

# Record heatwaves drive EU's July excess deaths to 2022 high

Reuters



[1/2] A firefighter works to extinguish a wildfire amid Spain's second heatwave of the year, in Faramontanos de Tabara, Spain, July 19, 2022. REUTERS/Borja Suarez/File Photo



Sept 16 (Reuters) - The European Union saw 16% more deaths than usual in July as a record-breaking heatwave hit parts of the continent, its highest monthly figure so far this year, official data showed on Friday.

The extreme heat in southern Europe had sparked wildfires in Spain, France and Portugal, and led to thousands of heat-related deaths across Europe, spreading concern over climate change and the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather.

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Excess mortality amounted to around 53,000 more deaths in July compared with the monthly averages for 2016-2019, EU's statistics office Eurostat said.

It defines excess mortality as the number of deaths from all causes during a crisis above what could be observed in "normal" conditions.

"Based on the available information, some of the mortality increase in July 2022 compared to the same month of the past two years may be due to the heatwaves that have affected parts of Europe during the reference period," Eurostat said.

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It added the 16% rate was "an unusually high value" for a July month. The bloc had 3% excess mortality in the same period in 2020, the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, and 6% in 2021.

Spain and Cyprus saw the highest numbers of excess deaths in July, more than double the EU's average, with excess mortality rates of 37% and 33% respectively.

Spain in July weathered its earliest heat wave in over 40 years, with temperatures surpassing 40 Celsius degrees (104°F) in some southern and central parts of the country.

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