Blue Adapt

Agenda

Climate change & health: building resilience and reducing risks in coastal environments

BlueAdapt Final Conference 22 September 2026

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BlueAdapt Final Conference

Date: 22 September 2026, 10.00 – 18.00 CEST
Venue: TownHall, Square de Meeûs 5-6, 1000, Brussels, Belgium

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Climate change is increasingly affecting marine and coastal environments, with direct and indirect consequences for human health, ecosystems, and local economies. Rising sea temperatures, extreme weather events, biodiversity loss, and water quality degradation are no longer only environmental concerns — they are cross-cutting challenges with significant implications for health systems, social resilience, and economic stability across the EU.

These developments are highly relevant in the context of key EU policy frameworks, including the EU Climate Adaptation Strategy, the European Water Resilience Strategy, and the Zero Pollution Action Plan. At the same time, they connect directly to priorities under EU public health actions and the growing recognition of climate change as a driver of health inequalities.

The BlueAdapt project contributes to addressing these gaps by advancing understanding of the health impacts of climate change in coastal regions through interdisciplinary research. It brings together environmental science, public health, climate modelling, and socio-economic analysis, grounded in a One Health approach. With a strong focus on equity and on contextual social and economic factors, it takes a systems approach to issues of health, climate change and pollution.

As climate risks intensify, there is a growing need to:

- Strengthen preparedness and adaptation at local and regional levels
- Improve integration between environmental, climate, and health policies
- Support vulnerable communities
- Translate research findings into actionable policy and practice

The BlueAdapt Final Conference will provide an opportunity to present key findings and engage with policymakers and stakeholders on how to better align EU priorities with local implementation, supporting more coherent and effective responses to climate-related health risks.

Draft Agenda

10.00–10.30 – Welcome coffee and registration

10:30–11:00 — Opening Session

- Professor Marc Neumann, Blue Adapt Project Coordinator, Basque Centre for Climate Change (BC3) - Objectives of the conference and short overview of BlueAdapt
- Francesca Racioppi, Head of Office at WHO European Centre for Environment and Health

11:00–12:30 — Session 1: Setting the scene: impacts of climate change and pollution on health in coastal communities

The session will discuss the links between climate, environment, and health, including pollution exposure and ecosystem degradation. It will discuss antimicrobial resistance (AMR) as an emerging policy issue in marine and coastal settings. Connections with EU priorities, including the EU Zero Pollution Action Plan, will be addressed. The discussion will cover coordination challenges across EU, national, and local levels, and between sectors, showcasing practical ways to strengthen prevention, resilience, and long-term investment in coastal health.

Keynote: setting the scene

- Professor Will Gaze, University of Exeter – *Impact of climate change on coastal bacteria and the evolution of Anti-Microbial Resistance*
- Professor Davey Jones, University of Bangor – *Impact of climate change on viral pathogens and developing risk maps and Early Warning Systems*

Panel discussion

Moderated by: Professor Jaime Martinez, BlueAdapt Advisory Board, Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona

- Ariane Vander Stappen, Head of Unit, One Health and Antimicrobial Resistance, DG SANTE
- Tony Holohan, Director of the UCD WHO Collaborating Centre for One Health
- Sara Johansson, Policy Manager for Water, European Environmental Bureau
- Professor Dearbhaile Morris, University of Galway

Q&A

12:30–13:30 — Lunch & Poster Viewing

13:30–15:00 — Session 2: Adapting to climate change and protecting human health through a systems approach

This session will focus on a systems-based approach to the climate-health nexus, exploring how interconnected climate, environmental, health, and socio-economic challenges can be addressed through more integrated policymaking and governance. The discussion will examine climate-related health risks and how a systems approach can support the implementation of the EU Adaptation Strategy and the European Climate Resilience and Risk Management Integrated Framework by strengthening coordination across sectors.

Keynote: setting the scene

Moderated by: Professor Marc Neumann, Basque Centre for Climate Change

- Dr. Aline Chiabai, BC3 – *A One Health systems-based approach to climate change adaptation*
- Dr. Eline Boelee, Deltares – *Examples of local adaptations across Europe*

Panel discussion

- Elina Bardram, Director, Climate Resilience And Information Management, DG CLIMA
- Professor Nestor Etxebarria, Deputy Director, Basque Research Centre for Experimental Marine Biology & Biotechnology
- Dorothea Baltruks, Director, Centre for Planetary Health Policy
- Dr. Stefania Marcheggiani, Environment and Health, Istituto Superiore di Sanità - ISS

Q&A

15:00–15:30 — Coffee Break & Poster Viewing

15:30–17:00 — Session 3: Building resilient, health-promoting water systems

A practice-oriented discussion on how climate pressures on coastal areas and wastewater systems affect health risks and how this connects to EU legislation, including the European Water Resilience Strategy, the Water Framework Directive, and the Bathing Water Directive.

Keynote: setting the scene

- Professor Tim Taylor, University of Exeter – *Assessing the health impacts and cost benefits of adaptation solutions and providing policy solutions*
- Professor Mikolaj Czajkowski, University of Warsaw - *People's willingness to pay for services to protect water quality*

Panel discussion

Moderated by: Dr Caroline Whalley, BlueAdapt Advisory Board, European Environment Agency

- Veronica Manfredi, Director, Zero Pollution, Water Resilience & Green Urban Transition, DG Environment
- Dr João Brandão, Member of European expert groups on the Bathing Water and Drinking Water Directives
- Sam Nichols, Water Quality App Manager, Surfers Against Sewage
- Dr. Sinead Duane, University of Galway

Q&A

17:00–17:15 — Closing Session: Key Messages for Communities and Public Health

- Professor Marc Neumann, Basque Centre for Climate Change

17:15–18.00 Reception & Networking