

Forest fires, barbecue bans: heatwave scorches Europe

July 27 2018, by Sophie Weymes-Mcelderry With Afp Bureaux



Dried sunflowers in a field near Magdeburg, eastern Germany on July 26, 2018

Firefighters battled forest blazes and authorities banned barbecues, warning citizens of near-record temperatures as a heatwave scorched much of Europe on Friday.

Here is a roundup:

Greece: blame game

A blame game broke out over wildfires that killed 82 people in Greece.

Deputy Citizen Protection Minister Mikos Toskas claimed "serious" signs of arson. Others pointed the finger at the government over its poor fire prevention measures.

Germany: forest fires

Germany sweltered in near-record temperatures, forecast to reach as high as 39 degrees Celsius (102 degrees Fahrenheit).

Firefighters were battling wildfires near Fichtenwalde, southwest of Berlin, and in northern Saxony-Anhalt.

Public broadcaster ARD posted a picture of a fire engine filling up with water from a swimming pool.

In Berlin, police used a water cannon to drench the parched lawn of Germany's iconic Reichstag parliament building.

Officials in Hamburg cancelled the annual fireworks due to fears the dry ground could catch fire.

Netherlands: night fever

The Netherlands counted 1,143 forest fires in the first 25 days of July, compared with 187 in the whole of July 2017.

The country registered its hottest night on record from Thursday to Friday: 24.4 C.

Switzerland: heat alert

Swiss weather authorities issued a heatwave warning for the south of the country.

Sweden: barbecue ban

Swedish authorities said 17 [forest fires](#) were still burning in the country after others were put out this week.

The country sweltered in its highest temperatures this year: 34.6 C in some southern regions.

Neighbouring Finland said it would send 35 firefighters to Sweden, joining teams from other EU countries.

Rain is forecast for the weekend, but citizens are still banned from lighting barbecues or fires.

Latvia: wildfire tamed

Firefighters in Latvia said they had contained a 1,000-hectare peat bog [wildfire](#) in the west.

Latvia has declared a national disaster with a severe drought and temperatures of around 35 C.

Neighbouring Lithuania and Belarus are helping to fight the wildfire.

France: storms coming

Swathes of France have also been sweltering under a heatwave, with temperatures as high as 37 C in Paris on Thursday.

Storms are forecast to bring a welcome cooling of temperatures over the weekend in the north and west of the country, according to forecaster Meteo-France.

Britain: 'Furnace Friday'

The all-time British record of 38.5 C could be broken in what the media have called "Furnace Friday".

Temperatures are forecast to be in the mid-30s for much of east and southeast England, reaching 37 C in London, according to the Met Office.

Cross-channel rail operator Eurotunnel cancelled thousands of tickets after "[extreme temperatures](#)" and malfunctioning air conditioning disrupted services.

London fire brigade asked councils to ban barbecues in public parks after an increase in call-outs to fires.

High temperatures forced the famously conservative Marylebone Cricket Club into a rare concession: allowing members to attend a match without a jacket.

Belgium: hotter than 2006

A heatwave has been declared in Belgium. Thursday was the hottest July

26 on record with a high of 34 C, said meteorologist David Dehenaw.

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