



# Aurora

Demonstrating trAnsformative sOLutions to empower  
climate Resilience tOWards impROved public health  
stAtus in the EU Boreal Region

## Newsletter 3

Welcome to our third newsletter!  
*March 2026*

We are excited to share insights into our project, which has reached Month 18 (M18) and is already producing real, concrete outputs you can follow. In this newsletter, we highlight our replicant cities, research process, latest news, upcoming events, and more.

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Aurora project is part of the EU Missions Community.

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# Presenting Aurora Replicant Cities

Project Aurora includes three replication cities — **Klaipėda** and **Joniškis** in Lithuania, and **Jūrmala** in Latvia. Their role is to build on the experience gained in the main demonstration cities, applying the lessons learned and validated solutions in small-scale actions tailored to their local contexts.

We have presented five Aurora Demo Cities in the previous [Newsletter No. 2](#).

## Joniškis (Lithuania)

Joniškis is a city and district in northern Lithuania, in the EU Baltic Sea region, close to the border with Latvia. As a replicant city in the AURORA project, Joniškis focuses on climate-related risks that affect public health and daily safety.

[Official city website](#)



## Key Climate Change Challenges and the Need for Adaptation

One of the main challenges is heavy rain, which increases flood risk. Flooding can damage infrastructure, disrupt services, and raise the likelihood of water contamination. This creates additional public health concerns, especially waterborne diseases linked to contaminated water after flood events. Another key issue is heatwaves, with alerts aimed particularly at elderly residents, local communities, and city visitors. Temperatures increase risks such as dehydration and heat-related illness, and can place additional strain on health and emergency services.

Joniškis also faces seasonal tick-borne disease risk due to its many green areas and public spaces. Warmer conditions and longer active seasons can increase tick activity and exposure, making prevention, awareness, and timely alerts important for reducing health impacts. In Joniškis, AURORA-created innovation will be replicated. The project helps demo cities plan for climate change by testing different solutions in virtual simulations. It brings together data on health, weather, and local communities to show what works best. Local experts also get training and tools to make smart decisions that protect people's health.

# Jūrmala (Latvia)

Jūrmala is a coastal city in Latvia, Northern Europe (EU Boreal region), located along the Baltic Sea near the capital city Riga. It is one of the larger cities in Latvia in terms of population and a well-known resort city with long beaches, forests, and extensive green areas. Despite its size, Jūrmala has a relatively small and ageing permanent population, which increases sensitivity to climate-related health risks.

[Official city website](#)

## Key Climate Change Challenges and the Need for Adaptation

As a replicant city in the AURORA project, Jūrmala focuses on addressing key climate change impacts on public health. One of the main challenges is heavy storms, which can cause flooding and wind damage. Flooding leads to infrastructure damage, water contamination, and increased risks of water-borne diseases, while strong winds can block roads, damage property, and cause injuries and stress for residents.

Another significant issue is increasing temperatures, which contribute to dehydration, heat strokes, and the wider spread of infectious diseases. Long-term climate data show a warming trend that increases health risks, particularly during heatwaves.



Climate change in Jūrmala also affects the spread of infectious diseases, including water- and food-borne diseases (such as salmonellosis and E. coli infections), arthropod-borne diseases (such as tick-borne encephalitis and Lyme disease), and other climate-sensitive infections like leptospirosis.

In Jūrmala, AURORA-created innovations will be replicated. The project helps demo cities plan for climate change by testing different solutions in virtual simulations. It brings together data on health, weather, and local communities to show what works best. Local experts also receive training and tools to support informed decision-making and better protection of public health.

# Klaipėda (Lithuania)

Klaipėda is a coastal city in western Lithuania, located on the Baltic Sea at the Klaipėda Strait, and is an important urban, transport, and port centre in the EU Baltic Sea region. The city has a diverse population with a significant share of older residents, making public health protection especially important in the context of climate change.

Official city websites: [Sveikatos Biuras](#), [Klaipėda](#)

## Key Climate Change Challenges and the Need for Adaptation

As a replicant city in the AURORA project, Klaipėda highlights several climate-change-related health challenges. A longer growing season and increased pollen emissions are linked to rising risks of asthma, obstructive pulmonary diseases, and pneumonia. At the same time, increasing average temperatures contribute to a higher risk of Lyme disease and tick-borne encephalitis.

Heatwaves are becoming more frequent and intense, posing serious health risks, particularly for older adults and people with chronic conditions. Extreme heat increases the likelihood of dehydration, heat exhaustion, and cardiovascular complications.

Klaipėda also faces growing flooding risks, mainly caused by extreme precipitation, storms, and spring floods. Flood-prone



areas include the Baltic Sea coastal zone and the Klaipėda Strait, as well as river valleys within the city. Flooding increases the likelihood of water-borne diseases, particularly intestinal infections linked to contaminated water.

According to the city's climate change adaptation planning, these health challenges are expected to reach medium to high risk levels in the future.

In Klaipėda, AURORA-created innovation will be replicated. The project helps demo cities plan for climate change by testing different solutions in virtual simulations. It brings together data on health, weather, and local communities to show what works best. Local experts are also provided with training and tools to support informed decision-making and better protection of public health.

# Interview with Ramojus Motuzas

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In this interview, Ramojus Motuzas – lecturer at Vilnius University and researcher at the AdCogito Institute for Advanced Behavioral Research (Lithuania) – reflects on the first-year challenges of the Aurora project (an innovative research initiative focused on forecasting and preventing climate change impacts within the One Health framework, particularly in the EU Boreal region).



Within the project, Mr Motuzas leads the task dedicated to identifying user needs, developing use case scenarios, and defining key performance indicators (KPIs), ensuring that Aurora's solutions are aligned with stakeholder expectations and practical implementation.

“

*...it was important to bring the cities and the technical partners into direct dialogue, so that the city representatives have the right expectations for the technological solutions and the technical partners are aware of the cities' expectations.*

”

**Q: At the beginning of AURORA, the project was still highly exploratory, and was launched at a time when many assumptions were still open. How would you describe your role and responsibilities during this first year?**

A: From the outset of the AURORA project, I was tasked with clearly defining the needs of the participating demo cities (Vilnius, Riga, Tallinn, Tampere, and Pori) and replicant cities (Klaipėda, Joniškis, Jūrmala). At the project's kick-off meeting, it became apparent that, despite all cities coming from the same region, the climate and health challenges they face do not overlap. At the same time, neither city had a clear idea of a technological solution to overcome these challenges. Given the nature of my task, I naturally tended to take on the unifying and mediating role in this project in helping the cities articulate their challenges, needs, and requirements, finding the common interest and agreement among them, as well as forging a dialogue with the technical partners of the project in assessing the technical viability of the possible solutions.

**Q: What was the most challenging part of defining use case scenarios? Same for the KPIs? Which outcomes from the first year are you most proud of?**

A: Once the consortium reached an agreement to work on heat-stroke and flood-Campylobacter frameworks, it was important to learn from the cities which specific actions they would like to take in the future. Examples of these actions include improving risk assessment, increasing public awareness, and taking preventive measures to reduce emergency medicine centre visits. Equally, it was critical to obtain early-stage feedback from technical partners on the feasibility of various technological solutions that would allow performing these actions. In the final stage, it was all about matching the planned technical solutions with the city's

planned actions. When it comes to KPIs, it is crucial to ensure they are ambitious yet achievable and, most importantly, measurable.

I am very pleased that, at this stage of the project, each city's challenges and interests are reflected in the AURORA project, and, together as a consortium, we are on our way to addressing these challenges with effective technological solutions. I am personally very excited about the upcoming demonstration events, where we will be able to witness, through each use case, how the technology can help cities in the Boreal region become more resilient to climate change.

**Q: You led several workshops involving pilot & replicant cities' representatives and technical partners (i.e., data researchers, engineers). What were the main challenges in aligning these groups and finding the right solutions?**

A: Throughout the year, I initiated and led an Online Workshop and two in-person Design Thinking Workshops. These meetings served as a platform for empathizing with the challenges each city faces, defining the unifying problems, ideating viable technological features, and, lastly, prototyping possible solutions. Each workshop involved numerous participants, including project partners of academic, research, and technological nature, as well as city representatives. While it is vital to ensure everyone's voice is heard, it is also critical to reach a mutual understanding and agreement for the project to move forward. Furthermore, it was important to bring the cities and the technical partners into direct dialogue, so that the city representatives have the right expectations for the technological solutions and the technical partners are aware of the cities' expectations.

**Q: What advice would you give to future project leaders facing a similar “nothing is clear yet” phase?**

A: I would advise setting strict internal deadlines to establish common ground and ensure the project moves forward, while also allocating sufficient time and effort to understand the unique characteristics of the project participants. In the initial phase of the project, it takes time to learn about end-user challenges, needs, requirements, and expectations, and to align them with viable technological solutions within the project scope. It is important not to panic that lengthy discussions do not generate concrete ideas and solutions from the very outset of the project.

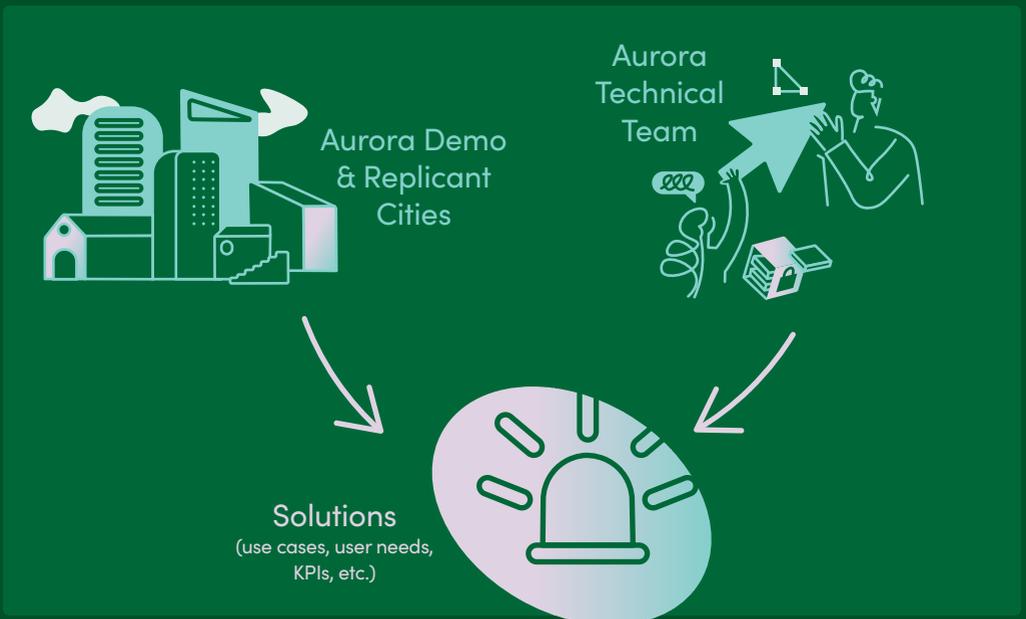
**Q: In your opinion, what is the most important long-term impact that AURORA will bring to the EU boreal region?**

A: I believe that, in the long term, the AURORA will set an example in the EU Boreal Region on how cities can

improve the quality of their policies, decision-making, and emergency response regarding the effects of climate change on population health. I hope that, with the success of the AURORA project, there will be a ripple effect in the region, with cities partnering, learning from one another, and passing along the best practices from this project.

**Q: How would you describe your experience working within the AURORA project consortium in general?**

A: My experience working in the consortium has been largely positive. Despite the professionals coming from very different backgrounds within the European Union, I find them extremely easy to communicate with, professional, and collaborative. Most importantly, I never received a “no” when asking for input or help. I believe this attitude is key to the project’s success.



We sincerely thank Mr Motuzas for sharing his insights and wish him every success in the coming year as the Aurora project progresses toward its next milestones, continuing to strengthen its impact on climate resilience and public health in the Boreal region.

# News

Meetings, events and public articles

## Consortium Plenary Meeting and Design Thinking Workshop in Greece

24-25 September 2025

The Aurora Consortium convened in Larissa, Greece, on 24–25 September 2025 for its Plenary Meeting, hosted at JOIST Innovation Park.

The Aurora Consortium convened in Larissa, Greece, on 24–25 September 2025 for its Plenary Meeting, hosted at JOIST Innovation Park. This two-day gathering marked an important milestone in the project's first year, offering a valuable opportunity to review progress, celebrate achievements, and establish a clear roadmap for the future.

As part of the Plenary Meeting, the consortium organized a Design Thinking Workshop dedicated to strengthening collaboration and ensuring a common understanding between the Aurora project cities—both demonstration and replication sites—and the technical partners.

The workshop applied a participatory and solution-oriented approach, enabling partners to collectively explore challenges, align expectations, and co-create strategies for successful implementation across diverse

urban contexts. By fostering direct dialogue between cities and technical experts, the session facilitated the translation of project objectives into locally relevant actions, while ensuring that technical solutions remain practical and scalable.

In addition, a dedicated session was held to address technical questions raised by end-users, providing a platform for clarification and knowledge exchange. This open forum not only enhanced transparency but also helped to identify critical user requirements that will guide the refinement of Aurora's tools and methodologies.

Through these interactive exchanges, the workshop reinforced a shared vision among all partners and laid the groundwork for more effective collaboration in the upcoming phases of the project.



# The Innohealth Forum in Larissa

26-27 September 2025

## Aurora partners participated in a healthcare conference in Larissa (Greece) - The Innohealth Forum 2025.

This international event is one of the most significant gatherings in the region, bringing together innovators, researchers, policymakers, and healthcare leaders. We are excited to connect with so many professionals working in Aurora-related fields, all striving to improve people's health through innovations.

A big thank you to the dedicated organizers of the Innohealth Forum 2025 for creating such an inspiring event:

- JOIST Innovation Park.
- Ευρωπαϊκός Κόμβος Ψηφιακής Καινοτομίας Health Hub.
- iED - Institute of Entrepreneurship Development.

For more information, please visit the [event website](#).



## Aurora at the PHAM 2025 Conference in Rotterdam

7-10 October 2025

We are pleased to share that the Aurora Project participated in the 7th Planetary Health Annual Meeting (PHAM 2025), held in Rotterdam, October 7-10.

The Lithuanian University of Health Sciences presented a scientific thesis entitled: "Effect of seasonal and meteorological factors on suicide in the Boreal region, 2001-2021 (pilot study of the Lithuanian case)." We extend our sincere thanks to Vidmantas Vaičiulis and Gintarė Kalininė for their professional presentation.

This year's conference theme - "Planetary Health for All and In All: Boosting Urgency and Agency for Systems Change" - brought together leading international experts and offered valuable opportunities for knowledge exchange and collaboration.



# Aurora at the EU Week of Regions and Cities Workshop in Brussels

14 October 2025

Aurora was presented as the initiative in the field of digital innovation.

On 14 October, our partner Johanna Honkanen from Prizztech Oy presented the Aurora project by taking part in the "Regions to Stay – Digital Innovations for Local Development" workshop at the European Week of Regions and Cities in Brussels.

Aurora was presented as the initiative in the field of digital innovation. Highlighting the city of Pori and its focus on the flood risks related to the Kokemäenjoki River, where ice jam floods could cause damage of up to

€140 million. Due to the risks of ice jams and frazil ice floods, Pori is among Finland's most flood-prone areas. In Satakunta, for example, in Rauma, coastal floods also pose major risks. Aurora's digital twin supports adaptation to climate change and its impacts, such as heatwaves, to which cities can adapt by, for instance, adding more greenery to urban areas. The digital twin provides nature-based adaptation proposals that support decision-making to strengthen regional climate resilience.



# Aurora at the Connecting Health and Climate Change conference ENBEL2025 in Tallinn

16-17 October 2025

## Two inspiring days for the Climate Change & Health community!



It was a truly productive and connecting experience – so many fascinating topics discussed and passionate people met. The energy, ideas, and commitment to improving our planet’s health were truly felt in the air.

Aurora project proudly presented outputs during two poster sessions:

- 1) P4.12 – *Temperature-related mortality projections in Finland: exploring different adaptation scenarios.* Lisa Haga | Finnish Meteorological Institute;
- 2) P5.9 – *Trend of Tick-Borne Encephalitis Incidence in The Boreal Region Over The Past 30 Years: Official Statistics Data From 1995 To 2024 (Lithuania Case).* Ricardas Radisauskas | Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Department of Environmental and Occupational Medicine.

The ENBEL2025 conference aims to foster collaboration, inform evidence-based policy, and promote knowledge exchange and new research across climate and health communities. Organised by: University of Tartu, Umeå University, CICERO – Center for International Climate Research.

# Aurora at the Baltic Sea Regional Forum 2025 in Viimsi, Estonia

17-18 November 2025

## Aurora presented by oral speech at the Baltic Sea Regional Forum 2025 for the EU Mission on Adaptation for Climate Change.



The TalTech Urban Water Systems Research Group participated in the Mission Baltic Forum 2025, held in Viimsi on November 17–18. The event gathered regional stakeholders to discuss climate adaptation across the Baltic Sea area.

Day one included site visits to Viimsi’s innovative stormwater and climate adaptation systems—many developed through projects involving the TalTech team, such as CleanStormWater, MUSTBE, and LATESTadapt. On the second day, Ivar Annus presented the AURORA project, which links climate stressors like extreme rainfall and urban heat islands to public health risks.

# Aurora at the AI for the Planet Conference in Paris

24–26 November 2025

The City of Tallinn, represented by Markus Annilo, joined the AI for the Planet conference in Paris on 24–26 November 2025 to connect with the broader AI-for-climate community.

AI for the Planet brought together leaders from government, industry, civil society, and academia to explore how artificial intelligence can support a healthier, more resilient planet. Over three days, participants exchanged ideas on practical AI applications for climate action and sustainability, while also working to spark new partnerships and concrete collaborations.

For Aurora, Tallinn's participation marks another meaningful step toward strengthening cross-sector cooperation and expanding our community of cities and institutions committed to climate innovation.



## Project Marked the First Year Review Meeting

4 December 2025

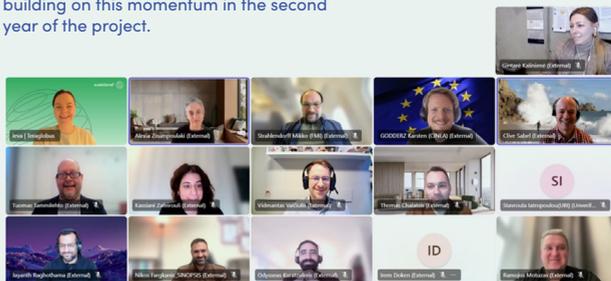
Reviewers praised the rapid growth of the Aurora Implementation Hub, strong expert engagement, and active city involvement.

The AURORA project held its first-year review meeting (Month 12), bringing together Work Package and Task Leaders to present and reflect on the progress achieved during the initial year of implementation. The meeting was also attended by Karsten Gödderz, the Project Officer from CINEA-European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency, and Professor Clive Sabel, the independent reviewer. Project leaders provided clear and concise summaries of their work, highlighting achievements and ongoing challenges.

Discussions focused on improving climate and health data delivery, strengthening collaboration between Work Packages, and reinforcing the key role of cities in translating results into action. Reviewers praised the rapid growth of the Aurora Implementation Hub, strong expert engagement, and active

city involvement, noting that the emphasis on collaboration reflects a highly committed network. Full insights from the reviewers' feedback are available in the [LinkedIn article](#).

The Aurora team is grateful for the constructive input and looks forward to building on this momentum in the second year of the project.



# Aurora at the Winter Satellite Workshop 2026 in Espoo

20-23 January 2026

During the event, Project Aurora was presented by partners from the Finnish Meteorological Institute (Ilmatieteen laitos).

The Winter Satellite Workshop 2026 brings together experts from academia, research institutions, and industry to exchange knowledge on current developments in satellite technologies.

Dedicated sessions focused on collaboration, research, and innovation, enabling in-depth discussions and the sharing of expertise across the satellite community.

The presentation delivered by Mikko Strahlendorff (Finnish Meteorological Institute) was titled "Machine Learning Weaving Together Satellite and In-Situ Observations."

A summary of the presentation is available at [this link](#).



# Aurora Co-Organised the Effective Cross-Project Learning Workshop

11 February 2026

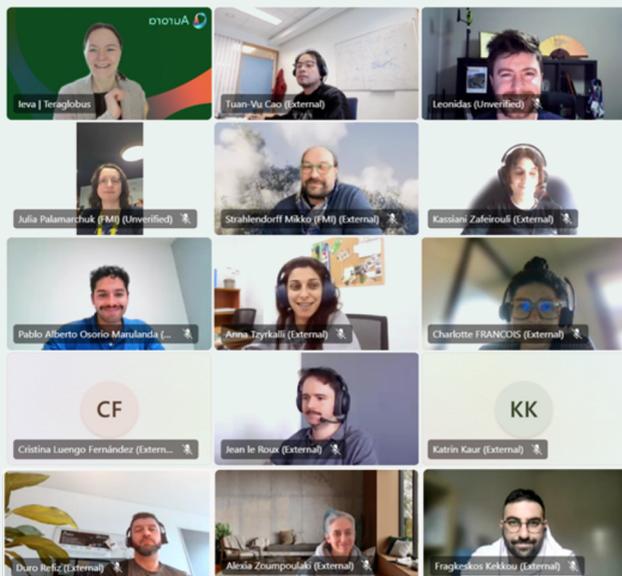
Four EU Mission-funded sister projects ( **Aurora**, **healthRiskADAPT**, **MOUNTADAPT**, and **ISMED-CLIM** ) launched a cross-project learning workshop entitled “Challenges and Success Stories in Collecting Health and Climate Data”, which took place on Wednesday, 11 February 2026, from 13:00 to 14:30 Central European Time (CET), online.

This workshop represents a strong clustering and collaboration activity, aiming to foster synergies, mutual learning, and coordination among EU-funded initiatives working at the intersection of health and climate. It is designed to strengthen cross-project exchange and support the alignment of approaches, methodologies, and future collaboration opportunities.

During the workshop, EU Missions' projects shared their experiences and lessons learned from working with various health and climate data across our projects. A total of 46 participants, representing 10 different EU initiatives, joined the session to exchange experiences and discuss the realities of working with diverse health and climate datasets. The workshop provided a platform for open dialogue on the technical, methodological, and operational hurdles encountered across projects, as well as the innovative solutions emerging from ongoing work.

[LinkedIn article.](#)

[Official press release.](#)





# Aurora Invites the Public to **Join** Register here Implementation Hub

The Aurora Project is committed to transparency, openness, and collaboration in building its innovative platform. To ensure diverse perspectives shape the future of the initiative, Aurora invites everyone – individuals, experts, and enthusiasts alike – to join its innovation hub and share ideas, insights, and recommendations.

As part of this commitment to openness, we have started a communication campaign to invite external people to the Implementation Hub.

## We Need You if You Are

An epidemiology and climate expert / A healthcare professional /  
A public health agency worker / A local municipality worker /  
A policymaker in health, climate, or sustainability /  
An individual interested in climate and health risks

## Why Should You Join?

By joining, you'll help shape climate–health solutions for the EU Boreal region, bringing your expertise and local insights to ensure actions are relevant and effective. You'll collaborate with a diverse network of experts, policymakers, and community voices to co-design and test innovative approaches that boost climate resilience and protect public health.

Members gain access to cutting-edge research, share best practices, influence policy, and build skills through workshops and peer learning – all while ensuring project outcomes meet real-world needs and can be scaled for greater impact.

By completing the survey, you'll gain access to several opportunities, including:

- Receiving our biannual project updates through the official Aurora Newsletter (via email, every 6 months).
- Getting email invitations to upcoming demonstration events and key workshops.
- Sharing your feedback and recommendations – if you choose to – via email, questionnaires, or short interviews (you will decide the format that suits you best).

# Publications

## White Paper "Early Findings from the AURORA Project in Fighting the Climate Effect: Risks of Climate Change Impacts on Human Health"

Written by: Lithuanian University of Health Sciences

[Open-access link](#)

## White Paper "Early Findings from the AURORA Project in Fighting the Climate Effect: Health Systems Response to Climate Change Adaptation"

Written by: Vilnius City Municipality Public Health Bureau

[Open-access link](#)

## White Paper "Early Findings from the AURORA Project in Fighting the Climate Effect: Potential for Climate Change Mitigation"

Written by: Administration of Jūrmala Local Government

[Open-access link](#)

## Journal Article "The effect of seasonal and meteorological factors on suicide rates in the Lithuanian population in 2001–2021: a case-crossover study"

Written by: Vidmantas Vaičiulis, Ričardas Radišauskas, Olga Meščeriakova, Gintarė Kalinienė, Donatas Valiukas, Laura Seiduanova, Akmaral Abikulova & Jonė Venclovienė

[Open-access link](#)

## Scientific Thesis "Effect of seasonal and meteorological factors on suicide in the Boreal region 2001 2021 (pilot study of the Lithuanian case)"

Written by: Vaičiulis Vidmantas, Radišauskas Ričardas, Mesceriakova Olga, Kalinienė Gintarė, Valiukas Donatas, Venclovienė Jonė

[Open-access link](#)

## Scientific Thesis "Trend of Tick-Borne Encephalitis Incidence in the Boreal Region Over the Past 30 Years: Official Statistics Data from 1995 to 2024 (Lithuania)"

Written by: Radišauskas Ričardas, Vaičiulis Vidmantas, Kalinienė Gintarė, Liseckienė Ida

[Open-access link](#)

# Upcoming Events

**3-4 March, 2026**

Consortium Plenary meeting hosted by KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Sweden

**28 May, 2026**

Forum for the EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change in Nicosia, Cyprus





# Aurora

## Discover Up-to-Date Information on Our Site:

[www.auroraclima.eu](http://www.auroraclima.eu)

## Our Dedicated Partners:

Coordinator



### Partners



Associated partner



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