

Europe bakes again in near-record temperatures

August 6 2018, by Bryan Mcmanus



A crowded outdoor swimming pool on a canal in central Paris as people seek relief from near-record temperatures in a heatwave sweeping across Europe.

Europe baked in near-record temperatures on Monday but hopes were for some respite after weeks of non-stop sunshine as people come to

terms with what may prove to be the new normal in climate change Europe.

Here is a roundup of recent developments:

France, adapt to change

Temperatures were expected to peak in southern France on Monday and further north on Tuesday. On Saturday, they hit their highest levels since a deadly 2003 [heatwave](#) killed thousands of mainly elderly people.

Health Minister Agnes Buzyn said people had to take proper care to cope with the heat and warned that everyone had to adapt.

"You need to drink a lot, but also to eat and take salt," Buzyn said.

"We are probably going to adapt our warnings in the coming years, because this is something we haven't been seeing until now."

Several cities imposed traffic restrictions and cut speed limits to try to reduce ozone pollution aggravated by the heat, with Paris also offering free parking and cheaper daily metro and bus passes to discourage driving.

The heat wave could be among the "top three" on record for France, the national weather service said.

The current forecast is for a cooler end to the week with temperatures in the mid-20s.

- Spain fires under control-



A road sign displays the message "heatwave warning, hydrate yourself and take breaks" near Bordeaux, southwestern France as a heatwave continues to bake Europe.

In Spain, the death toll rose to five after two homeless men succumbed to heat stroke in northeastern Taragona, officials said.

Firefighters helped by calmer winds were meanwhile gaining control of a wildfire in the southwestern province of Huelva, just across the border from the Algarve in southern Portugal where a major blaze was still burning in Monchique.

Temperatures remained high, especially in the southeast where they were forecast to hit 40-42 C.

There has been little relief at night.

At midnight the town of Zorita in the southwest recorded a temperature of 35.1 C, according to Spain's national weather office, the highest temperature in the country at that time.

Portugal fires

In Portugal, after hitting 45 C, short of the national record of just above 47 C, temperatures have eased slightly but not by enough to make the job of some 1,100 firefighters in Monchique any easier.

Monchique, in southern Portugal, was covered by thick clouds of smoke early Monday after the authorities evacuated several houses overnight, with 24 people injured, one seriously.

"Our priority is to protect people," Interior Minister Eduardo Cabrita told reporters.

EU Humanitarian Affairs Commissioner Christos Stylianides said on Twitter the EU was following the situation closely and was ready to help if needed.



Beach-goers cool off at the Spanish seaside resort of Benidorm

The weather service said that after Saturday's peak, temperatures were back below 45 C and should continue lower over the next few days.

Germany fresh spike

Germany expects a fresh spike mid-week to around 39 C before temperatures ease, with official figures showing the average for April-July running 3.6 degrees higher than the 1961-1990 reference period.

Farmers continued to plead for help, with the president of Germany's farmers' association, Joachim Rukwied, saying a billion euros in government aid may be necessary as crop failure rates hit 70 percent in some areas.

More than a million children returned to school on Monday in three German states -- Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland and Hesse—but some were allowed to go home earlier than planned due to the heatwave.

British islands in trouble

Britain continued to be hot in the south with a maximum of 32 C but it was cooler and cloudier in the north.

Reports said the persistent lack of rain has hit the country's more remote islands.

Worst affected is the tiny island of Lundy in the Bristol Channel—with a population in the dozens—which is now reliant on plastic bottles of water from the mainland after local supplies ran dry, the Daily Express said.

Arran in Scotland, the Isle of Scilly in southwest England and Jersey in the Channel Islands have all asked people to cut consumption, it added.



Smoke rises from a wildfire close to Monchique in the Algarve, southern Portugal, where more than a 1,000 firefighters are battling the blaze

Meanwhile last year's winner of Britain's best lawn award is "refusing to surrender his hallowed turf to the heatwave", according to the Daily Mail.

Stuart Grindle is reportedly spending four hours a day and hundred of pounds (dollars) on water bills to keep his garden an outlier of lush green in parched northern England.

"I have no intention of allowing my pride and joy to be ruined," the committed horticulturist told the newspaper.

Netherlands

The heatwave has hit the low-lying Netherlands hard like many other countries but no one thought it could be a threat to its world famous system of dams and canals designed to keep the sea at bay.

But river levels have fallen so low that the Rijkswaterstaat, which manages the national water system, has been opening barrages inland to flush out sea water seeping into coastal waterways.

However, opening sluices on the Waal River has also forced inland shipping from Germany to Amsterdam to take a detour at the city of Arnhem.

Greek fire toll 91

Greece was a little cooler but the toll in last month's wildfire northeast of Athens rose to 91 with the death from injuries of a 95-year-old woman, officials said.

Another 36 people are still hospitalised after the July 23 disaster, six of them in critical condition.

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