

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002843/26
to the Commission
Giuseppe Antoci (The Left)
(8 July 2026)**

Subject: Extreme heatwaves, energy poverty and protecting vulnerable people in Sicily and Mediterranean regions

With record temperatures in multiple areas of the Mediterranean, and particularly in Sicily, the recent heatwaves in many Member States have had serious repercussions on health and society. In areas with high summer temperatures and significant levels of poverty, single elderly people, homeless people, people with chronic conditions and households living in energy poverty are among the most exposed to the effects, often unable to access adequate cooling systems.

This situation highlights how the effects of climate change exacerbate social inequalities, so we need to strengthen EU coordination across climate policy, health policy and social policy, including through the instruments provided for by the Social Climate Fund.

In the light of the above:

1. Will the Commission promote specific measures to support Member States in protecting the most vulnerable during extreme heatwaves?
2. Will it promote, including through EU funding, the setting up of air-conditioned spaces for the public and assistance services for the most vulnerable groups?
3. Will it adopt common guidelines to combat the effects of extreme heat and energy poverty, with a particular focus on Mediterranean regions, such as Sicily?

Submitted: 8.7.2026

**Answer given by Mr Hoekstra on behalf of the European Commission
(1 September 2026)**

1. The Commission helps Member States to protect those most vulnerable from heatwaves. Examples include guidance for national climate adaptation strategies and plans ⁽¹⁾; for heat health action plans (from the European Climate and Health Observatory) ⁽²⁾; for employers and workplaces to implement EU legal obligations ⁽³⁾; and for improving prevention, preparedness and response planning under the regulation on Serious Cross-Border Threats to Health ⁽⁴⁾. The impact of extreme temperatures on workers is taken into account in the preparation of the upcoming Quality Jobs Act. It is, however, for the (sub)national authorities to choose the most appropriate heat protection measures, in line with the subsidiarity principle and the local heating and cooling plans as foreseen by Article 25(6) of the Energy Efficiency Directive ⁽⁵⁾. The Commission is also developing a new European framework to strengthen overall climate resilience and preparedness across all levels of government and policy areas, which it expects to adopt during the fourth quarter of 2026.

2. Member State authorities have the possibility of using EU funds for the purpose of setting up air-conditioned spaces for the public and assistance services for the most vulnerable groups. The Commission considers air conditioning an important heat protection measure for vulnerable groups. It also supports a comprehensive approach enhancing the performance of buildings for the summer ⁽⁶⁾, the micro-climate around buildings as well as the urban heat island effect through urban planning ⁽⁷⁾.

3. The Commission's 2023 Recommendation on energy poverty ⁽⁸⁾ and guidance document ⁽⁹⁾ will soon be updated with specific focus on summer energy poverty, affecting notably the Mediterranean regions.

⁽¹⁾ Commission notice 2023/C 264/01.

⁽²⁾ <https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/observatory/policy/national-policies/heat-health-action-plans>, <https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/observatory/topics/health-impacts/heat-and-health>.

⁽³⁾ <https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/heat-work-guidance-workplaces>.

⁽⁴⁾ Regulation (EU) 2022/2371.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:02023L1791-20260805>.

⁽⁶⁾ For example, through a combination of various solutions such as solar shading, thermal insulation, improved ventilation or active cooling.

⁽⁷⁾ E.g. <https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/knowledge/tools/urban-ast>.

⁽⁸⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L_202302407.

⁽⁹⁾ https://energy.ec.europa.eu/publications/commission-staff-working-document-eu-guidance-energy-poverty_en.