

## TOOLS FOR ASSESSING HEALTH IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE: LESSONS LEARNT FROM MALTA AND TURKEY

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**Background and Aims:** Within the framework of the CIRCE project, training in assessing health effects of climate change was provided and assessments of past and future impacts on health were done in Turkey and Malta.

**Methods:** The training package and the pilot training were targeted for national public health experts appointed to coordinate the development of a climate change and health strategy. Various CIRCE partners contributed to the development and delivery of the training. The objective of the training was in particular to enable participants to assess health impacts and to develop a climate change and health strategy, emphasizing the health sector role in adaptation and mitigation. Assessments were done in Malta and Turkey so far.

**Results:** In Turkey, the assessment of health risks of climate change has an emphasis on infectious diseases. Risks of vector-borne, water- and food borne diseases are growing. Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever, Hantaviruses and phleboviruses infections were recently detected in Turkey, and all were described to be associated with climate changes.

In Malta, an increase in summer temperatures is of concern to human health, especially in the elderly. Also air pollution (particulate matter, ozone), thunderstorms and flash floods and infectious diseases (food- and vector-borne diseases) put health at risk. In the Maltese assessment risk perception was considered, finding that 84 % of the Maltese population is aware of climate change but that Maltese public perceives climate change “only somewhat” as a threat to human health.

**Conclusions:** Adaptation actions in the area of Public Health include to strengthen health, social and environmental systems and services to improve their capacity to prevent, prepare for, and cope with climate change. At the same time, any mitigation and adaptation measures should integrate health issues at all levels; raise awareness to encourage healthy mitigation and adaptation policies in all sectors; increase the health and environment sectors' contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions; share best practices, research, data, information, technology and tools at all levels on climate change, environment and health and to identify research gaps.