

Environment & Climate Change - Italy

Ministry of Environment approves climate adaptation strategy

Contributed by **B&P Avvocati**

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Italy has become one of the latest European countries to take strategic action at a national level in the global fight against climate change.

On June 16 2015 the Ministry of the Environment formally approved the National Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change. The strategy responds to the broader goals set out in the adaptation strategy package adopted by the European Commission in April 2013, with the aim of making Europe better prepared to withstand existing and future climate impacts.

The Italian strategy sets out principles and measures with the aim of:

- reducing risks that arise from climate change;
- protecting public health;
- preserving natural heritage;
- maintaining and strengthening the resilience and adaptation capacity of natural, economic and social systems; and
- taking advantage of potential benefits that new climatic conditions may create.

Notably, it also contains measures to reduce adverse climate impact on cultural heritage and is the first adaptation strategy document at an EU level to do so.

In order to achieve these goals, the strategy will:

- strengthen existing knowledge of climate change and its impacts;
- assess Italy's vulnerability, along with potential adaptation options for all existing natural and socio-economic systems;
- promote participation, increase awareness of stakeholders and encompass adaptation within sectoral policies in a more effective way through improved dialogue and communication;
- strengthen information on adaptation through improved communication regarding potential risks and hazards, as well as potential benefits that may arise from climate change; and
- identify instruments to define the best adaptation options, including potential co-benefits associated with them.

The strategy will be reviewed every five years in order to keep up to date with scientific progress and reflect the results of the monitoring processes that it will create.

By December 31 2016, the Ministry of the Environment has agreed to:

- call upon the State-Regional Committee to define roles and responsibilities for implementing the strategy;
- develop criteria for establishing climate scenarios at a district and regional level; and
- determine adaptation models and necessary monitoring and evaluation practices.

As part of this process, two new bodies will be established under the auspices of the Ministry of the Environment:

- a permanent forum that aims to promote citizen information, improve public knowledge of climate issues and improve public participation in decision-making processes; and
- a national observatory, which will establish territorial priorities and monitor the effectiveness of actions taken.

The government's action marks yet another positive step by an EU member state towards achieving the European Union's existing and future climate goals.

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