

EN

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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Minzatu
on behalf of the European Commission
(20.3.2026)

The Commission considers that exposure to extreme temperatures at work is an important risk factor for workers' occupational safety and health (OSH). The EU OSH Framework Directive 89/391/EEC¹ sets out the general obligations for employers, who are required to assess all risks at work, including those arising from exposure to high temperatures when workers are or can be exposed to such risks, and to take appropriate preventive and protective measures which shall take into account vulnerable workers. A number of other EU OSH Directives include more detailed provisions with regard to temperature at work, such as the Workplace², Construction Sites³, the Fishing Vessels⁴ and the two Extractive Industries Directives^{5,6}. For example, the Construction Directive specifies in its Annex IV that 'During working hours, the temperature must be appropriate for human beings, having regard to the working methods used and the physical demands placed on the workers', and that 'The temperature in rest areas, rooms for duty staff, sanitary facilities, canteens and first-aid rooms must be appropriate to the particular purpose of such areas'. Similar provisions exist in the other mentioned Directives. In addition, the Commission currently assesses whether the EU OSH legal framework remains fit for purpose, and plans to adopt in 2026 a new European framework to strengthen resilience to, and management of, climate change related risks⁷.

Furthermore, EU-OSHA published the guide 'Heat at Work – Guidance for Workplaces'⁸ as well as the Online Interactive Risk Assessment Tool (OiRA) 'Heat and cold'⁹.

In addition, the European Climate and Health Observatory provides information on the impacts of heat on the health, wellbeing and productivity of workers.

¹ OJ L 183, 29.6.1989, p. 1, Council Directive 89/391/EEC on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A31989L0391>.

² OJ L 393, 30.12.1989, pp. 1–12, Council Directive 89/654/EEC concerning the minimum safety and health requirements for the workplace - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/1989/654/oj/eng>.

³ OJ L 245, 26.8.1992, p. 6, Council Directive 92/57/EEC on the implementation of minimum safety and health requirements at temporary or mobile construction sites - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/1992/57/oj/eng>.

⁴ OJ L 307, 13.12.1993, p. 1, Council Directive 93/103/EC concerning the minimum safety and health requirements for work on board fishing vessels - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/1993/103/oj/eng>.

⁵ OJ L 404, 31.12.1992, p. 10, Council Directive 92/104/EEC on the minimum requirements for improving the safety and health protection of workers in surface and underground mineral-extracting industries - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/1992/104/oj/eng>.

⁶ OJ L 348, 28.11.1992, p. 9, Council Directive 92/91/EEC concerning the minimum requirements for improving the safety and health protection of workers in the mineral- extracting industries through drilling - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/1992/91/oj/eng>.

⁷ https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/adaptation-and-resilience-climate-change/european-climate-resilience-and-risk-management-integrated-framework_en.

⁸ <https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/heat-work-guidance-workplaces>.

⁹ <https://osha.europa.eu/en/highlights/beat-heat-work-summer-oira>.