

EN

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Answer given by Mr Hoekstra
on behalf of the European Commission
(14.10.2025)

Glacier retreat is recognised as one of the major climate change impacts in Europe, affecting among others water resilience and biodiversity¹. Slowing global warming through deep and sustained emission reductions with the objective for achieving climate neutrality by 2050², remains the most effective measure to slow down a further deterioration of glaciers in the EU. Member States also need to ensure continuous progress in enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and reduce their vulnerability to climate change³.

Permanent glaciers are a protected habitat type of Community interest, listed in the EU Habitats Directive⁴. Member States must designate their most significant occurrences as Natura 2000 sites and take the necessary measures to protect them from any deterioration due to pressures under their control. The Commission considers that these Natura 2000 site-specific legal requirements are met.

Under the EU Nature Restoration Regulation⁵, the non-deterioration requirement for protected habitats (such as glaciers) has been extended to glaciers located outside Natura 2000. According to the Habitats Directive, Member States report every six years on their conservation status and trends. The Copernicus Programme also monitors glaciers through satellite observation⁶.

EU provides support to mountainous regions to adapt to the melting of glaciers, among others through Climate ADAPT⁷, as well as EU funding opportunities such as the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the LIFE programme. Support is also given to transnational cooperation in the Alpine Region⁸, among others through the Alpine Convention⁹.

¹ European Environment Agency, European climate risk assessment (2024).

² The European Climate Law https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/european-climate-law_en.

³ See footnote 2.

⁴ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7–50.

⁵ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/nature-restoration-regulation_en.

⁶ <https://www.copernicus.eu/en/news/news/observer-monitoring-glaciers-space>.

⁷ <https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en>.

⁸ <https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/countries-regions/transnational-regions/alpine-space>.

⁹ <https://www.alpconv.org>.