

The Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) represents national medical associations across Europe. We are committed to contributing the medical profession's point of view to EU and European policy-making through pro-active cooperation on a wide range of health and healthcare related issues.

European doctors call for comprehensive heat action plans

The Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) calls for urgent action by the EU and European countries to develop, implement, and update comprehensive heat-health action plans at European, national and local levels.

This summer, Europe is again experiencing record-breaking temperatures as has been predicted with our changing climate demonstrating. Given that 181,000 deaths have been attributed to heat in the summers of 2022, 2023 and 2024, extreme heat is a critical and escalating public health issue related to climate change.¹ More frequent and more intense heatwaves pose substantial mortality and other health risks, by exacerbating the severity of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, and the increase in premature deaths is particularly among the most vulnerable and at-risk populations.

In June, WHO/Europe recommended countries, regions and cities to develop and implement heat-health action plans to prevent avoidable impacts and to prepare for, respond to and mitigate the health impacts of extreme heat. It has been shown that countries with effective plans in place are able to respond fast, coordinate among relevant actors, and protect people.² Such plans also keep health systems and the health workforce operating without being exhausted by heat-related emergencies. The health sector plays a central role in heat-health action plans as it identifies and maps populations at increased risk, leads on public health communications, implements heat-health surveillance, and builds health system resilience.

European doctors recommend the key sector actors, including health sector, to follow the new WHO/Europe guidance³ setting out practical actions to protect communities, patients and the workforce from extreme heat, and to use its public health message bank to support effective

¹ [Over 62,700 Deaths Associated with Record-breaking Heat During the Summer of 2024 in Europe](#). ISGlobal, 2025.

² [Statement – Extreme heat: more deadly weeks may still lie ahead for the European Region](#). WHO/Europe, 2026.

³ [Heat-health action plans: guidance, second edition](#). WHO/Europe, 2026.

risk communication with the public. Protecting people from the adverse health effects of extreme heat requires close collaboration across sectors and governance.

CPME has previously addressed extreme weather events, including heat, in its 2026 Feedback on the European Integrated Framework for Climate Resilience⁴, the 2023 Policy on Climate Change and Health⁵ and the 2009 Policy on Global Warming and Health⁶. Moreover, in 2024, CPME and the Lancet Countdown listed heat as a policy priority for Europe.⁷

⁴ [CPME on European Integrated Framework for Climate Resilience](#). CPME, 2026.

⁵ [CPME Policy on climate change and health](#). CPME, 2023.

⁶ [CPME Policy on Global Warming and Health](#). CPME, 2009.

⁷ [2024 Climate and Health Policy Priorities for Europe](#). The Lancet Countdown in Europe, CPME, the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), and the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER), 2024.