

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002807/26
to the Commission
Stanisław Tyszk (ESN)
(7 July 2026)**

Subject: Availability of air conditioning in the context of heatwave-related deaths

The World Health Organisation (WHO) says that the heatwave that began on 21 June 2026 is responsible for more than 1 300 excess deaths and warns that heat claims more than 175 000 lives annually in the WHO European Region. The 2022 report of the Lancet Countdown estimates that, in 2019 alone, access to air conditioning averted around 195 000 heat-related deaths globally among over-65s. Around 20% of European households are fitted with AC units, versus over 90% in the United States, Japan and South Korea.

According to Euronews, despite declining to pick a side in the AC debate on 30 June, the Commission conceded on 2 July that air conditioning was a 'very necessary tool' but that its widespread use would push up bills at a time of high energy prices.

The price of CO₂ emission allowances under the EU ETS is approximately EUR 80/tonne. This inflates electricity generation costs, driving up household bills.

1. Has the Commission assessed the extent to which EU ETS costs are limiting households' access to health-protecting and life-saving air conditioning during heatwaves?
2. Will the Commission broaden its impact assessment of the EU ETS review in 2026 to cover the impact of energy prices on air-conditioning availability?
3. With heatwaves raging, does the Commission consider it acceptable that EU ETS costs have been driving up the price of AC use in homes, schools, hospitals and care homes?

Submitted: 7.7.2026

**Answer given by Mr Hoekstra on behalf of the European Commission
(31 August 2026)**

The Commission agrees that during periods of dangerous heat, air conditioning is part of the measures and technologies that can help maintain thermal comfort, safety and productivity.

Air conditioners are often inverse heat pumps, that in winter can heat homes, while emitting less greenhouse gas than fossil fuel heating appliances.

By putting a price on carbon, and generating revenues that are reinvested in clean energy, the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) will directly promote the deployment of heat pumps, and thus in part also air conditioning, in regions in the EU where heating needs are still the primary driver to install such technologies.

Regarding the impact of the ETS on electricity prices, on average the largest driver of high and volatile electricity prices is the EU's exposure to imported fossil fuels.

The next largest drivers are grid charges and taxes and levies. On 17 July 2026, the Commission presented an Electrification Action Plan which tackles drivers of electricity costs ⁽¹⁾.

It includes measures to make better use of electricity grids, reduce network charges, encourage smarter electricity consumption, and better align energy taxation to make sure that electricity is not taxed more heavily than gas.

The review of the ETS, also presented on 17 July 2016, did not look at the contribution of ETS costs to the affordability of air conditioning specifically.

However, the ETS provides an effective contribution towards EU climate goals since it is technologically neutral and lets markets find ways to reduce emissions at the lowest cost.

The direct ETS contribution to electricity prices, which is already lower than the components mentioned above, will decrease with a cleaner generation mix.

⁽¹⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_26_1596.