COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN EUROPE TO PROTECT WORKERS' HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK AGAINST HEAT AND HEAT WAVES

Collective bargaining and social dialogue in Europe to protect workers' health and safety, welfare and productivity against heat and heat waves

ADAPTHEAT: The research project

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- Rationale (Why?)
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- Results (Products)
- Conclusions (at the European Level)

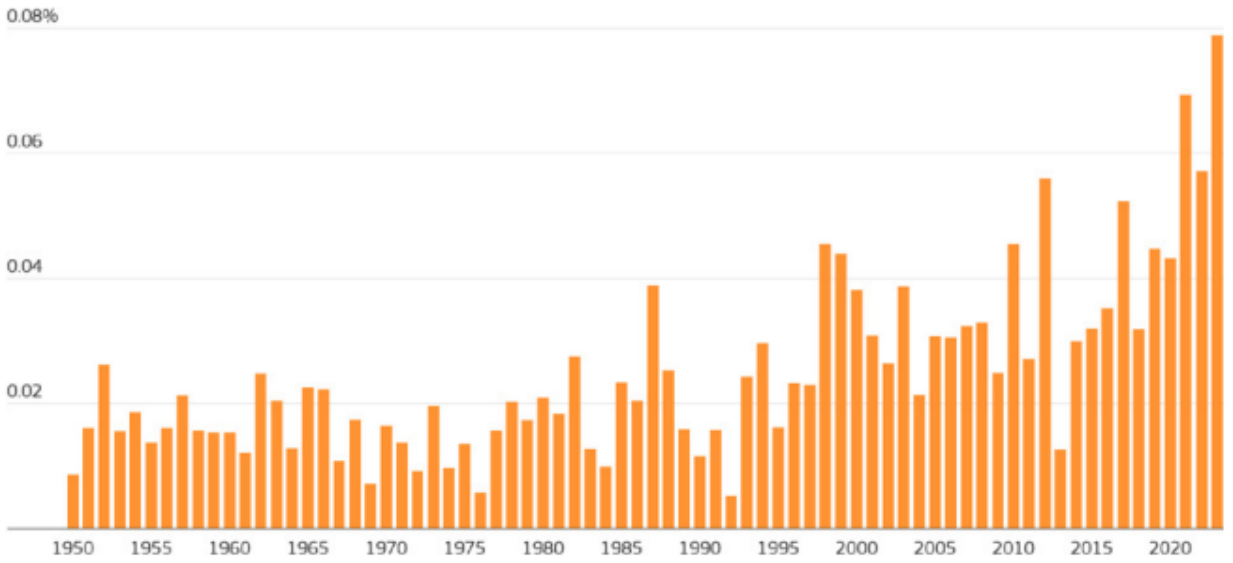
Outline of the project

- To study the factors that drive and inhibit the participation of social partners in social dialogue for heat-related occupational health and safety policies by analyzing 1) the legal and public policy framework; and 2) actual negotiation practices in companies to identify the key elements for implementing effective heat prevention measures.
- Cross-country perspective (European).
- Diverse taskforce:

Rationale

- Rapid increases in extreme weather events (heatwaves) and air surface temperatures

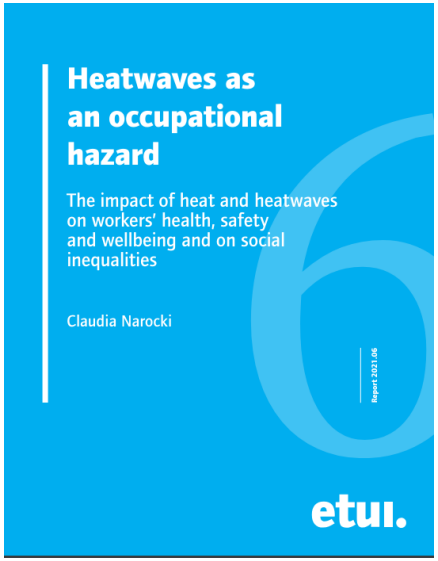
Figure 1. Percentage of days with 'extreme heat stress' (UTCI exceeding 46°C), for European land, for each year between 1950 and 2023. Source: [1]

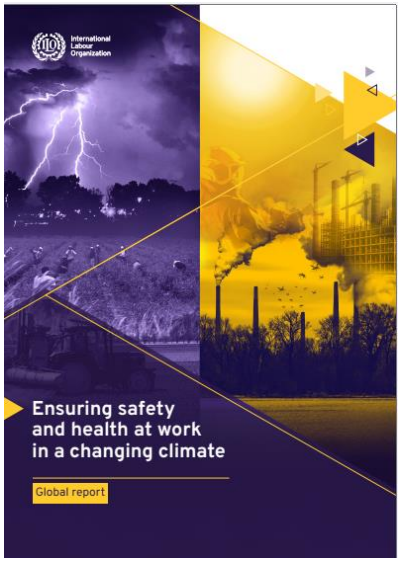


Source: Copernicus, 2024.

Rationale

- Heat impact on OHS: diverse, large and cumulative.





«70% of workers exposed to climate change hazards»
(ILO, 2024)

Rationale

- Impact on equity: social gradient of heat illnesses
  - The most precarious and lowest paid jobs are also the most exposed to heat stress (Kim and Lim 2017).
  - Precarious workers have fewer means to cope with heat outside of work (poorly insulated housing, no air conditioning, etc) and thus they rest less, poorer recovery....

Rationale

- Traditionally absent from OHS and collective negotiation scope.
- Lack of common policy approach:
  - Each country reacts differently.
  - Heat hits southern and northern European countries differently not a valid reason.
  - No specific mandate to employers for adaptive/preventive response.
- Knowledge gap with a few notable precedents:
  - HeatShield (2016)
  - ILO: Guidelines for a Just Transition (2015), Working in a warmer planet (2019).
  - ETUI: Heatwaves as occupational Hazard (2021)

Objectives and Methods

1. Common methodological and conceptual working framework for desk and field research activities, working reports and final report:

Examples: Methodological guidelines for country reports, script for interviews, OHS item checklist, factors…

Objectives and Methods

2. Desk research: Review of countries' and EU legislative and policy framework:

- Heat & OHS

- Collective negotiation and Social dialogue

Examples: OHS institutional layout, heat-health plans, collective agreements, OHS catalogues and technical guidelines, etc.

Objectives and Methods

3. Each country team selected 2 cases of interest (company or sector) and analyze them, through **open interviews** with key informants in each negotiation process.

Table 2. Countries and industries analysed in the ADAPTHEAT project.

Country	Case Study 1	Case Study 2
Spain	Water management	Construction
Italy	Agriculture	Logistics
Greece	Food industry	Shipbuilding
Netherlands	Agriculture	Construction
Hungary	Agriculture	Education / Administrative Services

Objectives and Methods

4. Building on the countries' reports, a **cross-country analysis**, with conclusions about the relations between heat adaptation policies and labour relations, from the point of view of their potential impact on workers H&S was developed.

Results (as products)

- Five country reports including 2 case studies each.
- One comparative report that allows for common conclusions and recommendations at a EU level.
- Executive report.
- Sensibilization materials & communication campaign.
- A scientific publication (Forthcoming).
- A network of researchers on Heat and OHS.

Conclusions

1. Climate change is conceived as a public health problem, but NOT as an OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH problem.

2. Workers protection against the risks of climate change is INSUFFICIENT and faces multiple difficulties:

   - Incomplete regulatory frameworks.
   - Lack of reliable sources of information
   - Very heterogeneous measurement systems
   - Prevention measures only available in summer
   - Non-application of existing regulations

3. In all the countries analysed → there is FORMAL recognition of the right of workers to participate in the design and implementation of occupational health policies.

Positive effects → collective bargaining makes it possible to ADAPT the GENERAL content of regulations to the SPECIFIC and CHANGING needs of companies/industries.

This function, however, IS NOT BEING FULFILLED properly.

4. We are confronted with:

- Approval of occupational health policies without real negotiation processes with trade union representatives.
- Companies' preference for the establishment of NON-BINDING SOCIAL DIALOGUE AGREEMENTS.
- Refusal to incorporate the content of such agreements into COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS
- INEQUALITY in health protection → signing of agreements strongly conditioned by TRADE UNION PRESENCE

5. Presence of heatwave protection measures in traditional collective bargaining = LOW.

For example:

In Spain: out of 26,887 registered agreements (2010-2023) only 69 (0.3%) incorporated some reference to heat.

In the Netherlands: out of 1,100 collective agreements in force (2023) only 35 (3%) made reference to heat.

6. Limited scope of the existing measures:

- Some companies promote heat protocols but they are a small fraction of the total since they do it on a voluntary basis.

- Companies refuse to apply measures that entail an economic cost.

  Example → suspension of activity due to high temperatures is exceptional.

7. The protection of workers against the risks of high temperatures requires:

- Having detailed (enforceable) norms and standards → that do not depend on power relations.

- Ensuring that existing regulations are REALLY enforced → trade union monitoring and labour inspection.

PROTECT HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK FROM HEAT AND HEAT WAVES AND HEATWAVES AT WORK

Adaptation to heat and climate change at work.
ADAPTHEAT
Collective bargaining and social dialogue in Europe to protect workers' health and safety, welfare and productivity against heat and heat waves

+ INFO ADAPTHEAT PROJECT

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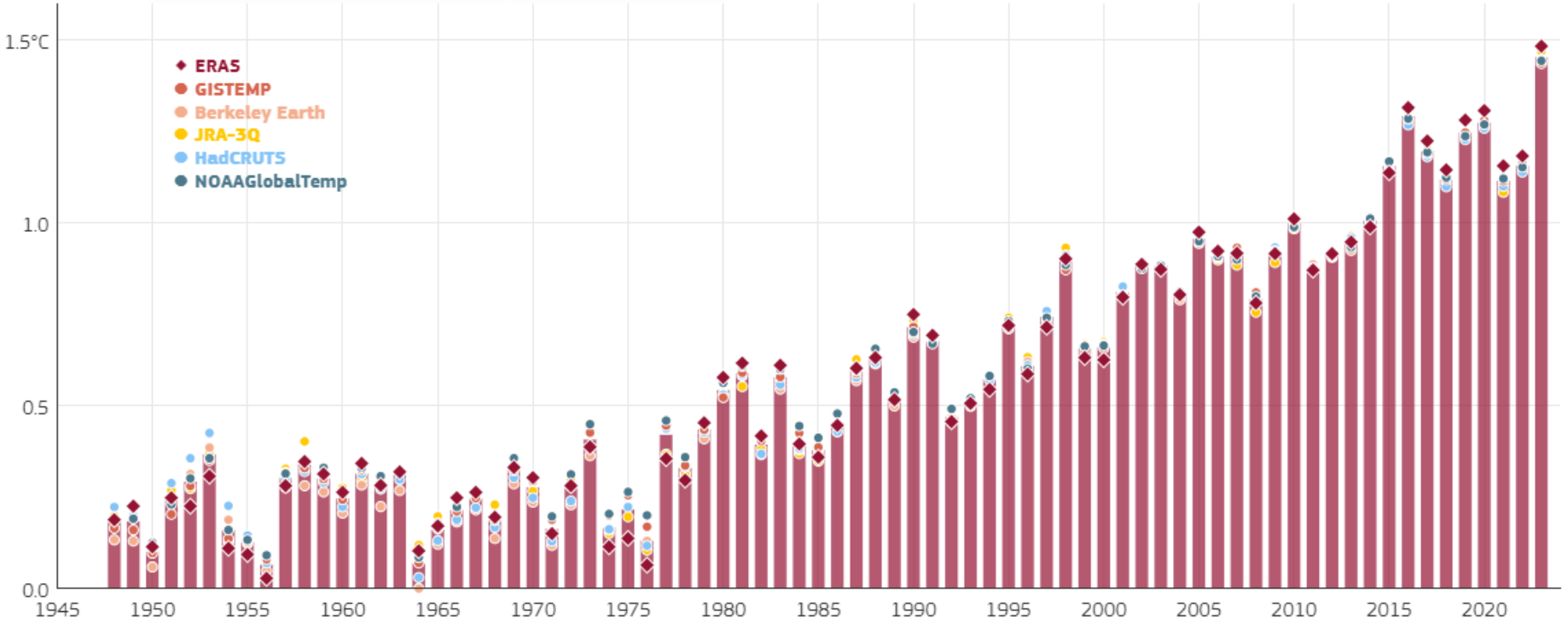
Annual global surface temperature

Annual average, since 1948. Vertical bars represent the average of available datasets.

Increase above: 1850–1900 reference (pre-industrial) | 1991–2020 reference



Data: ERA5 (C3S/ECMWF), JRA-3Q (JMA), Berkeley Earth, GISTEMPv4 (NASA), HadCRUT5 (Met Office Hadley Centre) and NOAAGlobalTempv6 (NOAA) • Credit: C3S/ECMWF

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Figure 1. Annual estimated global surface temperature[1] increase above the average, relative to the 1991–2020 and 1850–1900 reference periods, for 1948 to 2023, according to six different datasets. Data sources: ERA5 (C3S/ECMWF), JRA-3Q (JMA), Berkeley Earth, GISTEMPv4 (NASA), HadCRUT5 (Met Office Hadley Centre) and NOAAGlobalTempv6 (NOAA). Credit: C3S/ECMWF.

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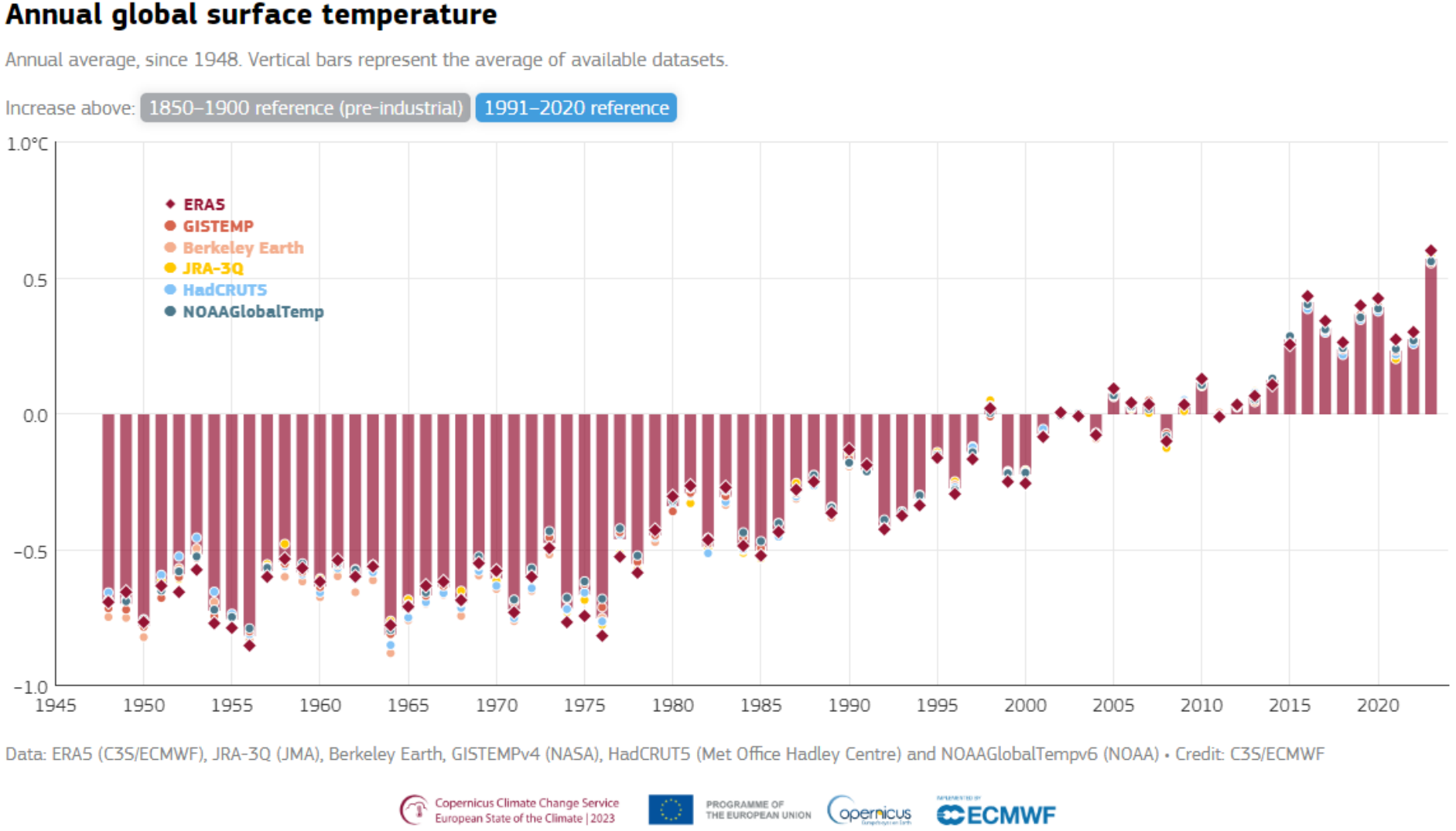

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