

Topic: It is too late to halt the climate change.

The path to tackle climate change and its side effects on human society and environment unfolds in two directions: on the one hand, that of “mitigation”, meant to progressively reduce emissions of climate-altering gases, responsible for global warming, and thus trying to stop climate change. On the other hand, that of “adaptation”, aimed at reducing the vulnerability of natural and socio-economic systems, whilst strengthening their resilience to the inevitable impacts of an ever-changing climate. What policy should we adopt nowadays?

Argument PRO: “We should abandon climate change “mitigation” policies in favor of policies and strategies for “adaptation” to climate change.”

Argument AGAINST: “We should not abandon climate change “mitigation” policies in favor of climate change “adaptation” policies and strategies”.

Current situation, scenario, and context.

Climate change poses challenges and hazards to the environment and economies both globally and locally, increasing the occurrence of extreme weather events, threatening natural resources, often creating impacts on human health, and causing severe social and economic imbalances by forcing entire populations to migrate.

It is now well-known that human activity has influenced climate change, therefore adequate and timely responses are required from both the scientific community and policy makers. Since the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, efforts have been made to contain greenhouse gas emissions through political commitments, describing it as the “first step in the right direction”. The Protocol is based on mitigation policies, i.e. aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which were immediately considered too expensive because they would penalize the energy and industrial sectors. For these reasons, and because many people believe that climate change is now inevitable, interest in adaptation strategies, intended to reduce damage in case of extreme and harmful phenomena, has increased significantly.

Arguments pro:

- Adaptation policies have immediate efficacy and allow to work on the forecasting and on the effects produced by climate change, rather than on its causes, which are now inevitable.
- With mitigation policies and strategies, the costs are borne specifically by those who implement them, yet afterwards everyone can enjoy the benefits resulting from the reduction of CO₂ emissions and the consequent decrease in temperature rise. This creates an incentive to wait for others to act, while waiting for the global benefits to accrue.

Arguments against:

- Policies addressing the causes and able to minimize the possible impacts of climate change are needed. It is not fair to invest efforts and resources only on the possible consequences, without committing ourselves to prevent the causes that are attributable to human activity and its economies.
- It is important noticing that global warming does not occur homogeneously throughout the planet: the most affected areas are not the most polluting ones. For such a reason, there should be uniform mitigation commitments and policies, at European and global level, such as regulations to promote the use – for instance – of renewable energy.

FURTHER INSIGHTS:

- Our World Data: [“Is It Too Late To Stop Climate Change? Well, it’s Complicated”](#)
- NASA: [Responding to Climate Change](#)
- [Intergovernmental Panel On Climate Change](#)