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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Minzatu
on behalf of the European Commission
(21.8.2026)

The human cost of extreme temperatures for workers can be severe. Heat at work can contribute to fatal and non-fatal occupational accidents and diseases, while also generating significant adverse economic effects.

The EU has strong rules addressing all occupational safety and health (OSH) risks. The Framework Directive on Safety and Health at Work¹ requires employers to assess and address all OSH risks, including heat-related risks. Other directives, such as those concerning the workplace, construction sites, extractive industries and fishing vessels², contain more detailed provisions, including related to indoor and work-area temperatures and protection against inclement weather conditions.

In addition, the Commission and the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) provide guidance and practical tools to support the implementation of EU OSH legislation, including measures to address heat at work³. EU-OSHA's guidance *Heat at Work - Guidance for Workplaces* covers the adaptation of working hours; the organisation of rest breaks and access to hydration. It also recommends that workers in hot environments be encouraged to set their own work and rest schedules.

In the context of the ongoing work and social partner consultation on the Quality Jobs Act, the Commission is considering, among other issues, possible further EU action to address occupational safety and health risks, including risks related to heat at work. In December 2025, the EU Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work recommended stronger EU action on heat-exposure indicators, workers' acclimatisation to heat at work, hydration and work organisation. However, the Committee did not reach a consensus on whether such measures should be binding or non-binding.

¹ OJ L 183, 29.6.1989, p. 1: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A01989L0391-20081211>.

² Directives 89/654/EEC (Workplace), 92/57/EEC (Construction), 92/104/EEC and 92/91/EEC (Mining) and 93/103/EC (Fishing).

³ EU-OSHA guidance 'Heat at Work – Guidance for Workplaces': https://osha.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Heat-at-work-Guidance-for-workplaces_EN.pdf, EU-OSHA's Online Interactive Risk Assessment Tool (OiRA) 'Heat and cold': <https://osha.europa.eu/en/oshnews/winter-cold-sudden-heat-protecting-workers-oira>, European Commission sector-specific guidelines for employers in the construction, agriculture and fishing sector: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/96b5fe83-ef7d-4628-9af0-e02b25810c1d>, https://osha.europa.eu/sites/default/files/OSH_workers_agriculture_livestock_farming.pdf, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e64b1594-1b60-11e7-aeb3-01aa75ed71a1>.