Building on the 2025 national-level country data sheets developed by the Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change, this data sheet draws on findings from the **2026 report of the *Lancet* Countdown in Europe: *Narrowing the window for decisive health action*** to offer insight into how climate-related health risks and responses vary within countries.

LANCET COUNTDOWN: HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN EUROPE

GERMANY

LANCET COUNTDOWN IN EUROPE
CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH INSIGHTS 2026

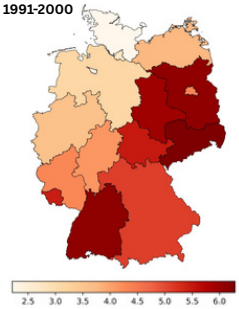
This document highlights patterns in heat-related risks and health impacts, shifting risks of climate-sensitive infectious diseases, demonstrating how climate change is shaping health risks across different parts of the country, while also considering longer-term environmental changes such as tree cover loss.

Heat and health

Exposure and vulnerability tend to be concentrated in particular regions in Germany, reflecting differences in local climate conditions, population age structure, and adaptive capacity. Tracking these subnational patterns is important for identifying where heat poses the greatest risks to health, where pressure on health systems may intensify, and where targeted adaptation measures are most needed.

Heat-related mortality

Change in annual heat-related deaths per 100,000 inhabitants in Germany in 2015-2024 compared to 1991-2000



The state of **Saxony**, closely followed by **Brandenburg** and **Baden-Württemberg**, registered the highest increase in heat-related mortality between 2015–2024 and 1991– 2000, with over deaths per 100,000 inhabitants (Indicator 1.1.3).

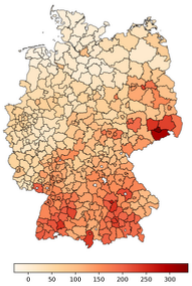
Heat-health early warnings

Heat–health early warnings translate daily temperatures into categories of health risk based on the proportion of deaths linked to heat (low: 5–10% to extreme: ≥20%), with a new epidemiological framework. **The region of Darmstadt** recorded an increase in extreme heat–health warning days from 0–1 in 1991 2000 to 3 in 2015–2024, reflecting growing heat-related health risks (Indicator 2.2.2).

Heat exposure of vulnerable populations

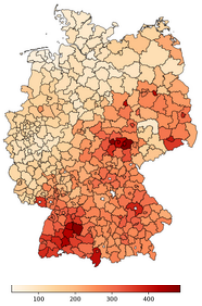
Dresden registered the highest increase in heatwave days experienced by infants aged under 1 between 2015–2024 and 1991–2000, with a 339% increase from ~360 to ~1,600 total days of heatwave exposure across the infant population (Indicator 1.1.1), highlighting increasing risks to early-life health from more frequent and intense heat exposure.

Percentage change in heat exposure days for 2014-2024 compared to 1991-2000 for infants under 1



Saale-Holzland-Kreis registered the highest increase in heatwave days experienced by adults aged over 65 between 2015–2024 and 1991–2000, with an 487% increase from ~83,500 to ~490,170 total days of heatwave exposure across the aged population (Indicator 1.1.1), reflecting growing exposure among populations most vulnerable to heat-related illness and mortality.

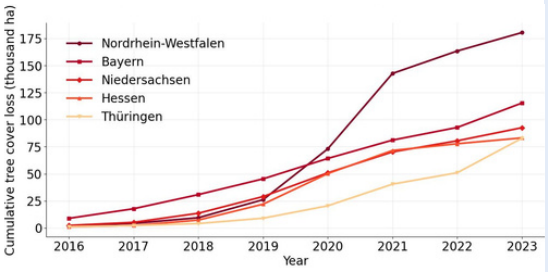
Percentage change in heat exposure days for 2014-2024 compared to 1991-2000 for adults over 65



Tree cover loss

Loss of tree cover can reduce the capacity of ecosystems to regulate local climate and filter air pollutants, potentially amplifying exposure to heat, degrading air quality, and increasing risks to physical and mental health.

Cumulative Tree Cover Loss- Top 5 regions (2016-2023)



Between 2016 and 2023, the **Nordrhein-Westfalen region** in Germany recorded the highest levels of tree cover loss, with approximately 180,600 hectares lost; While these losses were largely driven by forestry activities, sustained reductions in tree cover, particularly when combined with drought, storm, or pest pressures, may nonetheless exacerbate climate impacts by reducing carbon sequestration capacity and weakening local environmental regulation (Indicator 3.6).

Climate-sensitive infectious diseases

Climate change is altering the environmental suitability for tick-borne diseases across Germany, enabling ticks and the pathogens they transmit to expand into new regions and to intensify transmission in areas where they are already established. These changes vary across regions due to differences in temperature, precipitation patterns, and tick ecology.

Ticks

The district of **Schweinfurt** registered the highest increase in the mean climatic suitability for Ixodes tick transmission between 2015–2024 and 1981–2010, rising from 4.34 to 5.01 months (Indicator 1.3.6).

The region of **Oberallgäu** registered the highest increase in the mean climatic suitability for Hyalomma tick transmission over the same period, rising from 0.37 to 1.06 months (Indicator 1.3.6).

Recommendations

Building on the 2025 Germany data sheet of the Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change, which highlighted rising exposure to extreme heat, continued health harms from air pollution, and growing environmental pressures affecting health and wellbeing, these findings point to the need for more geographically targeted responses.

Strengthening **heat–health action plans and early warning systems** in high-risk regions is imperative, building on Germany's existing climate adaptation framework, heat-protection framework and monitoring infrastructure and federal heat-health plans.

Strengthening **surveillance, prevention, and early detection** of climate-sensitive tick-borne diseases is needed in areas where environmental conditions are increasingly favourable for tick survival and transmission.

Prioritising ecosystem resilience and land-use strategies in highly exposed areas is critical, particularly where tree cover loss intensifies heat and climate-related health risks.

Aligning regional public health, climate adaptation, and land-use strategies can help mitigate these interconnected risks while supporting a more resilient and health-focused response to climate change.

Kriit HK, Chen-Xu J, Semenza J, et al. The 2026 Europe report of the *Lancet* Countdown on health and climate change: narrowing window for decisive health action. Lancet Public Health 2026; published online Apr 21. https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667(26)00025-3

The Lancet Countdown Europe is a regional research collaboration providing an overview of the relationship between public health and climate change, the region's response to climate change, and the health benefits that emerge from this transition. The Lancet Countdown was established in partnership with Wellcome.

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