



An assessment of the suitability of EU food and trade policy in the context of cross-border climate risks and geopolitical instability

Insights from semi-structured interviews and in-depth policy document analysis

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Background

CASCADES WP3: Trade as a pathway for cascading climate impacts into Europe

Research combines takeaways from:

1. Stakeholder interviews
1. An in-depth policy analysis across food, trade, environment domains (on going)

Stage One: Stakeholders Interviews

Semi-structured interviews - 17

- Various **public** and **private** EU-based actors within the global food trade system

Aimed to gain stakeholder insights on:

- **Trade-mediated** climate linked **shocks**
- Possible **response** and **mitigation** mechanisms
- Current **actions** of supply chain actors and public policy actors in **mitigating** or **exacerbating** risk

Inductive thematic analysis in **NVivo** - produced several **emergent themes**

Main Takeaways

Geopolitics and **political economy** play a large role in policy

The EU is **mostly insulated** from external **climate driven shocks** to food systems



Ian Taylor, Unsplash

Shocks will **increase global instability**, but the **magnitude, effects** and **responses** remain **uncertain**

Current **action** is **inadequate**, although climate risk is **moving up the policy agenda**

Main Takeaways from a policy perspective

Take **tailored approach for each commodity** – no one-size fits all solution

The **'Just In Time'** system needs to become a **'Just In Case'** system – supply diversity, stocks/reserves

EU could **influence its trading partners' policy** through international fora

Due diligence requirements will **increase costs** and **disrupt** supply chain operations



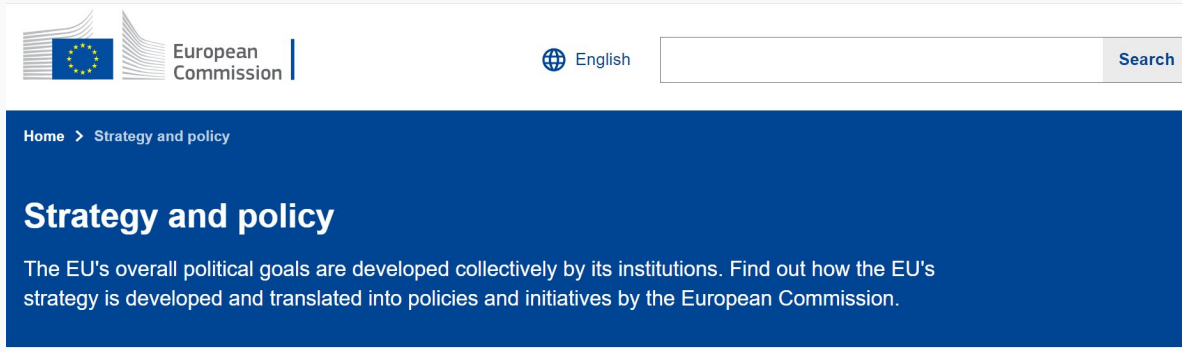
Guillaume Périgois, Unsplash

Stage Two: In-depth Policy Analysis

Detailed review of **EU websites** and **policy documents** across **three domains**; food, trade, the environment

Using a '**cross border climate risk**' lens

Focussing on **resilience to shocks**, not **carbon mitigation**



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the European Commission website. On the left is the European Commission logo, which includes the European Union flag and the text 'European Commission'. To the right of the logo is a language selector showing a globe icon and the word 'English'. Further right is a search bar with a 'Search' button. Below the navigation bar is a blue banner with the text 'Home > Strategy and policy' in white. The main heading 'Strategy and policy' is also in white. Below the heading is a paragraph of text: 'The EU's overall political goals are developed collectively by its institutions. Find out how the EU's strategy is developed and translated into policies and initiatives by the European Commission.'

Food Domain - EU Farm to Fork, CAP/CFP

Core aim: Supply of **affordable food**, updated to include environmental objectives

Details lacking on response procedures and mechanisms

Internally facing: funding for 'eco schemes' for farmers to boosting EU domestic production and increase **resilience to shocks**

Many platforms for supply chain **stakeholder engagement**, monitoring dashboards, and an emphasis on **data transparency** through data sharing initiatives

Engaging in international cooperation to **promote EU standards internationally**

Food Domain - European Food Security Crisis preparedness and response mechanism (EFSCM)

Most recent (2021 Q3) and detailed mechanism for shock responses

“assess how to improve cooperation between the public and private sectors and evaluate risks when crises arise”

Core Actions

- Convene a group of experts periodically, rapidly in crises
- Create a **dashboard** to monitor EU food supply (includes external sources)
- **Map out dependencies** and vulnerabilities, conduct **stress tests** of different value chains
- **Mobilise technology** and **big data** to improve market transparency

Trade Domain - Trade Policy Review & 'Power of Trade Relationships' Communication

Outlines the general direction of **trade policy** and its interaction with the planned '**green transformation**'

States the key factors for supply chain resilience are trade **openness**, **transparency**, and **strategic dependency** mapping

Frames EU trade policy as a method to **promote higher standards** and pursue the EU's **interests** and values

Core aims:

- **Mainstream sustainability** in free trade agreements
- Increase the **monitoring** of the **implementation** of **sustainability** commitments of trade partners
- Increase **enforcement** of sustainable development clauses in Free Trade Agreements by means of trade sanctions

Explicit mention of **climate risk** to trade is **absent**

Environment Domain

EU Climate Adaptation Strategy

European Green Deal

Climate Law

Circular Economy Action Plan

Biodiversity Strategy for 2030



Nicholas Doherty, Unsplash

Connections between the policy analysis and the stakeholder interviews

Connections

- Emphasis on **increased transparency** and monitoring
- **Geopolitics** and international relations is playing a large role in policy
- Action is **inadequate** - **lack of details** and developed policy

Absent connections

- No movement towards a **'Just in case'** system with redundancies/stocks - explicitly discouraged
- Unclear if climate risk is **moving up the policy agenda** - **absent** in many documents

Next Steps

Complete the review of Environment policy domain

Draw out more connections between the insights from stakeholders and the policy analysis

Map the identified response mechanisms onto the Response Framework (Talebian and Benzie) to further assess response appropriateness

Write up results into a journal paper

Thank you for listening

I look forward to any questions

Any suggestions on policy focus areas are welcomed