

Adaptation to climate change in the European Union: efficiency vs. equity considerations

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EU climate policy based on GHG emissions reduction (mitigation) is coupled with measures aimed at responding efficiently to the unavoidable consequences of climate change (adaptation). However, as the European Commission stated recently in its Green Paper on adaptation in Europe, there is still need to develop an overall EU adaptation strategy. Moreover, such a strategy should take into consideration both efficiency and equity concerns. In this article we propose a framework for EU adaptation policy that addresses both concerns and which enables a transparent decision-making process. In the proposed scheme universal weightings of the individual policy objectives have to be agreed upon prior to actual decision-making.

Objectives of Public Economic Policy and the Adaptation to Climate Change

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Research on adaptation to climate change is still in its infancy. Much can be learned about adaptation by applying structures and methodologies already used in other research fields. In this study we employ a public economic policy approach to investigate how - or if at all - adaptation should be supported by the public sector. We identify three different fields of adaptation activity which are especially relevant for governmental intervention and we propose ways how governmental support could be accomplished. We take account of the fact that developing countries are especially vulnerable and have insufficient funds to adapt to climate change in an adequate way.