# Europe faces rising heat-related deaths in 2025 as climate change accelerates



A recent study conducted by researchers from Imperial College London and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine has revealed a stark and alarming link between climate change and heat-related deaths across Europe during the summer of 2025. The analysis, encompassing data from 854 major cities which house nearly a third of Europe’s population, estimates that out of 24,400 heat-related fatalities, approximately 16,500—or nearly 68%—were directly attributable to human-induced climate change. This finding reaffirms the deadly consequences of rising temperatures driven by greenhouse gas emissions.

The summer of 2025 ranked as the fourth warmest on record for Europe, with urban temperatures soaring between 2.2°C to 3.6°C above natural baselines due to global warming. Southern European countries were among the hardest hit, with Italy suffering 4,597 heat deaths, Spain 2,841, followed by Germany, France, and the UK, which recorded 1,477, 1,444, and 1,147 fatalities respectively. Notably, capital cities such as Rome, Athens, and Bucharest faced the highest per-capita death rates amid these extreme conditions. Older adults proved particularly vulnerable, accounting for 85% of the fatalities, underscoring the demographic’s heightened risk. Health experts warn that these figures likely underestimate the true toll since heat is often not explicitly recorded on death certificates, rendering it a “silent killer” hidden within broader mortality statistics.

Beyond its devastating human cost, the intensifying heat threatens Europe’s public health infrastructure and urban environments. Despite improvements in emergency responses since the catastrophic 2003 heatwave, many cities and national health systems grapple with escalating summer temperatures coupled with ageing populations. The study highlights urgent adaptation needs, including the development of local heatwave action plans, expansion of green and shaded urban spaces, prioritisation of air conditioning for retirement homes and vulnerable groups, and the roll-out of early warning systems alongside robust public awareness campaigns. These measures would bolster resilience against increasingly frequent and severe heat episodes.

The ramifications extend beyond health, profoundly affecting the continent’s tourism sector. Heatwaves deter outdoor cultural events, hikes, and midday excursions, pushing a shift in travel patterns and reducing visitor numbers especially during peak summer months. Coastal destinations face additional climate stressors such as beach erosion and water quality deterioration. Many heritage hotels and iconic attractions lack adequate cooling infrastructure, placing tourists and staff at greater risk. Southern Europe—particularly Spain, France, and Italy—is experiencing declining summer bookings, imperilling the economic sustainability of regions heavily reliant on seasonal tourism and prompting calls for climate-conscious tourism strategies.

Experts stress that while adaptation is vital, mitigating climate change remains the most effective long-term solution. Phasing out fossil fuels and aggressively reducing greenhouse gas emissions could curb the trajectory of rising temperatures and related health emergencies. Meanwhile, policymakers, public health authorities, and tourism boards must coordinate efforts to implement cross-sectoral protections—from heatwave emergency protocols to investments in shade and cooling infrastructure. For European destinations dependent on summer travel, embracing sustainable and diversified tourism that aligns with evolving climate realities is critical to safeguarding both human health and economic stability.

The deadly summer heatwave of 2025 thus signals a fundamental shift in the challenges facing Europe. It calls for a dual approach of urgent health system preparedness and broad environmental reform to confront the escalating risks posed by climate change. This multifaceted strategy will be essential to protect vulnerable populations, maintain thriving urban and tourism environments, and secure a resilient future amid an increasingly warm and unpredictable continent.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.travelandtourworld.com/news/article/climate-change-linked-to-summer-heat-deaths-in-europe-raises-urgent-alarms-for-public-health-and-tourism-what-you-need-to-know/), [[2]](https://www.euronews.com/green/2025/09/17/silent-killer-climate-change-led-to-16500-more-heat-deaths-in-europe-this-summer-study-say), [[3]](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/9/17/did-climate-change-cause-16500-extra-deaths-in-europe-this-summer)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.travelandtourworld.com/news/article/climate-change-linked-to-summer-heat-deaths-in-europe-raises-urgent-alarms-for-public-health-and-tourism-what-you-need-to-know/), [[2]](https://www.euronews.com/green/2025/09/17/silent-killer-climate-change-led-to-16500-more-heat-deaths-in-europe-this-summer-study-say), [[3]](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/9/17/did-climate-change-cause-16500-extra-deaths-in-europe-this-summer)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.travelandtourworld.com/news/article/climate-change-linked-to-summer-heat-deaths-in-europe-raises-urgent-alarms-for-public-health-and-tourism-what-you-need-to-know/), [[4]](https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/heat-wave-across-europe-resulted-in-2-300-deaths-report/3626109)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.travelandtourworld.com/news/article/climate-change-linked-to-summer-heat-deaths-in-europe-raises-urgent-alarms-for-public-health-and-tourism-what-you-need-to-know/), [[5]](https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/observatory/evidence/health-effects/heat-and-health)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.travelandtourworld.com/news/article/climate-change-linked-to-summer-heat-deaths-in-europe-raises-urgent-alarms-for-public-health-and-tourism-what-you-need-to-know/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.travelandtourworld.com/news/article/climate-change-linked-to-summer-heat-deaths-in-europe-raises-urgent-alarms-for-public-health-and-tourism-what-you-need-to-know/), [[6]](https://www.who.int/europe/news-room/fact-sheets/item/climate-change)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.travelandtourworld.com/news/article/climate-change-linked-to-summer-heat-deaths-in-europe-raises-urgent-alarms-for-public-health-and-tourism-what-you-need-to-know/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.euronews.com/green/2025/09/17/silent-killer-climate-change-led-to-16500-more-heat-deaths-in-europe-this-summer-study-say> - A study by researchers from Imperial College London and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine found that climate change was responsible for 68% of the 24,400 estimated heat-related deaths in Europe during the summer of 2025. The study analysed data from 854 European cities and concluded that human-induced climate change intensified temperatures by up to 3.6°C, leading to an additional 16,500 deaths. The countries most affected included Italy, Spain, Germany, France, and the UK, with capital cities like Rome, Athens, and Bucharest experiencing the highest per-capita death rates. The study underscores the urgent need for robust adaptation strategies at both city and national levels to address the health impacts of extreme heat.
3. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/9/17/did-climate-change-cause-16500-extra-deaths-in-europe-this-summer> - A study by researchers from Imperial College London and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine estimated that climate change was responsible for 68% of the 24,400 heat-related deaths in Europe during the summer of 2025. The study analysed data from 854 European cities and found that human-induced climate change intensified temperatures by up to 3.6°C, leading to an additional 16,500 deaths. The countries most affected included Italy, Spain, Germany, France, and the UK, with capital cities like Rome, Athens, and Bucharest experiencing the highest per-capita death rates. The study highlights the need for robust adaptation strategies at both city and national levels to address the health impacts of extreme heat.
4. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/heat-wave-across-europe-resulted-in-2-300-deaths-report/3626109> - A study by scientists at Imperial College London and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine estimated that a severe heatwave across Europe in early July 2025 resulted in approximately 2,300 heat-related deaths. Of these, about 1,500 deaths were linked to climate change, which intensified the heatwave. The study focused on 12 European cities, including London, Paris, Frankfurt, Budapest, Zagreb, Athens, Rome, Milan, Sassari, Barcelona, Madrid, and Lisbon. The researchers used peer-reviewed epidemiological models and historical mortality data to assess the death toll, emphasizing the underreporting of heat-related deaths. The study highlights the need for robust adaptation strategies at both city and national levels to address the health impacts of extreme heat.
5. <https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/observatory/evidence/health-effects/heat-and-health> - Between 1980 and 2023, heatwaves were responsible for 95% of weather and climate-related fatalities in Europe. In 2022, it was estimated that between 60,000 and 70,000 people in Europe died from heat, and in 2023, just under 48,000 heat-related deaths were estimated across Europe. Heat impacts also place an additional burden on Europe’s already stretched healthcare systems. For example, in Portugal, daily hospital admissions increased by 19% during heatwave days between 2000 and 2018. The effects of global warming are already being felt now: half of the heat-related deaths in Europe in the summer of 2022 have been attributed to anthropogenic climate change. According to the European Climate Risk Assessment, heat risks to the general population are already at critical levels in Southern Europe.
6. <https://www.who.int/europe/news-room/fact-sheets/item/climate-change> - The WHO European Region is the fastest-warming region globally, with 2024 being the warmest year on record for continental Europe. The last 10 years have been the warmest on record, and 19 of the 23 most severe heatwaves in Europe since 1950 occurred since 2000. Significant numbers of additional deaths every year are due to heat. In 35 countries in the Region, more than 61,000 people died in 2022 and 47,000 in 2023 due to heat. Moreover, heat also causes an uncounted amount of suffering and impacts on well-being. Climate change is projected to increase the number of days with high heat stress levels. The frequency, intensity, and duration of heatwaves will increase further, seriously impacting public health in the Region. Heat-related mortality in the Region has increased by more than 30% during the past 20 years.