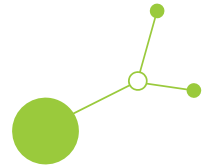


D.1.3.2: Development of a heat strategy and action plan for the City of Weiz - Summary in English



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Summary of the Heat Action Plan for the City of Weiz

The City of Weiz has crafted a forward-thinking Heat Action Plan to address the growing challenges posed by climate change, particularly the rising frequency and severity of heatwaves. This strategic initiative, developed under the framework of the "Ready4Heat" program supported by Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE, is designed to safeguard public health, adapt urban infrastructure, and enhance overall resilience against the impacts of extreme heat. Recognizing the diverse risks posed by prolonged high temperatures, the plan combines immediate, medium-term, and long-term measures, all of which aim to protect residents while transforming Weiz into a more climate-resilient city.

Background and Objectives

The Heat Action Plan stems from the recognition that urban areas, including Weiz, are increasingly vulnerable to the effects of global warming. Rising temperatures and frequent heatwaves have significant consequences, ranging from health risks to environmental challenges. Vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, children, people with chronic illnesses, and outdoor workers, are particularly at risk. In addition, urban "heat islands" — areas with dense building coverage and minimal vegetation — amplify the impact of heat, creating hotspots where temperatures can reach critical levels.

The plan focuses on four core objectives:

1. **Protect Public Health:** Safeguard vulnerable populations from the adverse effects of extreme heat through targeted measures and public education.
2. **Adapt Infrastructure:** Make urban environments more heat-resilient by increasing green spaces, shading public areas, and improving water availability.
3. **Enhance Quality of Life :** Create a cooler, more livable urban environment by transforming public spaces with features like shaded seating, cooling water features, and tree-lined streets.
4. **Prevent Environmental Damage:** Reduce the risks of wildfires and other climate-related hazards through ecological and urban management strategies.

Overview of Measures

The Heat Action Plan outlines a multi-faceted approach, categorized into short-term, medium-term, and long-term actions.

Short-Term Measures

The immediate priority is to inform and prepare residents for heatwaves through widespread communication campaigns. These campaigns are delivered via social media, newsletters, posters, and public events to educate citizens on essential heat protection strategies, such as:

- **Public Awareness Campaigns:**
 - Use of social media platforms, the city's website, and newsletters to provide tips on staying cool and hydrated during heatwaves.
 - Dissemination of visual materials like posters and banners in high-traffic areas, including public transport stops and city offices.
- **Educational Outreach:**



- Development of easy-to-understand educational materials for vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and parents of young children.
- Targeted information campaigns through local organizations, schools, and healthcare providers.
- **Promoting Hydration:**
 - Encouragement to drink 2–3 liters of water daily, with tips on avoiding alcohol and caffeine.
 - Advising residents to carry water and use public drinking fountains.
- **Heat-Resistant Clothing and Sunscreen Advice:**
 - Recommendations to wear light, loose, and breathable clothing.
 - Emphasis on sunscreen use and staying in shaded or indoor areas during peak heat hours.
- **Cooling Tips for Homes:**
 - Guidance on keeping indoor spaces cool, such as early morning or nighttime ventilation and using blinds or curtains to block direct sunlight.
 - Suggestions for creating cool zones within homes, such as moving to shaded or cooler rooms.
- **Cooling Techniques:**
 - Encouragement to use damp cloths, spray bottles, or cooling wraps to lower body temperature.
 - Tips on safe cooling practices, such as lukewarm showers and cooling foot baths.
- **Targeted Support for Vulnerable Groups:**
 - Outreach programs to remind older adults and children about hydration and cooling measures.
 - Collaboration with care facilities, hospitals, and social organizations to ensure these groups are supported during heatwaves.
- **Emergency Communication Channels:**
 - Promotion of heat warning systems through city apps and other digital platforms, alerting residents of upcoming extreme weather conditions.

These measures are designed to have an immediate impact, ensuring that residents of Weiz are informed, prepared, and protected during periods of extreme heat.

Specific educational materials are tailored to vulnerable groups, including senior citizens, young children, and individuals with pre-existing health conditions. Local businesses, schools, and community organizations are engaged to spread awareness, while digital tools such as the city's app are leveraged to provide real-time heat alerts and recommendations.

Medium-Term Measures

Over the next 1-5 years, the city plans to implement infrastructure upgrades and develop new facilities to mitigate the effects of heat. Key measures include:

- **Increasing Drinking Water Access:** The city will enhance the visibility and accessibility of public drinking water fountains, using clear signage, maps, and digital tools to help residents locate these resources easily.
- **Creating Shaded Spaces:** Public parks, streets, and plazas will see the addition of shaded seating areas and shelters, developed in consultation with residents to address the most critical needs.



- **Cooling Stations:** Libraries, museums, and community centers equipped with air conditioning will be promoted as cooling refuges. Collaborations with local businesses may also provide temporary relief for residents during extreme heat events.
- **Public Mapping of Cooling Spots:** Interactive maps, available online and through city apps, will guide residents to nearby cooling zones, including shaded parks, air-conditioned spaces, and water features.

Medium-term actions also prioritize engaging the community through surveys and workshops to identify high-priority areas for improvement. This participatory approach ensures that investments address residents' needs effectively.

Long-Term Measures

The Heat Action Plan incorporates ambitious measures to ensure long-term urban resilience. These include:

- **Sustainable Urban Design:** Incorporating greenery into city planning, such as green roofs, vertical gardens, and tree-lined streets, to mitigate the heat island effect. Private property owners will be incentivized to plant trees through subsidy programs like the "Tree Premium."
- **Heat-Resilient Infrastructure:** Urban developments will prioritize the use of reflective materials and permeable surfaces, reducing heat retention while improving water absorption during rainfall.
- **Water Integration:** Enhancing blue infrastructure, such as water fountains, misting stations, and improved access to natural water bodies, to provide cooling and recreational benefits.
- **Mandatory Green Space Regulations:** New developments will be required to maintain a minimum percentage of green and permeable surfaces, reducing the impact of heat while fostering biodiversity.

The city also plans to raise public awareness of these initiatives by showcasing successful examples, such as the greening of public buildings like the Weiz City Hall, to inspire broader community participation.

Monitoring and Adaptation

To ensure the effectiveness of the Heat Action Plan, Weiz will establish a robust monitoring framework integrated with its Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP). A dedicated task force, including representatives from various city departments, will oversee implementation and conduct evaluations every two years. These assessments will measure progress, identify emerging challenges, and adjust strategies as needed to align with national climate goals and evolving climate conditions.

The monitoring process will track key metrics, such as reductions in heat-related health incidents, the expansion of urban greenery, and community engagement levels. This data-driven approach will provide transparency and accountability, ensuring that the plan delivers tangible benefits to residents.

Significance and Broader Impacts

The Heat Action Plan represents a comprehensive and forward-thinking response to one of the most pressing challenges of our time. By combining immediate protective actions with long-term urban planning, Weiz is setting a benchmark for climate resilience in Central Europe. The plan not only addresses the immediate risks posed by extreme heat but also integrates sustainable development principles that enhance the city's livability, health, and environmental sustainability. Ultimately, the Heat Action Plan positions Weiz as a leader in proactive climate adaptation, ensuring that the city remains a safe, attractive, and vibrant place to live, even in the face of rising global temperatures.