

R03 * Climate Adaptation Is Justice: Care for Europe's Vulnerable Territories

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Agenda item: 8. Resolutions

Motion text

1 Hope is green – but hope alone will not hold back floodwaters, stop megafires,
2 or prevent hillsides from collapsing.

3 Across Europe, especially in the Mediterranean basin, **the climate crisis is no**
4 **longer a warning but a lived reality.** The 1.5°C objective is slipping out of
5 reach. Emissions continue to rise, fossil fuel expansion persists, and political
6 courage remains insufficient.

7 From floods in Valencia to landslides in Sicily and megafires across Southern
8 and Central Europe, the pattern is clear. Climate impacts are intensifying and
9 unevenly distributed. **Inland, mountainous, and rural territories – often**
10 **politically invisible – are on the frontline.**

11 These regions are already strained by austerity, depopulation, and extractivist
12 land use. Small farmers, forest workers, and elderly populations are paying the
13 highest price for a crisis they did not create.

14 Where infrastructure is fragile and public services weakened, **climate breakdown**
15 **becomes a multiplier of injustice.**

16 Climate adaptation is therefore a matter of justice.

17 **Mitigation remains essential,** but it will not protect vulnerable communities
18 already facing irreversible impacts.

19 **Adaptation must become a central political priority, rooted in CARE, solidarity,**

20 and structural transformation.

21 **This crisis** is not only environmental but systemic. It **is rooted in capitalism**,
22 which is inherently structured around extractivism, where ecosystems are treated
23 as infinite resources to be exploited in the pursuit of continuous growth. Such
24 a model reinforces territorial and class inequalities, and undermines the
25 resilience of the very systems on which it relies on.

26 Addressing this crisis **requires a systemic shift towards** approaches that
27 overcome this perpetual growth, such as **post-growth economy**, which understands
28 and prioritises ecological limits, redistribution and collective well-being over
29 accumulation and profit.

30 Ecosystems are weakening as socio-economic vulnerabilities deepen. **Europe's**
31 **vulnerable territories** are not spaces to abandon or exploit – they **are essential**
32 **socio-ecological infrastructures that require CARE**. Their resilience is directly
33 linked to that of the entire continent.

34 Inland areas sustain biodiversity and provide vital ecosystem services: water
35 regulation, soil regeneration, pollination, climate regulation, and protection
36 against extreme events. Yet **these systems are under growing pressure**. Rising
37 temperatures, prolonged droughts, and extreme events interact with habitat
38 fragmentation and resource overexploitation.

39 Fragile systems also mean rising tensions, including conflicts between human
40 activities and wildlife. These conflicts reflect policy failures – lack of
41 coordination, scientific grounding, and community participation – not ecological
42 imbalance.

43 Adaptation cannot be reduced to technological fixes or urban-centric policies.
44 It must be grounded in the care of socio-ecological systems and the
45 **interdependence between communities and their environments**.

46 Inland territories must be recognised as both vulnerable spaces and strategic
47 laboratories for ecocentric adaptation. **Healthy ecosystems are among the most**
48 **effective defenses against climate impacts**.

49 **Agriculture is a foundational socio-ecological infrastructure**. Caring for
50 agricultural systems means recognising soil as a common good. Soil degradation,
51 erosion, and loss of organic matter are reducing the capacity of land to retain
52 water and withstand shocks, while monocultures increase vulnerability.

53 **A transition toward agroecological practices is essential**: crop diversification,
54 soil restoration, improved water retention, and reduced dependence on

55 unsustainable irrigation. Farmers must be supported in adapting to climate
56 change, including through resilient crop varieties.

57 **Rural landscapes are also protective infrastructures.** Hedges, terraces,
58 woodlands, and small water networks are essential defenses against
59 hydrogeological instability, desertification, and biodiversity loss.

60 Without a public strategy centered on care, vulnerable territories risk losing
61 not only economic viability, but also identity, cohesion, and future prospects.

62 A different path exists: one of care, where these areas become laboratories of
63 socio-ecological adaptation and collective well-being.

64 We call on European institutions to recognise the central role of inland
65 territories in the climate transition and adopt a justice-driven approach to
66 adaptation based on **CARE**.

67 We therefore demand:

- 68 • Recognition of inland, rural, and mountainous areas as key to European
69 climate resilience, **integration of agricultural adaptation into EU**
70 **policies**, and restoration of rural landscapes as protections against
71 desertification, floods, and biodiversity loss.
- 72 • Recognition of agriculture as core climate and food infrastructure,
73 **support for agroecological transitions** that build resilience, and
74 investment in water-smart farming to reduce vulnerability to climate
75 shocks.
- 76 • **An EU framework treating soil as a common good** with targets for organic
77 matter, erosion, and water retention, alongside large-scale ecosystem
78 restoration and connectivity in vulnerable inland areas.
- 79 • Alignment of agricultural, environmental, and rural policies toward
80 resilient, non-extractive systems;
- 81 • **Support for farmers** through resilient crops, technical assistance, and
82 local knowledge; meaningful involvement in adaptation strategies;
83 programmes strengthening their role **as socio-ecological custodians**; and
84 investment in environmental monitoring, restoration, and green jobs.
- 85 • **The promotion of decentralized renewable energy systems**, including small-
86 scale solar, wind, and sustainable biomass, to reduce dependence on

- 87 centralized grids and strengthen energy security;
- 88 • **The recognition and support of energy communities**, enabling local
89 ownership and governance of energy production and ensuring that economic
90 benefits remain in rural areas;
- 91 • **Structural investment in climate-proof rural infrastructure**, upgrading
92 roads, bridges, and transport networks to withstand floods, landslides,
93 and extreme heat, particularly in mountainous and remote regions;
- 94 • **The prioritization of nature-based infrastructure**, including wetlands,
95 floodplains, and reforestation, to complement or replace grey
96 infrastructure and enhance natural water management and disaster risk
97 reduction;
- 98 • Support for resilient buildings and settlements through the **retrofitting**
99 **of homes and public infrastructure** for energy efficiency and climate
100 adaptation, using locally appropriate materials and designs;

101 Adaptation is not optional. It is the ground on which climate justice will
102 either stand or fail. To care for inland territories is to care for Europe's
103 future – without this shift, we will remain trapped in permanent emergency,
104 reacting to crises instead of preventing them.

Reason

The international situation is crazy but let's not forget the climate crisis, which is hitting hard. Mitigation remains essential, but it will not protect communities already facing irreversible impacts. Adaptation must become a central political priority, rooted in care, solidarity, and structural transformation.