

### *DATA ANALYSIS APPROACH*

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In this report we present analysis of the landscape of climate emergency declarations at three levels of governance: the EU, national and local scales. The report has three interwoven foci:

**Focus 1 (Section 3): Present analysis of the landscape of climate emergency declarations across the EU.** Analysis for Section 3 began with a surface-level macro analysis of climate emergency declarations and climate change policy among EU member states and the UK. Following this, the United Kingdom, France and Germany were selected for closer analysis. Countries were chosen based on a number of factors: (1) how accessible they are for research, particularly considering language barriers, (2) to ensure diversity in the examination of the case studies, (3) to provide a spread of ambition to tackle climate change and engagement in the topic. The research used national emergency declaration texts, national statements on climate action, national climate change plans or targets and insight from reports and observers to assess climate emergency action in the specified countries, and Europe more broadly.

**Focus 2 (Section 5): Deep dive of three nations with a focus on the scope and ambition of their declarations with a selection of local case studies highlighting the link between local, regional and central government.** We examined and showcased the various measures put in place by local governments once a climate declaration was made, and discussed the asks made by local governments to national governments. As the nature and themes of local climate emergency declarations varied based on the country, the criteria differed slightly for each country. Three local governments were highlighted in the three case study countries, presenting a representation of the main themes, plans and climate asks to national governments within each country. The selections are not meant to be interpreted as hierarchical or rankings within each country.

**Focus 3: Where adaptation fits in climate emergency declarations and action.** In light of the need to act quickly

as understood by the use of the term 'emergency' in climate emergency declarations, we build on the first two foci which highlight an emphasis of action on mitigation, to explore where adaptation to climate risks fits within this. To do so, we analyzed official resolutions of local authorities for mentions of adaptation. We aimed to include all local declarations in each country by using the list of declarations provided by 'climateemergency.co.uk and 'cedamia.org'<sup>68</sup>, and official motion text, when available, was analyzed using a direct word search (e.g. terms such as "adaptation", "adaptation" and "Anpassung" in documents in the UK, France and Germany respectively). Though this methodology omits indirect mentions of adaptation, it provides a uniform comparison between countries and local authorities. For the case studies, climate adaptation was analyzed in the context of the declarations itself and its resultant actions, and this analysis was incorporated throughout the report.

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<sup>68</sup> The analysis is limited by the completeness of the data provided by the websites. Any additional declarations not captured by these websites were not included in the analysis.





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**For queries and further information regarding this publication, please contact us at: [social@89initiative.com](mailto:social@89initiative.com)**

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