

Heat and Health: Experiences from Austria

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Slide set prepared by Katharina Brugger and Christina Lampl.

IANPHI Annual Meeting Maputo

Session "Climate change and Environmental Determinants on Diseases"

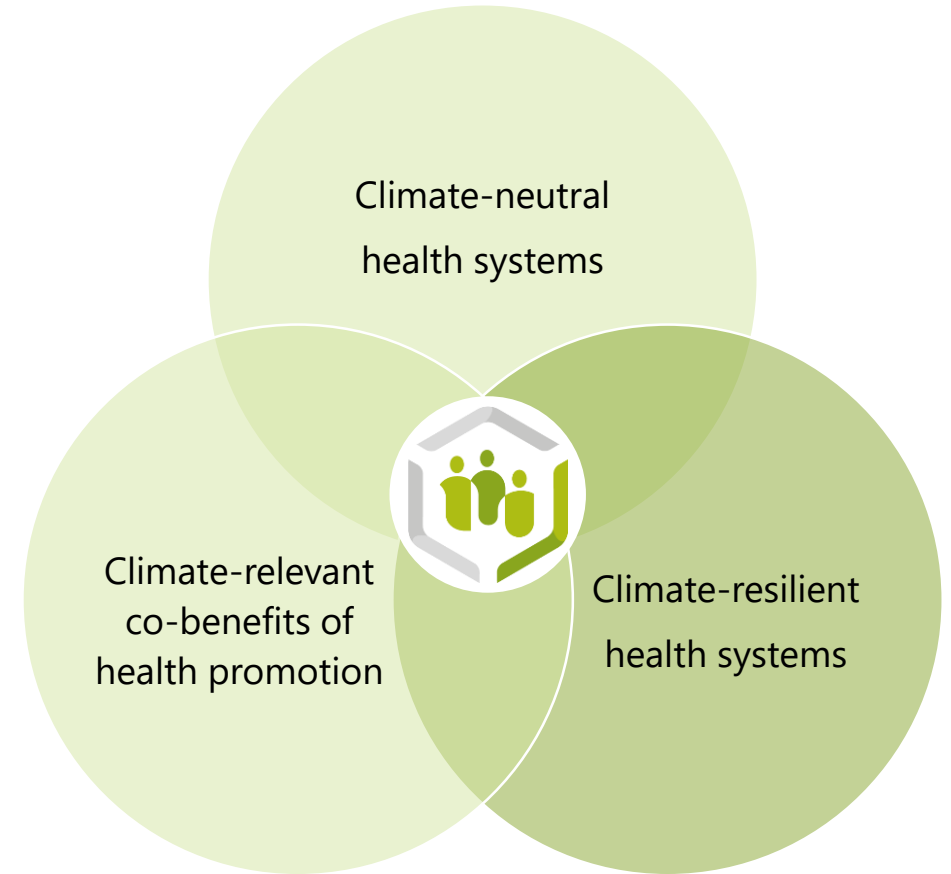
April 2025

Competence Centre Climate and Health

The Competence Center Climate and Health at the Austrian National Public Health Institute bundles interdisciplinary expertise from research, policy and practice at the interface of mitigation, adaptation, health promotion and health systems.

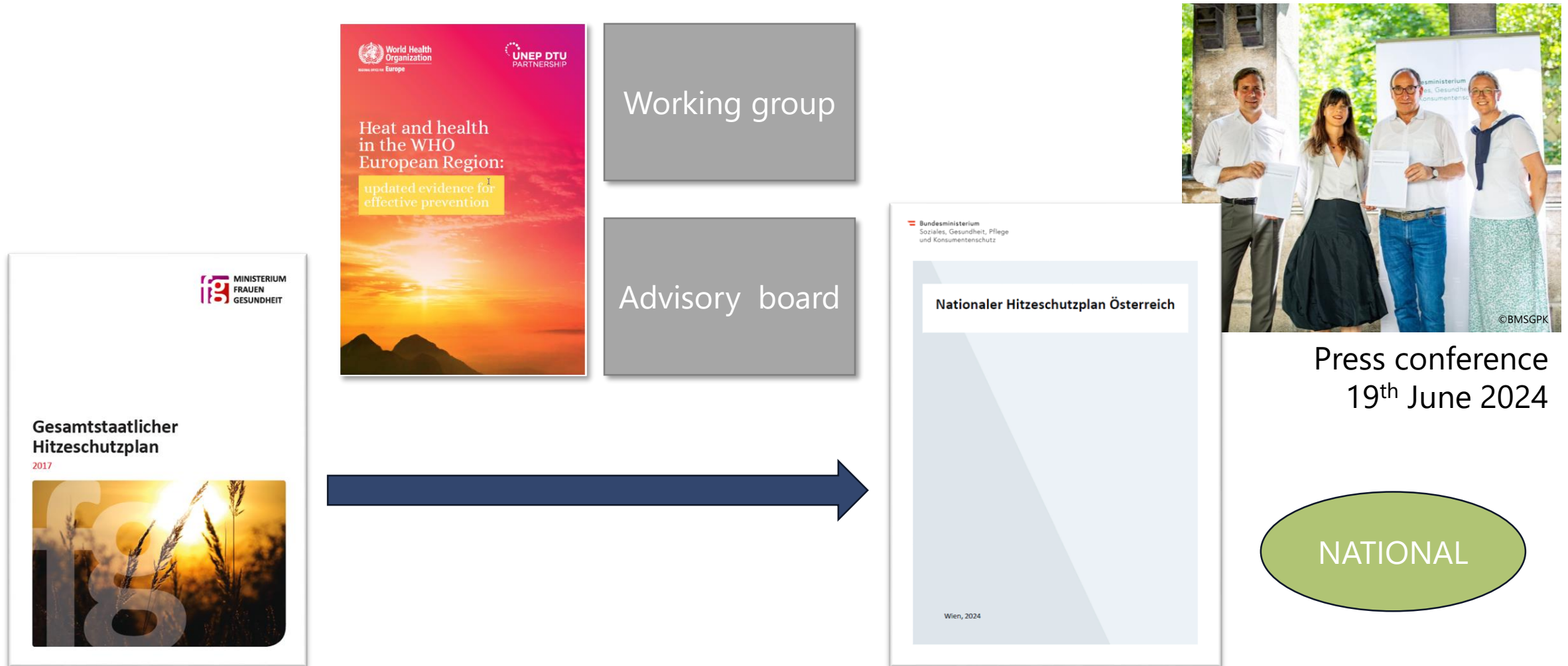
It aims to contribute to developing sustainable strategies for the health system, as well as scientific contents and monitoring systems for health policy impacted by climate change.

Established in March 2022



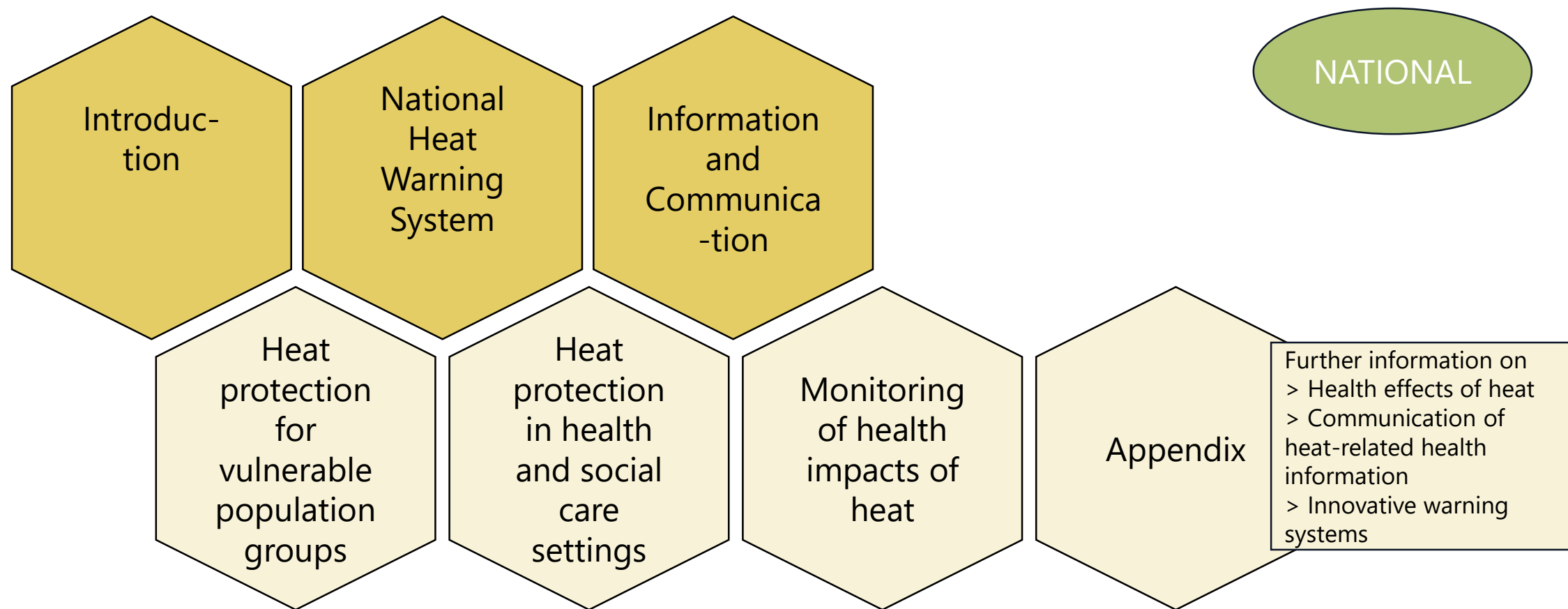
Department Climate Neutrality and Sustainable Transformation
Department Climate Resilience and One Health

Revision of the Austrian Heat Health Action Plan



National Heat Health Action Plan | Modular design

based on WHO recommendations



Addressing vulnerable population groups & health and social care settings

- Lists of possible measures at local and/or regional level in cases of heat and heat-related stress for vulnerable population groups
- List of recommended measures to prepare for, protect against and respond to heat and heat-related stress in health and social care settings

REGIONAL
LOCAL

Toolbox for accessibility and support for vulnerable population groups with best practices examples



Toolbox for heat protection plans for health and social care settings with best practices examples



Selected recommended measures in health and social care settings

REGIONAL
LOCAL

Before summer

- Preparation and implementation of a heat protection plan
- Adaptation of infrastructure (buildings, green spaces)
- Staff resource planning, taking into account holiday arrangements, adjustments to staff clothing
- Raising employee awareness of the health effects of heat (e.g. training, information material)

During summer, esp. during heatwaves

- Monitoring the room temperature and ensuring a comfortable room temperature, esp. in rooms of vulnerable persons
- Monitoring vulnerable persons
- Providing water and drinks to prevent dehydration
- Ensuring cold chains and the refrigeration of medicines and food
- Rearranging schedules (e.g. moving physiotherapy appointments to cooler times of day)
- Forwarding heat warnings and information about the heat protection plan to employees

Monitoring the impact of heat on health

NATIONAL

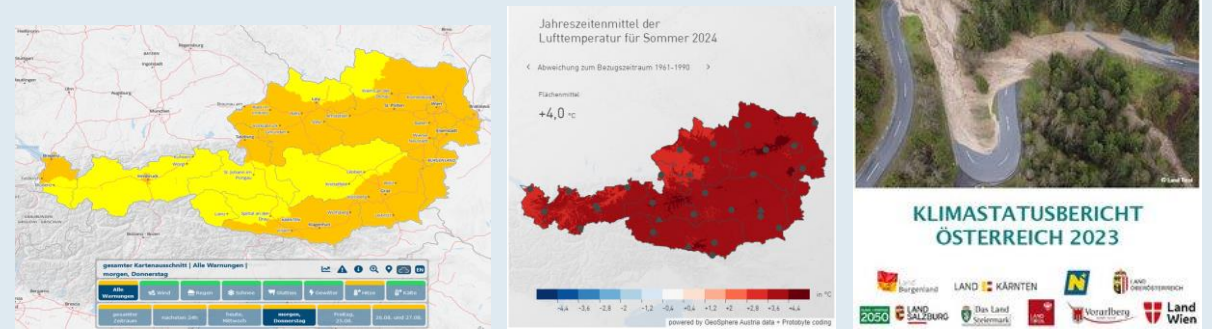
Heat-related deaths

- in Austria 2023 486 heat-related deaths
- more women than men affected and mainly older people affected, as in most EU-countries
- No homogenous monitoring of heat-related deaths in Europe
- WHO estimates around 176.000 heat-related deaths per year in Europe
- Heat-related death rates have increased by 30 percent

Source: [Mehr als 47.000 Hitze-Tote 2023 in Europa – BMK INFOTHEK](#)

- Heat mortality monitoring
Estimate of heat-associated excess mortality including 95 % confidence interval, Austria, summer periods
- Heat morbidity monitoring
hospital admissions based on selected ICD-10 codes

Toolbox for meteorological parameters and climate overviews



Recipe for a successful implementation or revision of a national heat health action plan

- Strong commitment by the **ministry of health**
- Involvement of **stakeholders from several sectors** via working group and advisory group (e.g. federal states, ministry of climate, weather service, public health institute)
- Comprehensive recommendations by **WHO**
- Ongoing **international exchange** with other organisations and institutions
- Collection of **best practise examples**
- **National exchange with different stakeholders**
 - Forum Hitze & Gesundheit 2025 (Vienna)
 - Heat action day 2025 (on-side and online events)

