

*World Health Organization  
warns that more than 176,000  
people die annually from extreme  
heat in Europe alone*

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Geneva, August 2 (RHC)-- The European Commission has published a report on the situation in Europe, which shows that more than 176,000 people die each year from the effects of extreme heat and it is expected that the figures will rise.

The WHO regional director for Europe, Dr. Hans Henri P. Kluge, detailed that between 2000 and 2019, at a global level, there have been about 489,000 heat-related deaths each year, Of which 36 percent corresponds to. European continent, which translates into, on average, 176 040.

In that sense, he said that Europe “records the fastest warming of the six WHO regions, with temperatures increasing at a rate that is about twice the world average”.

The WHO authority in the region recalled the call to action against extreme heat, which in recent days was made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres.

“The Secretary-General’s appeal identifies four critical areas of action to care for the vulnerable, protect workers, increase the resilience of economies and societies, and limiting the rise in global temperature to 1.5°C”, he said, while stressing the importance of this call for Europe, where heat stress is the leading cause of temperature-related death.

It also warns that “extreme temperatures exacerbate chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular, respiratory and cerebrovascular diseases, mental health problems and diabetes”.

She also points out that extreme heat is a problem particularly for elderly people living alone, and “can be an additional burden for pregnant women.”

While the regional director of the agency acknowledges that more than 20 European countries have action plans to combat heat, he points out that these are insufficient and announced that WHO/Europe, The European Centre for Environment and Health in Bonn, Germany, is preparing a second updated edition of its guide to action plans on heat and health.

In this regard, he considered that the adverse health effects of heat can be prevented by good public health practices such as avoiding going out during the hottest hours, keep homes fresh and the body hydrated and be aware of elderly people who spend much time alone.

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