The Economic Cost of Extreme Heat in Europe

Heat is a live cost line on Europe's economy. It hits productivity first, then tax revenue and GDP, then people and healthcare systems. Adaptation isn't a cost, it's what stops a cost that's already accumulating.

€160 BILLION A YEAR

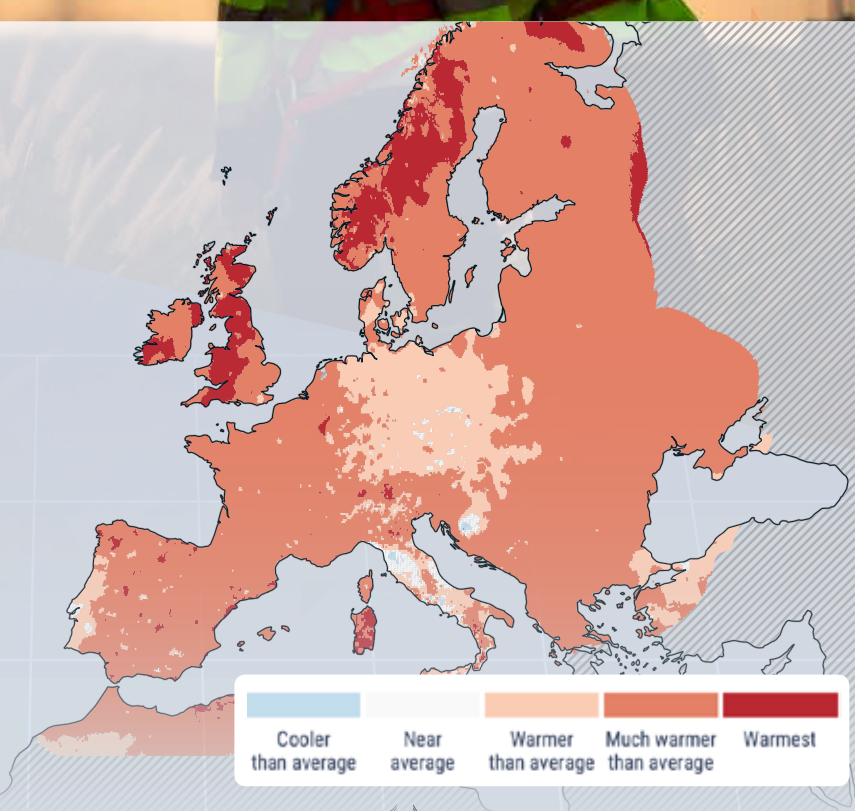
Heat stress is already a drain on the European economy, combining healthcare costs and lost productivity.

Source: HEAT-SHIELD (Horizon 2020) with the European Commission Joint Research Centre, via CORDIS

Left unaddressed, heat-driven productivity losses in the EU will hit at least

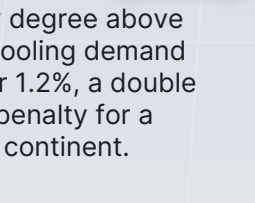
€17 BILLION A YEAR BY 2030

Source: European Parliament Think Tank, study for the EMPL Committee (2025)

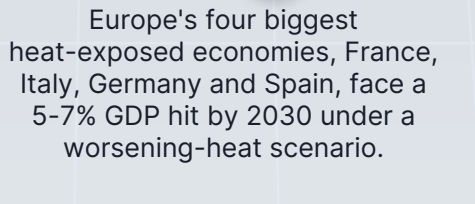


Anomalies and extremes in annual surface air temperature in 2025

3% of labor productivity



lost for every degree above 30°C, while cooling demand climbs another 1.2%, a double economic penalty for a warming continent.

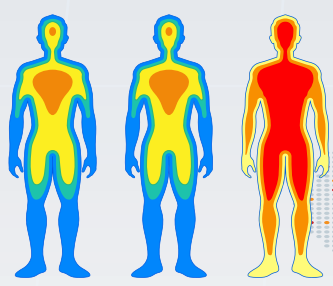


Europe's four biggest heat-exposed economies, France, Italy, Germany and Spain, face a 5-7% GDP hit by 2030 under a worsening-heat scenario.

Estimated annual tax revenue losses from heat-driven output loss: 1.8% in France, 1.3% in Italy and Spain, 0.7% in Germany.

Source: Allianz Research, "Too Hot to Grow" (28 May 2026)

Nearly 1 in 3 workers in Europe are now exposed to dangerous heat on the job, the fastest-growing exposure rate of any region on earth since 2000.



1 in 14 EU workers has already fallen ill from heat at work, proof this is a current workforce risk, not a future one.

Read the ILO report

Source: ILO, "Heat at Work: Implications for Safety and Health" (2024), co-edited by Prof. Andreas Flouris (FAME Lab)

HEALTHCARE COSTS HEAT RELATED MORTALITY

Heat-related workplace injuries in Europe are rising faster than anywhere else in the world, part of a global toll of 22.85 million injuries and nearly 19,000 deaths in a single year.

Source: ILO, "Heat at Work: Implications for Safety and Health" (2024)

An estimated **62,775** heat-related deaths occurred in Europe between 1 June and 30 September 2024, a 23.6 percent rise on summer 2023; Italy recorded the highest national toll at over 19,000.

Source: ISGlobal (Barcelona Institute for Global Health), published in Nature Medicine

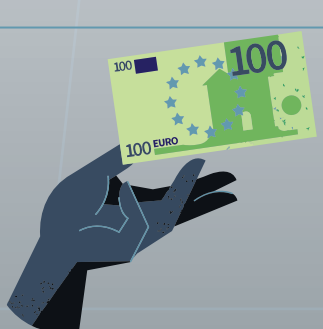
Heat now kills at least **175,000** people a year across the WHO European Region, a death toll that has climbed 30% in two decades.

Source: World Health Organization (WHO), Regional Office for Europe, via UN News

Heat-related mortality has worsened in 820 of 823 European regions, essentially the entire continent, with southern and south-eastern Europe bearing the sharpest increases.

Source: The Lancet Countdown, 2026 Europe report

General population mortality is well tracked. Poorly tracked: heat illness and death among workers. The real numbers are likely far higher.



Every euro spent on heat protection today returns more than a euro saved on lost productivity, healthcare costs and lives tomorrow. Adaptation is not a cost, it is the investment Europe can no longer postpone.