

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001513/24
to the Commission
Leire Pajín (S&D)
(15 August 2024)**

Subject: Reducing heat-related deaths in Europe

The Barcelona Institute for Global Health (ISGlobal) has published a study in *Nature Medicine* that puts the number of heat-related deaths in 2023 at 47 000. Summer 2023 was the second hottest summer on record in Europe and the hottest globally.

The build-up of heat over several days creates imbalances in the human body that can lead to metabolic disorders, kidney failure and urinary infections, with women, elderly people and poorer populations being most at risk.

Following the dramatic consequences of the 2003 heatwave, some Member States, such as Spain, began developing heat-health action plans to minimise the effects of high temperatures. It will be necessary for climate and temperatures to be monitored in real time, bodies and institutions to collaborate to coordinate a response in the event of an emergency and the health and social care system to be prepared.

1. How will the European Commission facilitate cooperation between meteorological services, civil protection agencies and public health authorities to tackle this issue?
2. Is the Commission planning any public health strategies?

Submitted: 15.8.2024

**Answer given by Ms Kyriakides on behalf of the European Commission
(4 October 2024)**

In line with the objectives of the European Climate Law ⁽¹⁾ and the EU Adaptation Strategy ⁽²⁾, the Commission has undertaken significant steps to strengthen resilience against climate-induced risks, including heatwaves.

Published in March 2024, the European Climate Risk Assessment ⁽³⁾ identified heat stress as the most severe and urgent of all climate risks to public health.

Responding to this, in its communication ‘*Managing Climate Risks — Protecting People and Prosperity*’ ⁽⁴⁾ the Commission sets out how to strengthen surveillance response mechanisms, coordination of civil protection assistance for climate-related health threats and enhance the European Climate and Health Observatory ⁽⁵⁾, which helps prepare local and national health systems for climate change.

The Observatory provides essential real-time data that underpins coordinated responses to extreme weather events, including heatwaves, and it published the European Environment Agency’s 2023 Report on Heat ⁽⁶⁾, which summarises the available evidence.

Depending on the nature of the health threats that are caused by heat, they can fall within the scope of Regulation (EU) 2022/2371 on serious cross-border threats to health ⁽⁷⁾.

The Health Security Committee ⁽⁸⁾ (HSC), chaired by the Commission, coordinates public health strategies across the EU and countries of the European Economic Area to respond to serious cross-border health threats, such as extreme heat.

On 19 June 2024 the HSC held a specific meeting on climate change and health security ⁽⁹⁾. The Commission together with the World Health Organisation has published a factsheet ‘*Stay safe in the Heat*’ ⁽¹⁰⁾.

⁽¹⁾ https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/european-climate-law_en

⁽²⁾ https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/adaptation-climate-change/eu-adaptation-strategy_en

⁽³⁾ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/european-climate-risk-assessment>

⁽⁴⁾ https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/adaptation-climate-change/managing-climate-risks-protecting-people-and-prosperity_en

⁽⁵⁾ <https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/observatory>

⁽⁶⁾ <https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/observatory/++aq++metadata/publications/eea-report-2018climate-change-impacts-on-health-in-europe-heat-and-infectious-diseases2019/>

⁽⁷⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022R2371&qid=1725543259223>

⁽⁸⁾ https://health.ec.europa.eu/health-security-and-infectious-diseases/crisis-management/list-authorities-represented-health-security-committee_en

⁽⁹⁾ https://health.ec.europa.eu/document/download/7c0fa5ca-51bf-4751-9586-457fb14f3542_en?filename=security_ev_20240619_sr_en.pdf

⁽¹⁰⁾ https://health.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ee1527a5-70fe-4404-89af-d3bd181f41e2_en?filename=ec-who_heatwave_factsheet_en.pdf

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control publishes current threats from extreme heat in its weekly Communicable disease threats reports ⁽¹⁾.

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/communicable-disease-threats-report-24-30-august-2024-week-35>