

EU climate monitor says 2024 will be hottest year on record

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**People cool off under a water sprinkler during a heat wave in Vienna
Scientists say the period being lived through right now is likely the warmest the Earth has been for the last 125,000 years [File: Elisabeth Mandl/Reuters]**

Brussels, December 9 (RHC)-- Europe's climate monitor says 2024 is "effectively certain" to be the hottest on record and the first year above the 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7F) climate benchmark, a critical threshold to protect the Earth from dangerously overheating.

The Copernicus Climate Change Service said on Monday an unprecedented spell of extraordinary heat had pushed average global temperatures so high between January and November that this year was sure to eclipse 2023 as the hottest yet.

Copernicus uses billions of measurements from satellites, ships, aircraft and weather stations to aid its climate calculations. Its records go back to 1940, but other sources of climate data – such as ice cores, tree rings, and coral skeletons – allow scientists to expand their conclusions using evidence from much further in the past.

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Last month ranked as the second-warmest November on record after November 2023. Portugal experienced its hottest-ever November, the country's meteorological agency said on Thursday, with the average air temperature 2.69C (4.84F) higher than the average for 1981-2010.

In another grim milestone, 2024 will be the first calendar year more than 1.5C hotter than pre-industrial times before humanity started burning large volumes of fossil fuels.

Scientists warn that exceeding 1.5C over a decades-long period would greatly imperil the planet, and the international community agreed under the Paris climate accord to strive to limit warming to this safer threshold.

Yet, the world is nowhere near on track to meeting the 1.5C target. In October, the United Nations said the current direction of climate action would result in a catastrophic 3.1C (5.6F) of warming.

Carbon dioxide emissions from burning fossil fuels are the main cause of climate change. Emissions from fossil fuels keep rising despite a global pledge to move the world away from coal, oil and gas. Scientists say global warming is making extreme weather events more frequent and ferocious, and even at present levels climate change is taking its toll.

This year saw deadly flooding in Spain and Kenya, violent tropical storms in the United States and the Philippines, and severe drought and wildfires across South America.

At UN climate talks in November, wealthy countries committed \$300 billion annually by 2035, an amount decried as woefully inadequate.

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