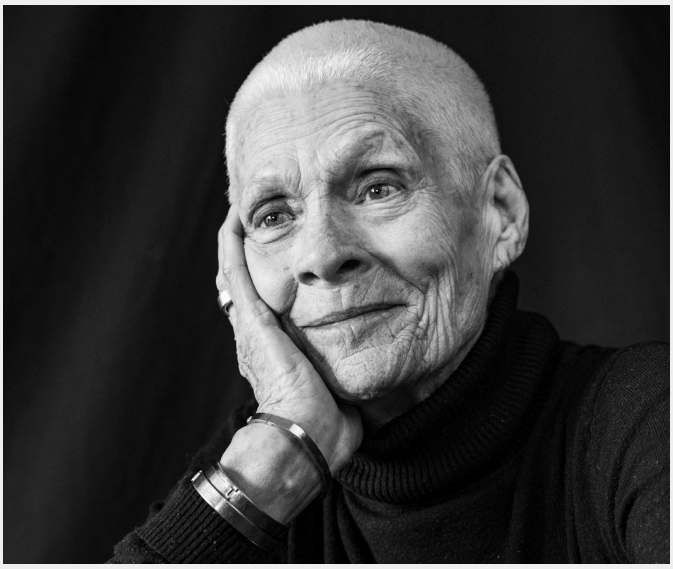
BULLETIN

NUMBER 6

HOPE
Responding to Heatwaves in Older People Ecosystem

MARCH 2025



Picture by Henk Rosendal

THIS ISSUE'S FEATURED ARTICLES:

COOLING THE HEAT

1. **Results and urgency to act:**
   - Cooling the heat: HOPE major conference
   - Interview with the Director of Public Health of Rotterdam, Yvonne van Duijnhoven: Reflections on the HOPE Project and Preparing for Heat Crises
2. **On the spotlight:**
   - E-modules and MOOC
   - Guidelines for the Ecosystem
   - Enhancing Organizational Capacity to Protect Older Adults During Heatwaves with a Database of Good Practices
   - Policy recommendations for Local, Regional and European Authorities
3. **"Cooling the heat":** interactive highlights from Students from the RUAS, international experts, decision makers, voices from Older People
4. **EU and partners news** - HOPE going local: Treviso, Amadora, Syros
5. **Looking ahead:** shaping the future: launch of a Heat Action Day

Co-funded by the European Union

1. RESULTS AND URGENCY TO ACT

Forenote:

Climate change is escalating the frequency, intensity, and severity of heatwaves, posing severe health risks—particularly for older adults. **The HOPE project (Responding to Heatwaves in the Older People Ecosystem)** is raising alarm and pushing this critical issue to the forefront of the older adult services and healthcare sectors with an inclusive, ecosystem-wide approach.

Immediate action is needed. The health and well-being of older adults are at stake, and the time to act is now.

To address this urgent challenge, six dedicated partners from across Europe have united:

- **The Netherlands:** City of Rotterdam, coordinator of the project, and the Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences
- **Italy:** Istituto per Servizi di Ricovero e Assistenza agli Anziani (ISRAA)
- **Portugal:** Santa Casa Da Misericórdia Da Amadora (SCMA)
- **Greece:** Social Cooperative Enterprise of Cyclades
- **France:** Réseau Européen pour l'Inclusion et l'Action Sociale Locale (ELISAN)

The HOPE project's urgent mission is being realized through these critical actions:

- **Building Competence:** Enhancing the skills of students, informal caregivers, and professionals in the health, care, and social sectors to better respond to older adults' needs during heatwaves, significantly reducing risks
- **Innovative Teaching Tools:** Designing and implementing cutting-edge educational tools for students and both formal and informal caregivers to improve heatwave response
- **Improved Care Skills:** Increasing the capacity of caregivers to deliver higher-quality care during extreme heat events
- **Guideline Implementation:** Supporting and motivating organizations within the older adults ecosystem to apply heatwave care guidelines and best practices effectively
- **Ecosystem Guidelines and Best Practices Database:** Developing comprehensive guidelines and an international database of best practices, in close collaboration with associated partners, older adults, and caregivers
- **Empowering Older Adults:** Enhancing older adults' capacity to manage their health and well-being during heatwaves, reducing vulnerability and improving outcomes
- **Policy Recommendations:** Assisting local and regional authorities in adopting policies that mitigate heat risks for older residents and implementing these measures across participating municipalities
- **Knowledge Exchange:** Facilitating the exchange of best practices at local, regional, national, European, and international levels to build resilience across communities

The stakes are high. The HOPE project's results has created an integrated, ecosystem-wide approach that can be adopted by organizations and authorities across Europe, reducing morbidity and mortality rates and improving care for older adults. This collaborative effort is fostering new policies, enhance knowledge exchange, and drive essential change management.

We cannot afford to wait. The health and lives of older adults depend on swift, decisive action.

René Keijzer, project manager HOPE

H.O.P.E Coolling the heat Conference
Brussels, March 3 2025
House of the Dutch Provinces

1.1. COOLING THE HEAT: MAJOR CONFERENCE OF THE HOPE PROJECT

H.O.P.E Final Conference, Brussels, March 3 2025
House of the Dutch Provinces

On **March 3rd and 4th**, the final conference of the **HOPE project** took place at the **House of the Dutch Provinces**, upon the invitation of the **City of Rotterdam**, project coordinator, in collaboration with European networks **ENSA** and **ELISAN**, and the HOPE Consortium from **the Netherlands, Italy, Greece, Portugal, and France**. The event brought together over **70 stakeholders** from around the world, including leading experts from Cities, Public Authorities, Academia, Students, Civil society (including INGOs), European and international networks, and Older Adults—key beneficiaries and active protagonists of the HOPE project.

Notable contributions came from representatives of the **Rotterdam Public Health Sector**, the **German Federal Environment Agency**, and the **City of Vienna**. European institutions were well represented, with key contributions from officials of the **European Commission** and the **European Committee of the Regions**. International organizations, including the **Council of Europe** and the **Conference of INGOs** of the Council of Europe's **Committee on Inclusive Territories, Environment, and Health**, provided significant insights.

The academic sector played a vital role, with strong representation from the **Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences**, a guiding HOPE Consortium member, and the **University of Applied Sciences of The Hague**. Policymakers were also prominent at the event, featuring the **President of the Veneto Regional Council**, the **Ambassador for Italy of the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy**, and a member of the European Committee of the Regions, who serves as **Vice President of the NAT (Natural Resources) and ENVE (Environment, Climate Change, and Energy) Commissions**.

European networks, including **Age Platform Europe, EuroHealthNet**, and the **SOL Network**, enriched the discussions and significantly contributed to the project's objectives.

Conference Objective

The HOPE project conference aimed to inspire and engage participants in enhancing heat resilience among older adults. It provided a valuable opportunity to connect with experts and colleagues, explore effective strategies for adapting and developing policies to better protect older populations from heat-related challenges, and facilitate cross-sector knowledge sharing.
A key highlight of the conference was the introduction of an **e-learning platform** for **Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs),** designed for students and caregivers. The conference featured presentations and discussions on:

- **Ecosystem guidelines** for enhancing heat resilience
- An **international database of best practices,** and
- **Recommendations** for support at local, regional, and European levels

Participants collaborated to identify practical solutions and policy recommendations, contributing to the shared goal of safeguarding older adults against heat-related risks.

Panel discussion “From policy to action regarding heatwaves”
Tine Vande Maele, Gezondheidsmakers, Esther Wienese, city of Rotterdam, Josine van den Bogaard, city of Rotterdam, Silvia Ganzerla, Eurohealth net, Adriano Fernandes, Santa Casa da Misericordia Amadora

1.2. INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH OF THE CITY OF ROTTERDAM, YVONNE VAN DUIJNHOVEN, REFLECTIONS ON THE HOPE PROJECT AND PREPARING FOR HEAT CRISES

As the HOPE project concludes on a high note, we sit down with the Director of Public Health for the City of Rotterdam to discuss the impact of the project, the lessons learned, and the city's progress in heat crisis preparedness.

Q: The HOPE project marks the end of an important journey. How would you describe its conclusion?

Director: The conclusion of HOPE is both fruitful and festive. Over the past three years, we've collaborated with care organizations from Mediterranean countries to enhance our preparedness for heat crises, drawing on experiences from the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic highlighted how crises affect not only communities but also healthcare systems and workers themselves. HOPE allowed us to apply those lessons to heat crises, mitigating their impact and improving our resilience. The final conference was an opportunity to share our progress and celebrate the hard work of all the involved ones.

Q: Reflecting on Rotterdam's goals at the start of HOPE, what progress has the city made?

Director: When we launched HOPE, we set four key goals. Firstly, we wanted to focus more on how heat affects older people living at home. This was achieved by establishing the Heat Network Rotterdam, which includes health, care, and welfare partners. Thanks to our HOPE partners—Laurens, SOL, and Genero—this network has been a cornerstone of our efforts. We've also integrated heat measures into the standards for Homeplus flats, ensuring buildings for vulnerable older adults include necessary heat protection measures. Additionally, performance agreements with housing corporations now mandate heat assessments in older people's apartments. Finally, the Climate Justice Rotterdam initiative is advancing, with a PhD research project heat justice in housing, which will further inform our strategies.

Q: Shifting the focus from water to heat must have been challenging. How did Rotterdam manage this shift?

Director: Indeed, the Netherlands traditionally focuses on water management due to our geography. Expanding this focus to include heat wasn't easy, but it's crucial. Through HOPE, we've successfully raised awareness about heat as a significant climate issue. Media coverage on heat has increased, and Rotterdam has become a sought-after location for heat-related research. This shift has integrated the social and health domains into climate research, highlighting the importance of protecting vulnerable populations, including older adults, from heat impacts.

Yvonne van Duijnhoven,
Director of Public Health of the City of Rotterdam

Q: Education is another goal Rotterdam aimed to enhance. What steps have been taken in this area?

Director: Learning from the pandemic, we recognized the need to educate healthcare and welfare professionals about heat management. As a result, HOPE facilitated the creation of an e-learning module and a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) to spread knowledge widely. This academic year, we launched the Rotterdam Heat Lab, a collaborative initiative involving educational institutions, the city, and our Public Health Service. The lab fosters research and innovation, and we're thrilled that local students actively contribute to our ongoing efforts, including today's conference.

Q: What message would you like to convey to partners and communities as the HOPE project concludes?

Director: My message is clear: we must build on HOPE's outcomes to enhance our preparedness for extreme heat. The policy recommendations developed through HOPE serve as a roadmap for governments at all levels to protect citizens from heat crises. Initiatives like Heat Action Day, which were highlighted in the European Network of Social Authorities agenda, exemplify simple yet effective actions that can prevent significant harm. Good preparation doesn't require vast resources; with the right strategies, we can protect lives and communities with relatively modest investments.

Q: Finally, what are your thoughts on the future beyond HOPE?

Director: HOPE has been a catalyst for change in Rotterdam and beyond. The project's collaborative spirit has strengthened our networks and prepared us for heat crises more robustly. We are grateful to all HOPE partners and the Erasmus Plus fund of the EU for their support. As we move forward, the goal is to sustain and build on these achievements, ensuring that cities like Rotterdam continue to adapt and thrive in the face of climate challenges. The HOPE project may be concluding, but our work to protect vulnerable populations from heat continues.

Yvonne van Duijnhoven,
Director of Public Health of the City of Rotterdam

2. ON THE SPOTLIGHT

2.1. HOPE E-LEARNING AND MOOC: FREE WORLDWIDE ACCESS

by **Dr Marleen Goumans**, Professor of Integrated care for Older people & **Prof Henk Rosendal**, Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences, **Miltos Sakellariou**, chair of Altera vita Cyclades Greece

We are excited to offer an e-learning platform and MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) available on a worldwide accessible platform. These courses are designed to stimulate innovative learning and teaching practices, focusing on climate change and the severe threat of heatwaves on the older people services and health care sector.

Climate change, including the increasing frequency of heatwaves, has significant implications for health. That's why we focus on educating health and social care students, professionals, volunteers, and older adults about the risks of heatwaves and effective mitigation strategies.

Dr. Marleen Goumans, Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences

Available Courses:

- **HOPE E-Learning** for students
- **MOOC** for formal and informal caregivers

The approach is unique, as there has been no existing educational framework tailored to these specific groups. The courses are designed to be easily accessible and directly applicable to everyday practices.

Course Development Collaboration:

The courses have been developed with the **guidance of Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences** and the **Social Cooperative Altera Vita** from Cyclades Greece, the **HOPE consortium**, climate and health experts, older adults, caregivers, and organizations involved in the older adult ecosystem.
The content is based on real-world cases and examples, drawing from cross-disciplinary and cross-country learning.

Course Content Includes:

1. **Climate Change:** UN SDGs, heatwaves, causes, and effects
2. **Health Impacts of Heatwaves:** Direct and indirect effects, thermoregulation, and vulnerable populations
3. **Micro-level Interventions:** Personal strategies
4. **Meso-level Interventions:** Building-based solutions
5. **Macro-level Interventions:** Surrounding environmental actions

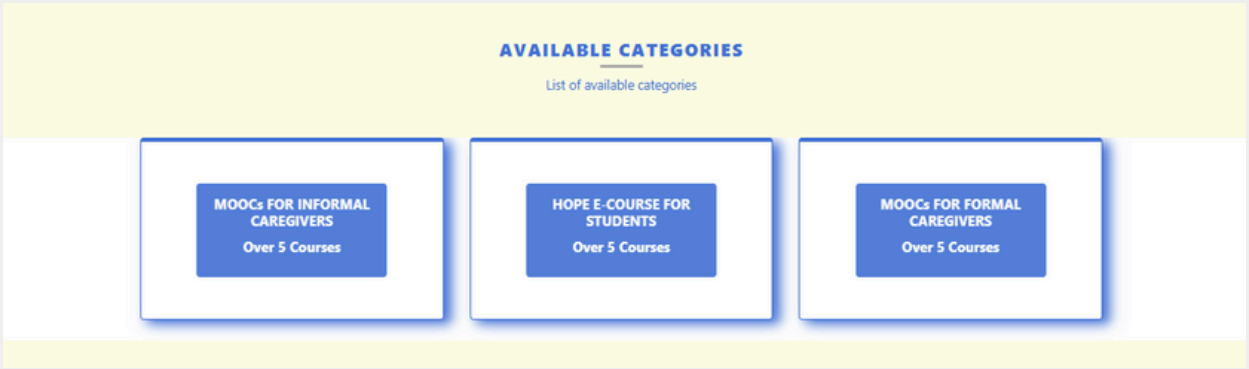
Each module includes a test and assignment to ensure practical learning and knowledge application.

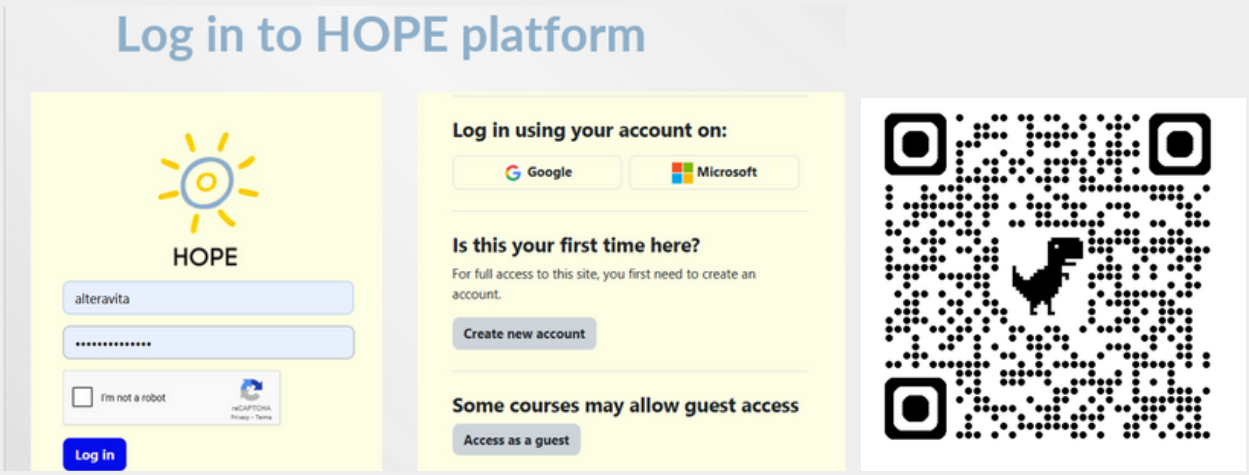
Start Learning Today!

HOPE E-Learning Platform: https://e-learning.hopeheatwaves.eu/

Visit the **HOPE E-Learning Platform** to access the courses.

On the left, Miltos Sakellariou, Social Cooperative Altera Vita (Cyclades Greece))
On the right, Henk Rosendal, Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences
HOPE final conference, March 3, 2025- House of the Dutch Provinces





https://e-learning.hopeheatwaves.eu/login/index.php

2.2. GUIDELINES FOR THE ECOSYSTEM "A JOURNEY OF HOPE!"

by **Adriano Fernandes**, director of the innovation Department, Santa Casa da Misericórdia da Amadora, Portugal

Santa Casa da Misericórdia da Amadora (SCMA) is a Charity with 38 years of service, providing daily support to 5,800 individuals across four core areas: **Education, Social Support, Healthcare, and Services for Older Adults**. Within the latter, SCMA operates three nursing homes, two day care centers, and four homecare support services, serving approximately 600 older adults daily.

SCMA played a pivotal role in the **co-design and co-development** of the **Guidelines for Ecosystems**, focusing on older adults, caregivers, and organizations. This initiative aimed to support both the personal and professional lives of stakeholders in mitigating the impact of heatwaves on older adults.

The main vision for the design and development of the Guidelines for Ecosystems was the **strengthening of competences** of older adults, caregivers, and professionals on better responding to the needs, as well as **supporting and stimulating** the professional organizations in the older adults' ecosystem to **apply specific guidelines**.

For **organizations**, the objective was to facilitate a **capacity building** process that would enhance their ability to respond effectively to heatwaves, improve decision-making, and increase confidence in managing the health and well-being of older adults. Ultimately, this effort aimed to reduce hospitalizations and mortality rates during extreme heat events.

This project result was founded and leveraged on 3 strategic drivers:
-**collaboration** (promoting cooperation both among consortium partners and within the internal teams of participating organizations);
-**demand driven orientation** (ensuring that the framework was tailored to the actual needs of the target groups);
-**user centered design** (customizing the guidelines to align with the specific profiles of the involved stakeholders).
The process began with the **co-design** of the **Guidelines Framework**, which established key conditions that guided its development:
a) **a structured guide** for partners to research and address the impact of heatwaves on older adults;
b) **identification of challenges** and unmet needs in heatwave management;
c) **a co-design framework** to drive organizational change, fostering clear vision, leadership, supervisory support, and goal setting;
d) **a collaborative** approach that engaged stakeholders to improve communication, empower older adults and professionals, enhance decision-making, and raise awareness.

Following the framework's definition, a **co-creation process** was implemented, using an iterative methodology with the following steps:

a) **Definition of the challenge** and assessment of the current state of the art;

b) **Activation and consultation** of the Local Action Groups;

c) **Identification and validation** of real unmet needs among the Local Action Groups and Older Adults through dedicated co ideation sessions;

d) **Translation** of these **unmet needs** into concrete requirements for the Guidelines;

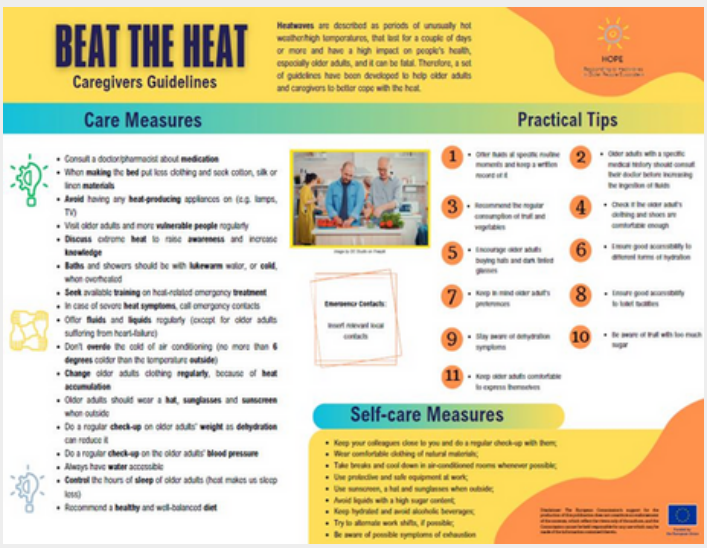
e) **Development of key actions**, recommendations, and practical tips for older adults, caregivers, and organizations;

f) **Change management**: the final step involved integrating the guidelines into the daily operations of partner organizations, ensuring both adoption and sustainability of co-creation processes.

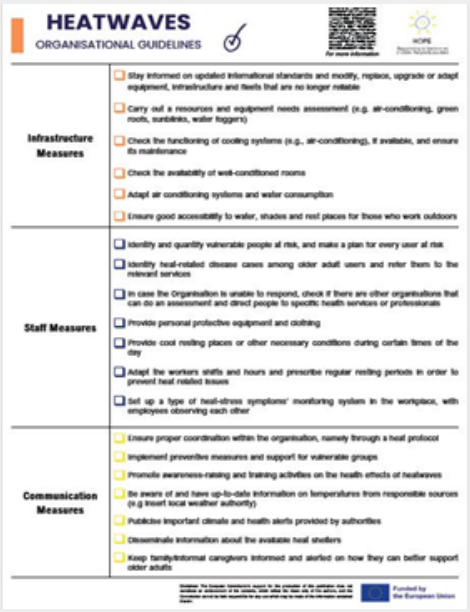
The structured and iterative methodology resulted in a set of **targeted Guidelines** to help manage and mitigate the effects of heatwaves on older adults. These guidelines were categorized as follows

a) **for Older Adults, key drivers**: focus on self-care, homecare, and outdoor safety; practical daily tips; emergency contact information.

b) **for Caregivers, key drivers**: focus on care-related measures; self-care strategies; practical day-to-day recommendations.



c) **for organizations, key drivers**: focus on infrastructural improvements; staff training and preparedness; communication strategies.



The final set of Guidelines was officially presented at the **Final Conference of HOPE**, held in Brussels on March 3rd 2025.

The initiative received positive and encouraging feedback from the audience, reinforcing partners' pride in their achievements.

More importantly, partners felt that the Guidelines may **HOPE**fully result in their practical adoption and long-term application in the daily routines of older adults, professionals, and organizations—regardless of geographical, political, or cultural context.

Adriano Fernandes, Santa Casa de Misericordia Amadora

2.3. ENHANCING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY TO PROTECT OLDER ADULTS DURING HEATWAVES WITH A DATABASE OF GOOD PRACTICES

By Francesca Masiero, ISRAA Treviso

Among all climate-related extreme events, **heatwaves** have been occurring more frequently and intensely with a higher impact on the overall related mortality rates and economic losses. **Adaptation and mitigation** measures are and will be even more crucial to deal with a phenomenon that is not set to diminish in the future, and for which citizens, organizations and governments alike still need to build more capacity to be prepared and resilient.

In this framework, initiatives and projects such as **HOPE are key to increase public's attention and awareness** of the risks connected with heatwaves and to develop a common understanding of this problem, which should be more prioritised within political agendas.

The **Database of Good Practices** produced within the HOPE project is one successful example of the importance of collecting knowledge, practical experiences and lessons learnt from initiatives that have been implemented worldwide at different levels to manage heatwaves, which is key to get inspiration for their replication in other contexts.

Francesca Masiero, ISRAA Treviso

Davide Tuis, ISRAA Treviso

The **Database** presents a wide collection of practices including local adaptation and action plans, nature-based solutions, organizations' protocols, etc.

Thus, it includes several types of resources in part reflecting the cross-cutting priorities of the **2021 EU Adaptation Strategy**. This latter fosters a more integrated and systematic approach to adaptation measures to the impacts of climate change with the aim to build more climate resilience and decrease its economic impact.

According to the **statistics** of the **European Environment Agency**, between 1980 and 2021 heatwaves have caused 159,003 fatalities with economic insured losses amounting to 11 billion euros vis-à-vis 66 billion euros of non-insured losses.

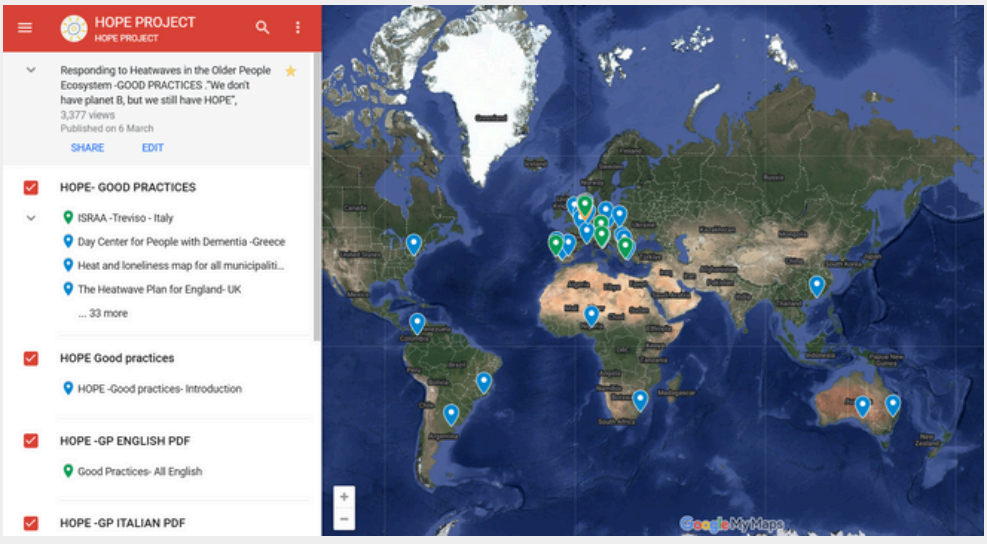
In comparison, according to the same statistics, **floods** have been causing 4,161 casualties, droughts, forest fires and cold waves would be responsible for the death of 15,169 people, while the fatalities derived from storms and mass movements would amount to 3,872, for the same period.

Source: Immo Wegmann, Unsplash

In light of these statistics, it is clear that more efforts need to be made and that public awareness around heatwaves needs to change to see it as a priority, and thus, to tackle this problem with more effective actions and systematic approaches.

The **Database of Good Practices** offer an incredible opportunity to dive into what other countries have been doing, with the idea that there is no need to reinvent the wheel. But while it is always important to innovate based on what already exists, we should never forget to look at untapped opportunities and disruptive solutions that emerge alongside the fast technological advancements.

INTERACTIVE MAP OF GOOD PRACTICES



Some cities and organizations have already taken on this challenge by **exploiting the potential of AI-powered tools** for heatwaves management.

For instance, IBM is currently developing an AI-predictive system to send early alerts to the population about when and where extreme heat hotspots will occur in an urban area.

At the same time, AI is also being used to develop tools for supporting urbanists in understanding where it would be more appropriate and beneficial to implement urban regeneration projects, such as cool roofs.

Connected with this, the city of Los Angeles is using AI to scan the presence and density of trees in the urban environment, regardless of whether they are planted in public or private spaces, to help city planners understand exactly where more trees should be planted.

In sum, there is overall growing attention to how heatwaves can be managed most effectively, and it is likely that this trend will continue and intensify in the future, based on the negative predictions around the phenomenon of extreme climatic events.

At the European level, more countries have adopted multilevel **Heat-Health Action Plans** (HHAPs), which suggests the intention to integrate different policies and emergency response mechanisms with the aim to reduce mortality and the emergence of health-related conditions. The road ahead is still long, but these little steps forward do bring some hope.

Francesca Masiero and Davide Tuis, ISRAA Treviso, HOPE final conference March 3 2025, House of the Dutch Provinces

2.4. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND EUROPEAN AUTHORITIES

The HOPE Project presents a comprehensive set of **policy recommendations** aimed at **protecting older adults during heatwaves** by enhancing communication, preparedness, and cross-sector collaboration. A key priority is **improving communication** to mitigate heat-related health risks. This involves developing a heat coding system based on biometeorological indicators, increasing public awareness through targeted campaigns, ensuring information accessibility for vulnerable populations, and strengthening collaboration among governments, healthcare services, and public transport providers. Effective communication fosters community mobilization, raises awareness, and ultimately reduces health impacts.

Local governments are encouraged to develop comprehensive **heatwave emergency plans**, supported by EU directives, to ensure tailored and coordinated responses. This approach enhances stakeholder engagement, resource allocation, and community resilience, addressing the increasing frequency and severity of heatwaves due to climate change.

Josine van den Bogaard, city of Rotterdam

To standardize and improve responses across Europe, the **3H approach—focusing on Habitat, Housing, and Health**—is recommended. This framework calls for environmental measures such as urban forestry and shaded areas, housing adaptations including sun protection subsidies and overheating standards, and targeted health interventions like public cooling centers and care protocols for vulnerable populations. A unified European strategy fosters knowledge sharing, resource efficiency, and improved health outcomes.

Raising public awareness is another critical component, with the proposal to establish an **annual Heat Action Day on June 2nd** to educate communities about heat risks and protective measures. National and local **awareness campaigns** are essential to dispel misconceptions about heat risks and increase public knowledge, ultimately enhancing community resilience and self-sufficiency.

The project also highlights the often-overlooked risks faced by social workers and healthcare professionals during heatwaves. It recommends national **occupational safety policies** tailored to various work environments, improving conditions through better access to shade, adjusted work schedules, and hydration strategies. These measures support caregiver well-being, productivity, and the quality of care provided.

To reduce indoor heat buildup, **mandatory installation of blinds** in buildings housing older adults and vulnerable populations is proposed. Blinds offer a cost-effective solution by reducing heat absorption and lowering energy consumption, with government subsidies and automated systems addressing installation challenges.

A national **crisis response policy**, modeled after France's heat coding system, is essential for coordinating efforts during extreme heat events. Such policies ensure a unified approach, improving resource allocation, health outcomes, and reducing healthcare costs during heat emergencies.

Community support structures like Greece's Open Protection Centres (K.A.P.I.) demonstrate effective models for providing medical care, social support, and air-conditioned spaces during heatwaves, promoting social inclusion and active aging. Similarly, establishing emergency heat shelters in public buildings such as libraries and churches provides safe havens during extreme heat, preventing heat-related illnesses and deaths at relatively low costs.

Collaboration between municipalities and local stakeholders, including NGOs and care organizations, is critical to implementing heat emergency services for older adults. Services like air- conditioned spaces, climate-adapted meals, and transportation for isolated seniors reduce health risks and social isolation during heatwaves.

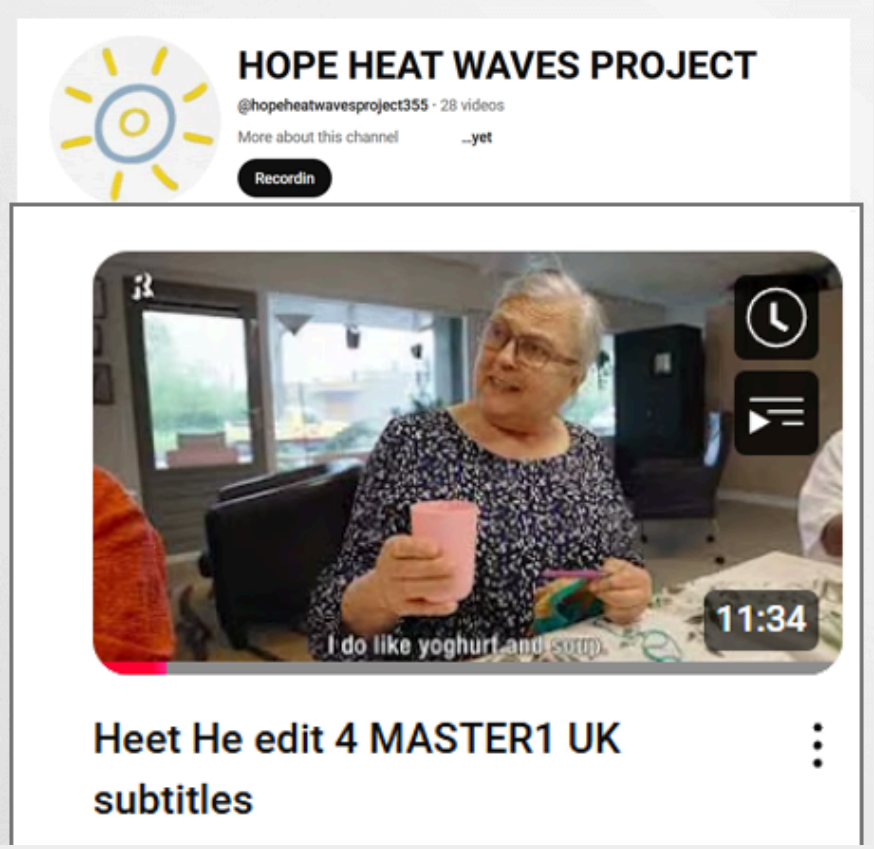
Enhancing social monitoring through educational campaigns, SMS alerts, wearable health devices, and targeted outreach ensures that vulnerable populations receive timely support. Integrating community infrastructure and partnerships with local businesses enhances this approach's effectiveness and scalability.

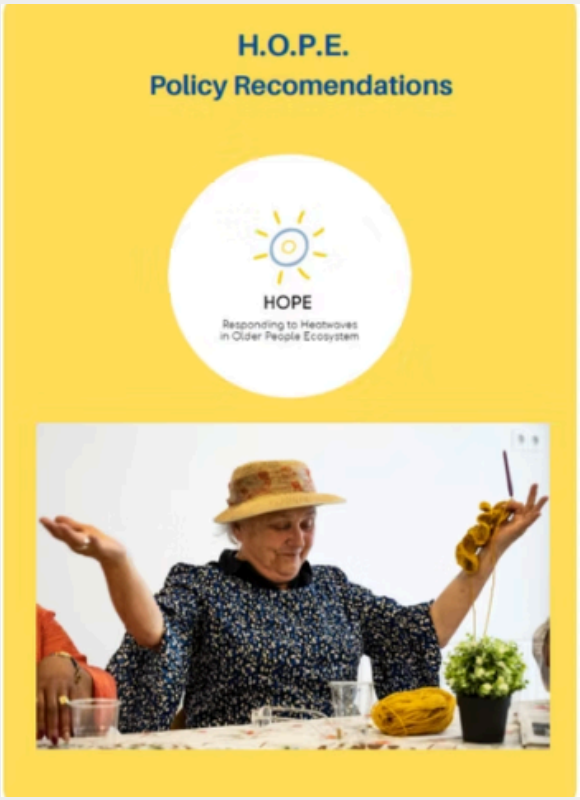
To mitigate the Urban Heat Island effect, the project recommends **expanding access to green urban spaces near residential areas**. Green spaces reduce heat impact through shading, evapotranspiration, and water features, while fostering social cohesion and climate resilience.

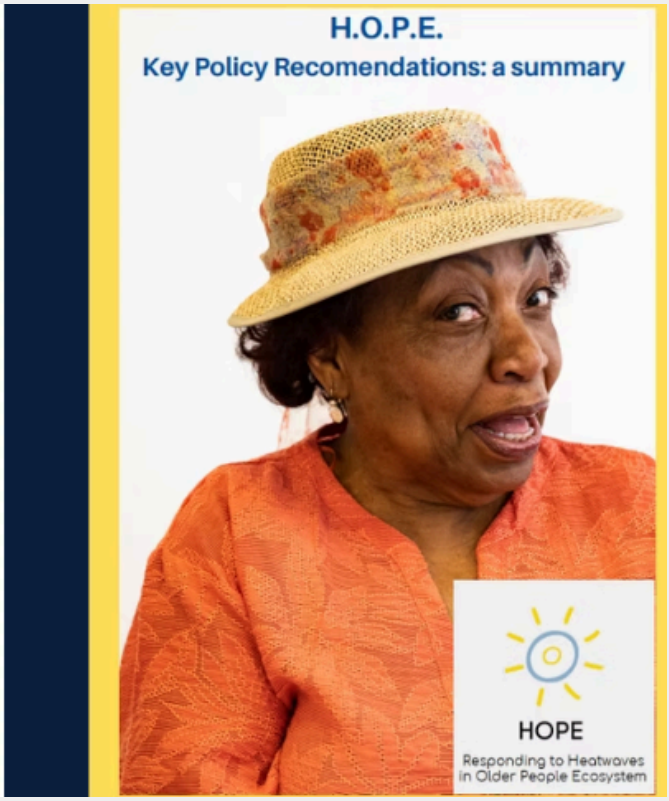
Lastly, implementing **white rooftops** on buildings, especially those housing older adults, is a practical and cost-effective solution to reduce indoor temperatures and lower heat-related health risks. White rooftops reflect sunlight, improving living conditions and reducing healthcare costs.

These **interconnected policy recommendations** aim to build resilient communities, enhance preparedness, and reduce the health impacts of extreme heat events, ensuring the safety and well-being of older adults across Europe.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS







3. COOLING THE HEAT! INTERACTIVE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE BRUSSELS HEAT RESILIENCE CONFERENCE

by the students of the Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences

The recent Brussels Heat Resilience Conference underscored the **urgent need to integrate heat resilience into public health policies**. Experts emphasized the importance of local action, community engagement, and long-term adaptation strategies to combat the escalating risks posed by heatwaves across Europe. The conference provided valuable insights into the impact of extreme heat, the necessity of collaborative action, and the implementation of practical solutions to protect vulnerable populations.

Heatwaves and Public Health: The Case of Germany

Hans-Guido Mücke from the German Environment Agency highlighted the **increasing frequency and intensity of heatwaves in Germany**. Longer-lasting hot days and warmer nights pose severe health risks, particularly for older adults. Notably, excessive air conditioning use can exacerbate nighttime heat, raising temperatures by 2 to 3 degrees, making proper ventilation and cooling strategies critical.

Mortality rates peak during the summer months, disproportionately affecting those over 70, individuals with disabilities, the homeless, and young children. While it remains uncertain whether northern Germany experiences higher mortality rates than the south, adaptation measures in southern regions may contribute to better outcomes.

Germany has yet to implement a national heat action plan, though a **heat guidebook** based on the WHO's 2008 guidelines exists. To move from theory to practice, Germany must establish **care organizations for the homeless, create designated cooling spaces, and ensure access to drinking points**. France's model, where individuals can register to receive heatwave alerts and support, presents an effective approach worth replicating. Furthermore, **housing corporations** should prioritize breathable, well-ventilated homes to mitigate the effects of extreme heat.

Hans-Guido Mücke
German Environment Agency

Projects:

https://adelphi.de/en/projects/national-heat-action-plan-for-germany

Recommendations:

https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789289071918
https://www.bmuv.de/en/topics/health-chemicals/overview-health/overview-health-in-climate-change/recommendations-for-heat-action-plans
https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/en/press/pressinformation/federal-environment-ministry-supports-preventive

Data and recent publications:

https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/en/data/environmental-indicators?thema%5B%5D=102884
https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/9789289055406
https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10389-023-01932-2
https://www.rki.de/EN/News/Publications/Journal-of-Health-Monitoring/GBEDownloadsJ/Focus_en/JHealthMonit_2023_S4_Heat_climate_change_health.html?nn=16781724
https://www.rki.de/EN/News/Publications/Journal-of-Health-Monitoring/GBEDownloadsJ/Focus_en/JHealthMonit_2023_S4_Heat_climate_change_health_Addendum.html?nn=16781724

Climate Change and Healthcare Strain in Europe

Dorota Tomalak from the **European Committee of the Regions** addressed the broader climate challenges exacerbated by heatwaves. **Europe is the fastest warming continent** on Earth and the 2024 was confirmed by the Copernicus Climate Change Service (CCCS) to be the first calendar year that the average global temperature exceeded 1.5°C above its pre-industrial level. This puts the goal set by the Paris Agreement in question.

Sprawling heatwaves are killing Europeans. The CCCS reports that heat-related mortality has increased by around **30% in the past 20 years** while the WHO Office for Europe estimates that by 2050 there could be 120 000 heat-related deaths every year. Extreme heat can be deadly even for healthy older adults. Those with chronic diseases are particularly at risk.

Rising temperatures bring also wildfires and droughts; each with their own set of **dangerous health impacts.** Sicily, Thrace, Crete or Algarve face high-to-extreme fire danger levels for **80 days** per year should Europe keep warming up. Southern European regions, already struggling with **water scarcity affecting 70%** of their population, become breeding grounds for several vector-borne diseases, including malaria, Zika or haemorrhagic dengue fever.

Several cities around Europe invest in **adaptation measures,** ranging from **dedicated heat plans** and cooling facilities (Kristianstad, SE), urban heat mapping (Wroclaw PL/Antwerp BE), greening of health facilities (Ayveron FR), special apps and warning systems (Athens EL) or new green and blue spaces (Jena DE/Trnava SK).

Dorota Tomalak, European Committee of the Regions

Engaging Older Populations Through Performance and Interaction

One innovative approach to raising awareness is through **theatre and musical performances**. The HOPE production, for instance, presents five characters demonstrating different heat adaptation strategies. Humor, interaction, and audience appreciation are key elements that foster engagement and discussion among older adults, helping them better understand heat-related risks while encouraging them to share personal experiences.

Rotterdam's Human-Centered Climate Adaptation Strategy

Josine van den Bogaard from the **City of Rotterdam** highlighted how the city's climate adaptation efforts have evolved from purely technical solutions to a more **human-centered approach**. While funding for adaptation initially focused on water management, the city has now prioritized the **inclusion of vulnerable groups**, particularly older residents.

Key initiatives include **special consultation hours** for older citizens, an **informative website**, and **knowledge-sharing events**. Additionally, Rotterdam has introduced **e-learning MOOCs** to educate caregivers and students on heat-related health risks, ensuring broad accessibility. By combining **technical solutions** with **community engagement**, Rotterdam offers a model for **integrating climate resilience into urban planning**.

Josine van den Bogaard, City of Rotterdam

Amadora's Heat Adaptation Strategies

Adriano Fernandes from the Region of **Amadora, Portugal**, emphasized the city's unique challenges in climate adaptation. A significant portion of its population consists of older adults living in apartment buildings, making them particularly vulnerable to extreme heat. Economic factors, including high unemployment rates, further complicate resilience efforts.

The HOPE project plays a crucial role in improving end-of-life care, managing chronic diseases, and enhancing home healthcare services to support older residents. Additionally, HOPE focuses on building community resilience through health literacy initiatives and improved organizational preparedness. By participating in European collaborations, Amadora is strengthening its capacity to respond to climate challenges effectively.

Adriano Fernandes, Santa Casa da Misericordia Amadora

Policy Action: Integrating Heatwave Preparedness into the European Pillar of Social Rights

A dedicated session at the conference examined how the **European Pillar of Social Rights can address heatwave-related inequalities**. Vulnerable groups, including low-income households and those living in urban areas with limited green spaces, are disproportionately affected by extreme heat.

Future policy developments include the **revision of the European Pillar of Social Rights** action plan, with a focus on skills development and self-communication training to enhance public awareness. The **Quality Jobs Roadmap** aims to protect workers from heat-related risks, while the Preparedness Union Strategy seeks to improve the EU's crisis response mechanisms. Additionally, the upcoming **Affordable Housing Action Plan** will integrate social inclusion and climate resilience into urban planning.

Valeria Spazzoli, European Commission

From Policy to Action: Implementing Local Heat Plans

A parallel session focused on **translating heat adaptation policies into concrete actions**. Local governments are best positioned to implement heat action plans due to their proximity to affected communities. However, success depends on securing buy-in from policymakers through data-driven evidence, mapping existing initiatives, and setting clear local priorities.

Challenges in implementation include a lack of real-time epidemiological data, insufficient interdepartmental cooperation, and a reliance on statistical evidence over lived experiences. Smaller cities, in particular, struggle with funding constraints. However, cost-effective solutions such as expanding green spaces and establishing cooling centers can make a significant impact.

Esther Wienese, City of Rotterdam

Conclusion: A Call for Integrated Action

The Brussels Heat Resilience Conference made it clear that the increasing frequency and intensity of heatwaves demand **immediate and sustained action.** From local initiatives to EU-wide policy changes, integrating climate resilience into public health and urban planning is crucial to protecting vulnerable populations. By fostering **interdisciplinary collaboration**, prioritizing **community engagement, and securing long-term funding** for adaptation efforts, European cities can build a sustainable and heat-resilient future. **The need to act is urgent**—without comprehensive adaptation strategies, the health and well-being of millions remain at risk.

Students of the Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences

3.1 “COOLING THE HEAT” BRUSSELS, HOUSE OF THE DUTCH PROVINCES – 3 MARCH 2025

Views from Roberto Ciambetti, President of Veneto Regional Council, Ambassador for Italy of the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy Member of the European Committee of the Regions (Vice President of the NAT Natural Resources, and ENVE Environment, Climate change and Energy Commissions), Vice-President of ELISAN.

Roberto Ciambetti emphasized the **growing challenge of heatwaves** in the context of climate change and urban sustainability, **aligning with SDG 11** of the United Nations. He highlighted the urgent need to **protect vulnerable populations**, particularly the older people and individuals with chronic conditions, from the severe health risks posed by extreme heat events.

A crucial aspect of the speech was the **interconnectedness of overheating and air pollution**, which exacerbates health risks. Ciambetti stressed the **ethical responsibility** of public officials and urban planners to implement sustainable and climate-resilient policies. He underlined the importance of **public awareness**, stating that informed citizens can better respond to climate-related health threats.

The **HOPE project** (funded by Erasmus+) was introduced as an innovative and concrete response to the crisis. It provides educational tools, best practices, and guidelines for students, caregivers, and healthcare professionals, integrating into the broader Long-Term Care (LTC) program within European policies. The project's collaborative efforts, including cities like Rotterdam and institutions from Italy, Portugal, Greece, and ELISAN, showcase a **unified approach to mitigating heatwave risks**.

The **Veneto Region** has actively implemented **heatwave prevention strategies**, including the "**Operational Health Protocol**" regional climate monitoring, and emergency response systems through **ARPAV** and **COREM.** Telemedicine and territorial medicine have also been emphasized as vital components in ensuring rapid medical intervention during heatwaves.

Ciambetti advocated for the institutionalization of an **annual Heat Action Day** to raise public awareness and strengthen community resilience. He reaffirmed **Veneto’s commitment to sustainable urban development**, in line with the Venice Declaration, European Pillar of Social Rights, and UN initiatives. Collaboration with European and international organizations, including the Council of Europe, remains a key strategy in advancing social inclusion and health protection.

Closing with a powerful North African proverb, Ciambetti urged decisive action:

“The difference between a desert and a blooming garden is not water. It is us.”

This serves as a call to prioritize sustainability, greenery, and proactive climate measures in urban environments.

Roberto Ciambetti, President of Veneto Regional Council

3.2 “COOLING THE HEAT”: BRINGING HOPE TO A SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE FUTURE
BRUSSELS, HOUSE OF THE DUTCH PROVINCES – 3 MARCH 2025

Views from Anne-Marie Chavanon, President of Committee on Inclusive Territories, Environment and Health council of Europe, Conference of INGOs

“This inspiring initiative has tackled one of today’s most pressing challenges—**climate change and its impact on public health, particularly for older adults**. It was an honor to **share the floor with President Roberto Ciambetti**, a longstanding advocate for **sustainability, inclusivity, and social justice**. His dedication has played a crucial role in shaping policies that **prioritize the most vulnerable in our society**. Over the years, his commitment has been evident in the fight against climate change and in his relentless efforts to address its effects on public health.

From its inception, HOPE has grown into a **powerful movement**, the final meeting was a moment of reflection on the project's journey, emphasizing its critical role in addressing **extreme heat and its devastating consequences on public health**. The session featured high-level discussions and valuable insights, with a particular focus on older adults, the primary affected group. Attendees explored innovative local solutions and were presented with ground breaking policies and initiatives, including e-modules, online courses, and databases of best practices aimed at helping communities adapt to climate challenges.

The **HOPE project fully aligns with global sustainability goals and the core values of the Council of Europe: democracy, human rights, and the rule of law**. It directly contributes to **several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 3 on health and well-being, SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities, and SDG 10 on reducing inequalities**.

The project’s influence extends beyond Europe, with key recommendations submitted at major international summits, including COP 26 in Glasgow, where we were the first to advocate for integrating health into climate discussions. Our efforts contributed to health becoming a priority at COP 28 in Dubai. Additionally, our interventions at the World Forum for Democracy, the UNEP Assembly in Nairobi, and the World Urban Forum have reinforced the urgent need for sustainable, inclusive, and resilient urban development strategies.

A key takeaway? Local initiatives can drive global impact!

Rotterdam stands as a pioneering example, being among the first cities to dedicate a program to **Heat Action Day**. This initiative underscores how local governments can take proactive steps to address climate challenges, aligning perfectly with the goals of the HOPE project. As President Ciambetti highlighted, **regional authorities play an essential role in ensuring that policies transition** from theoretical frameworks into tangible actions that benefit communities directly.

The panel discussions and parallel sessions in Brussels reinforced the urgency of integrating these concerns into the **European Pillar of Social Rights**. The proposed solutions, from public awareness campaigns to innovative technological tools, reflect a collective commitment to addressing extreme heat's effects on public health. The commitment of younger generations, whose contributions were highlighted throughout the event, offers a beacon of hope for the future.

As heatwaves become an increasing threat, projects like HOPE remind us that we **must act with urgency**. The World Health Organization **(WHO) has declared climate change the single biggest health threat facing humanity**, and it is our responsibility to confront this crisis with determination. The Council of Europe invites continued engagement in shaping inclusive, climate-resilient communities—starting with **presenting the HOPE project at the next NGOs session on April 14**. We would be honored to collaborate further on initiatives like Heat Action Day, where Rtterdam has already set a strong precedent.

The HOPE project is a message of solidarity, resilience, and action that must extend beyond this initiative. Let us continue this journey and transform our shared hope into meaningful change for future generations.

Anne-Marie Chavanon, President of Committee on Inclusive Territories, Environment and Health council of Europe, Conference of INGOs

4. EU AND PARTNERS NEWS - HOPE GOING LOCAL: TREVISO, AMADORA, SYROS

A series of **national** and **local events** have been organized as part of the HOPE Project to explore strategies for adapting and developing policies that better protect older populations from heat-related challenges. These events introduced an innovative e-learning platform for Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), designed for students and caregivers.

Let's begin our journey in Treviso!

On Friday, March 14, the **final Italian event of the HOPE** project was held at ISRAA's Grand Hall. Despite the day's gloomy weather, the morning was full of speeches and questions from participants. ISRAA's project managers **Marta Mattarucco, Francesca Masiero and Davide Tuis** prepared a varied agenda including **Elena Procaccini** from the **Local Health Agency (AULSS2)** and **Matilde Brandolisio,** responsible for the environment - air quality and sustainability office and responsible for the environment - urban wildlife and pets protection office.

The event started with the presentation of some highlights on the topic. The estimated total number of deaths caused by the 2003 heatwave in Europe, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), is thought to amount to about 70,000.

The Summer of 2023 was the 5th warmest Summer in Europe, with temperatures exceeding the average by 0.83°C, according to the Copernicus Observatory. Over the Summer in 2023, 33 was the average number of heatwave days recorded in the Veneto Region (ARPAV data), with an average increase of 17 days compared to the period 1991-2020. Finally, 100 is the estimated number of tropical nights that southern European countries could experience each year towards the end of this century (EEA data).

Building on the situation depicted by these numbers, we continued with the presentation of the results of the HOPE project:

- **E-learning for students** and **MOOCs** for formal and informal caregivers
- **Collection of Good Practices** for the whole community
- **Guidelines** for formal and informal caregivers, elders, and organizations
- **Policy recommendations** for local and regional authorities

The speeches by the local stakeholders (AULSS2 and the Municipality of Treviso) gave us valuable insights into how to improve care services for older people, such as by promoting greener spaces within the city, shelter spaces, water dispensers for refreshment. These interventions helped cast light on the need to raise the public and local authorities' awareness on the problem of heatwaves, which is often downplayed or not as prioritised as energy economic savings amidst rising energy costs.

Finally, the concluding remarks focused on the **need to keep promoting the project's results to foster a better heatwaves management and adaptation both in public and private living environments.** Thus, some new initiatives were mentioned to give some final examples of how technological progress itself is going to give a significant contribution in the development of innovative solutions to forecast data on the evolution of temperatures and on the occurrence and impact of heatwaves.

Local event, ISRAA Treviso March 14th 2025

The Amadora Initiative

Our journey continues in Amadora, Portugal, where a pivotal multiplier event has been organized by Santa Casa da Misericórdia da Amadora (SCMA) through its Innovation Department, in collaboration with the Municipality of Amadora and Civil Protection, on March 26 2025.

As the driving force behind the Guidelines and Procedures Manual for older adults, caregivers, and organizations, SCMA presented this essential resource at the event.

The program featured:

✅ An introduction to the HOPE Project's mission and objectives

✅ A global perspective on the rising threat of heatwaves

✅ Practical guidelines and recommendations for older adults, caregivers, and organizations

✅ The launch of an innovative MOOC designed for students and informal caregivers

✅ Insights into SCMA's real-world experience in heatwave management

✅ A networking session to foster collaboration and share best practices

With knowledge, innovation, and community engagement, Amadora is taking a stand to better protect its older population from extreme heat.

Local event, Multiplier event Amadora March 14th 2025

The Syros Initiative

Now we go to Syros, Cyclades, Greece with the presentation and promotion of HOPE Project Results on **March 30, 2025** with a **Special Event on Well-Being and Social Innovation**.

ALTERA VITA – Social Cooperative of Cyclades, a rapidly growing and internationally active social enterprise, continues to lead the way in promoting innovative social initiatives that address the evolving needs of modern communities. As a proud partner of the HOPE project, ALTERA VITA remains deeply committed to fostering inclusivity, intergenerational solidarity, and well-being.

To celebrate the successful completion of this Erasmus+ funded project, ALTERA VITA, in collaboration with **organizations from Syros, the Prefecture of Cyclades, and the ENSEL European Network of Social and Emotional Learning**, will host a special community event on Sunday, March 30, 2025, at the Social Cooperative of Cyclades venue.
This event will showcase the key outcomes of the HOPE project, including:

✅ The MOOC (Massive Open Online Course)
✅ Guidelines for ecosystem development
✅ A database of good practices
✅ Policy recommendations to support sustainable and inclusive communities

It will also serve as a platform for engaging discussions and hands-on activities, fostering meaningful interactions among participants.

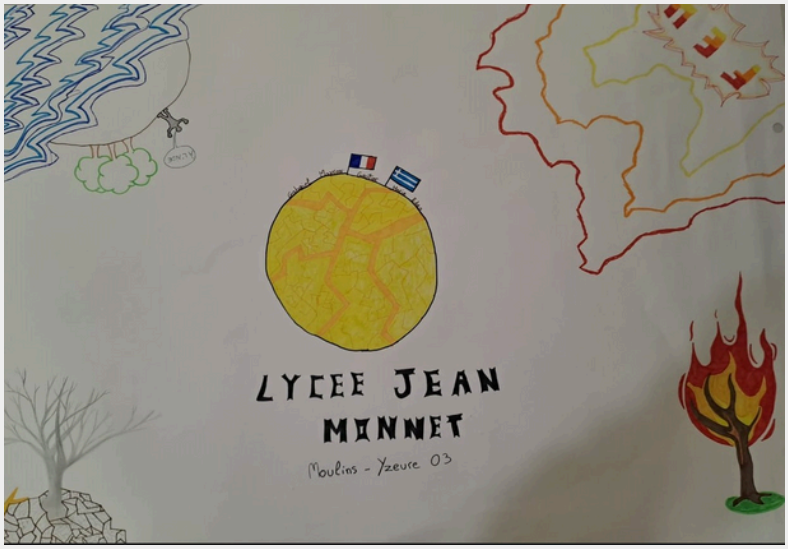
What to Expect:

🔹 **Experiential Workshops** – In collaboration with the 4th **Experimental Primary School of Ermoupolis**, interactive sessions will raise children's awareness while encouraging meaningful dialogue between parents and educators. These workshops will emphasize an intergenerational approach to well-being, highlighting the value of cross-generational connections in building a more inclusive society.

🔹 **Participation of Key Organizations** – Several local institutions and groups will actively contribute to the event, including:
✔ **AROGI,** the association for people with visual impairments of Cyclades
✔ **Ex Chordais and Organs,** a traditional music school
✔ **ANADRASIS**
✔ **Nursing homes and older people** care centers of Syros

🔹 A **Key Collaboration** with the **General Hospital of Syros** – As a leading institution in public health, the General Hospital of Syros plays a vital role in safeguarding the well-being of residents and visitors across the Cyclades. The hospital is invited to co-organize the event, featuring the presentation of the **OPSY** (Integrated Psychogeriatric Support Intervention) program—a critical initiative focusing on older adults care, closely aligned with the goals of the HOPE project.

Multiplier event Syros



ENSA General Assembly 2025, follow-up of HOPE Conference: "COOLING THE HEAT"

The ENSA General Assembly 2025, held from March 3rd to 5th in Brussels, gathered over 60 stakeholders from regional authorities, academia, international institutions, civil society, and professionals from various sectors.

This event was organized in collaboration with the Erasmus+ funded project HOPE: Responding to Heatwaves in the Older People Ecosystem, and as a follow up of this event focusing on improving the well-being of vulnerable populations, particularly older adults, in the face of climate challenges. It has also been the opportunity to highlight the **SACRED** project empowering care, enriching lives Erasmus+ funded project.

March 4th: **The ENSA General Assembly**

It tooks place at the Veneto Region's Brussels Office, chaired by **Annalisa Bisson**, Director International Relations, Veneto Region, where updates on key initiatives and future projects were shared.
The assembly included working group sessions in collaboration with the **ENSEL** European Network on Social and Emotional Learning. These sessions focused on **youth, family, child, and well-being,** with particular attention to behavioral disorders in teenagers and the role of youth in addressing climate change's health impacts. Special emphasis was placed on fostering intergenerational collaboration and empowering youth to support older adults in managing climate-related health challenges.

March 5th: **ENSA Older Adults and Disability Working Groups**

The final day centered on discussions related to demographic change, the creation of age- and disability-friendly communities, and the integration of social and healthcare services for older adults and people with disabilities. Panels explored strategies for mitigating the impact of climate change on vulnerable populations, developing Heat Action Days, and creating inclusive environments. The sessions concluded with practical insights on building resilient communities that prioritize the health and well-being of these groups. Throughout the event, participants shared best practices, innovative solutions, and valuable insights, strengthening collaboration. The discussions laid the foundation for future initiatives aimed at improving social inclusion, enhancing climate resilience, and enhancing the quality of life for older adults and people with disabilities across Europe.

ENSA General Assembly, Veneto Region Bruxelles Office
4-5 March 2025

5. LOOKING AHEAD: SHAPING THE FUTURE: LAUNCH OF A HEAT ACTION DAY.

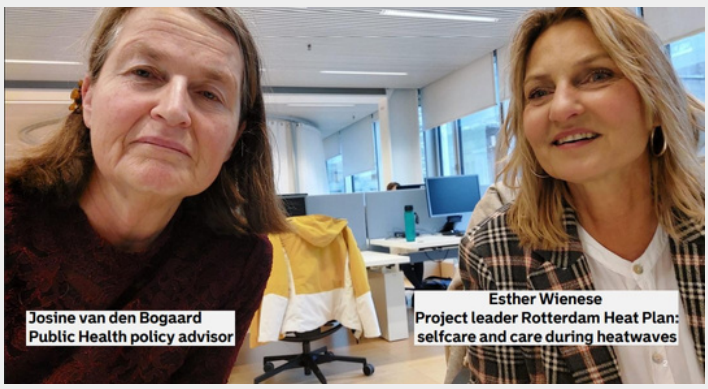
Rotterdam Leads the Way with Heat Action Day 2025!

On June 2 2025, Rotterdam will join the City of London, the University of Botswana, USAID, the Asian Development Bank, and other global partners—including ICLEI, Making Cities Resilient, the Zurich Resilience Alliance, and representatives from France, Portugal, and Scotland—in **embracing the International Red Cross Heat Action Day.** With summer temperatures now soaring 8ºC higher than before and heat waves becoming more frequent, Rotterdam is stepping up efforts to protect residents and adapt its urban spaces to the growing climate challenge.

The **Heat Action Day Rotterdam** initiative brings together knowledge-sharing, community events, and bold statements, including:

✅ **Knowledge Day** – Experts & policymakers brainstorm heat solutions.
✅ **Partner Program** – Local businesses & organizations take action.
✅ **HitteRun** – A running event highlighting heat risks.
✅ **Citywide Statement** – Iconic landmarks glowing red/orange to raise awareness.

Rotterdam isn't just cooling down—it's setting a national example! Join the movement and make the city heat-proof for the future. We have more national events where we present the results of HOPE. We did already have one at 27 January 2025 (>75 participants, live) and at 20 March 2025 (around 25 participants, online). At Heat Action Day 2 June, they will be highlighted as well!



GREETINGS FROM THE HOPE PARTNERSHIP!

Interested in a HOPE 2.0 Project contact us !!

Visit our website at https://hope-heatwaves.eu

HOPE - E Learning Platform: https://e-learning.hopeheatwaves.eu

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