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Climate_CRICES

From risk to resilience – Regional strategies for resilient infrastructure and a safer life

A storytelling article about the Climate_CRICES Pilot Actions in the Zagreb region

The City of Zagreb is increasingly facing the impacts of climate change. The greatest challenges are intense rainfall events over short periods (storms are becoming more severe) and heatwaves, which make it almost impossible to walk through the central parts of Zagreb during summer afternoons.



The storm in July 2023 was one of the strongest ever to hit the city, demonstrating that these events are no longer just an infrastructure problem – they can pose serious risks to human safety as well. Additionally, record-breaking temperatures are being recorded year after year, increasingly affecting public health. The latest one was recorded on the 27th of March 2026, with a hurricane wind speed of 120,6 km/h, causing severe damage all over the city, especially on sensitive infrastructure such as schools and kindergartens. On the other hand, heatwaves have become a common occurrence in the summer months, starting as early as June and continuously recurring up till September, which results in increasing numbers of heatwaves and their duration, which then increases the risk of temperature-related illnesses for the population that lives in Zagreb (especially vulnerable population such as elderly and children), but also for the increasing number of tourist that are visiting Zagreb in that period. Also lately the topic of biodiversity loss as a result of climate change has been acknowledged as an increasing hazard in the Zagreb region, mostly related to extreme temperatures, increasing risk of drought and decreasing water levels (both ground and underground).



All participants agreed that these two risks are the biggest challenge for the City of Zagreb and that the response to them should be improved.



Local Kick-off Event in Croatia

A Regional Conversation Begins

On 10 April 2026, at the Zagreb Energy Center (ZEC), we met with representatives of local (the City of Zagreb) and national authorities (Ministry of Environmental Protection and Green transition – Sector for Climate activities) to discuss the risks of flash floods and heatwaves, which significantly shape life in Zagreb.

This meeting marked the launch of the Croatian pilot action, through which we aim to address the question of how the City of Zagreb can respond to the impacts of climate change across three key risk areas: heatwaves and drought, floods, and impacts on biodiversity. The meeting also served as an introduction for stakeholders to the Climate_CRICES project.

The connection between adaptation measures and climate indicators

After a brief introduction to the Climate_CRICES project, in which all partners and the main objectives were presented, we began a discussion on the connection between climate indicators and adaptation measures. We identified that adaptation measures are not linked to the corresponding climate indicators in our adaptation policies. Since the proper selection of climate indicators is crucial for an accurate assessment of the level of specific risks, this

represents a gap in our adaptation policies. Together with the participants, we recognized an opportunity to address this issue within the framework of this project, as we had previously identified the relevant climate indicators for each risk and ultimately linked them to the adaptation measures outlined in the submitted adaptation policy.

Adaptation Measures – Monitoring and Examples of Good Practice

As we know, adaptation to the impacts of climate change consists of six steps:

1) Preparing the ground for adaptation
2) Assessing climate risks and vulnerabilities
3) Identifying adaptation options
4) Assessing and selecting adaptation options
5) Implementing adaptation policies and actions
6) Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

Although the second step should ideally be carried out more thoroughly, the sixth step was identified as the biggest problem. Specifically, the prescribed adaptation measures are not being properly monitored. As a result, we cannot determine how effective each measure is in adapting to climate change, and therefore we cannot know whether additional measures, a higher number of measures, or different adaptation actions are needed. This has been highlighted as a major issue because addressing it would finally make the process circular, as it needs to be repeated periodically.

As we know, climate change is an ongoing reality, meaning the level of specific risks changes over time, and consequently, adaptation measures may also need to be adjusted periodically.

We also recognized an opportunity to study what others are doing, specifically which adaptation measures they are using to respond to climate change. This can be very useful for us, as there is always the possibility that there are measures, we are not currently applying, which could



be fully applicable here or adaptable with minor adjustments due to spatial conditions and relative legislative.

What did the pilot introduce?

During this meeting, all three pilot actions were presented, as the City of Zagreb is involved in all of them:

- heatwaves and drought
- floods
- impacts on biodiversity

After briefly explaining the reasons for including the City of Zagreb in all three pilots, the Climate_CRICES dashboard, which is still under development, was introduced. We outlined its intended capabilities, and the participants expressed strong interest in examining it more closely once the first version is completed and ready for demonstration.

What changed?

The biggest change we observed was the understanding that adaptation measures are not just text written on paper, but that their implementation can significantly influence our capacity to adapt to climate change. The City of Zagreb is facing increasingly intense climatic extremes each year, which are becoming more frequent, making it crucial to raise awareness about the importance of applying adaptation measures. We were also very pleased with the strong interest participants showed in the Climate_CRICES dashboard once it became operational. Also, the discussion addressed the increasing need for higher-quality and accessible climate data and climate projections, but also the need for more state-level dashboards and easy-to-access data portals, similar to the Climate_CRISES dashboard, in order to examine and analyze



climate indicators on a higher level and better connect them to applicable measures, and consequently to make better climate policies.

What's next?

In the next steps, the pilot action will continue testing the dashboard to make it as high-quality, useful, and user-friendly as possible. In the City of Zagreb, the main goal is to find solutions to the impacts of flash floods and heatwaves. As mentioned earlier, these climate risks no longer pose a problem only for infrastructure, but also become extremely dangerous to human life. This meeting led us to a shared conclusion that decisive action is needed to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

