



2<sup>nd</sup> Science for the Environment Conference  
Aarhus Denmark 3-4 October 2013

## Urban Adaptation to Climate Change and Differing Capacities of Cities to Adapt

Anne Jensen, Blanka Loučková, Mark Zandvoort, Bjørn Bedsted, Margaretha Breil, Filipe Alves & X Li, Department of Environmental Sciences, Aarhus University, Denmark.

### ABSTRACT

Cities are widely recognized as key nodes of economic, social, environmental, cultural and political activities as well as concentrations of diverse people and multiple flows. Being key nodes, with cities' activities affecting adaptation and the amount of people and economic activities that are affected by the impact of a changing climate in the urban, cities hold a crucial position in societal responses to the impacts of climate change. With these impacts becoming increasingly evident, cities face challenges related to complexity and uncertainty in crafting timely and apt responses and implementing these in contexts that are equally marked by a range of other pressing issues for urban policy. However, there are wide differences in how well cities are equipped to manage these challenges. These differences in adaptive capacity of cities and their determinants are not sufficiently covered in urban / climate adaptation literature. Drawing on theories of urban policy analysis and urban planning, in particular related to the notion of adaptive capacity of cities and building on six European case studies, this paper addresses questions of which (policy) actions cities launch to adjust the urban context to impacts of a changing climate, which factors determine cities' ability to adapt, how the adaptive capacity of cities could be improved, and how such policy actions influence the spatial urban context.