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Preparing Maribor, Slovenia, for hotter days through heat action planning

Maribor is the first Slovenian city to develop a dedicated strategy and action plan that addresses the impacts of heatwaves

To adapt to rising temperatures, Maribor has developed a comprehensive Heat Action Plan by engaging its citizens and incorporating short, medium and long-term measures to increase climate resilience.

Key Learnings

- **Strong municipal ownership:** The Maribor City Council officially adopted the Heat Action Plan in January 2025, demonstrating leadership and political commitment. This ownership is further reinforced through the Council's annual progress review, carried out as part of the reporting on the implementation of the Local Energy and Climate Concept for the City of Maribor.
- **Citizen Engagement:** Engaging Maribor's local population in various information campaigns has raised citizen awareness about the challenges associated with rising temperatures and promoted behavioural change.
- **Extensive collaboration with partner cities:** Peer exchanges enabled shared insights and best practices with other partner cities, such as Worms (Germany), Weiz (Austria) and Hajdúböszörmény (Hungary), as well as from experts.

About the region

Maribor is Slovenia's second-largest city, with approximately 104,000 inhabitants, and serves as the economic, transportation, cultural, university, and healthcare hub of northeastern Slovenia. Located in a warm climatic zone, it has a temperate continental climate, with hot summers, cold winters, and significant temperature fluctuations throughout the year, accompanied by moderate precipitation. Maribor is at the intersection of the Pohorje mountain range and the Pannonian Plain, featuring rolling wine-growing hills, lush forests, and the Drava River, which flows through the city.

Climate Hazards

Extreme Heat

Sector

Urban

Key system

Local Economic System, Health and Wellbeing



Figure 1: Location of Maribor. Image Credit: Climates to travel.

Climate Threats

Extreme heat is on the rise in Maribor. By mid-century, the number of hot days is projected to nearly double, while tropical nights – when temperatures stay above 20°C – will become far more common. Longer stretches of consecutive heat days will heighten the risk of heat stress, particularly among vulnerable groups such as the city's growing elderly population. These changes carry significant implications for urban services and infrastructure planning.

Maribor's heat response action

In response to the rising number of extreme heat days, Maribor's City Council has spent the last two years developing a comprehensive [heat action strategy](#) and an incorporated heat action plan to strengthen the city's resilience to heatwaves. Supported by the Interreg [Ready4Heat](#) project, the strategy focuses on identifying and protecting the most vulnerable groups – including the elderly, children, pregnant women, infants, outdoor workers, and people with pre-existing medical conditions – while ensuring measures remain within the city's financial capacity. The Maribor heat action plan also incorporates a [heat and climate analysis](#) to underpin actions on scientific evidence.

Maribor is implementing short, medium and long-term adaptation measures, covering built infrastructure, green spaces – such as parks and trees – and water features, along with actions to improve governance, introduce new technologies and promote behaviour change and awareness-raising. Those activities include:

- Putting up information **posters and billboards** about what measures can help protect vulnerable **groups** in public places such as bus stops, train stations, health centres and parks.
- **Press campaigns** at the beginning of summer inform people about the coming heatwaves and how to protect themselves.
- Using **social media platforms** to share information, tips and videos on heat protection to reach the majority of the population.
- Organising **public events** and setting up **information stands** at events to provide residents with information and advice.
- Distributing **information leaflets, brochures and other information material** to vulnerable groups such as the elderly, mothers with young children and the homeless to inform them about specific risks and prevention measures.

Implementing Nature-based Solutions provides shade and cooling at kindergarten playgrounds. Green pergolas - wooden structures covered in living plants – create a "living canopy" or "living roof" of vines and climbing plants that provide natural shade and cooling while also being visually appealing. The pergolas protect vulnerable groups, such as toddlers and pre-school children, from extreme heat.

Over the past decade, the city has planted more than 3,000 trees and plans to revive an urban vineyard on Piramida Hill that had been abandoned for decades. These efforts are part of a broader commitment to greening the city – its streets, public spaces, schoolyards and future reconstruction areas.

The city has also recognised that rising temperatures increasingly expose its residents to heat while waiting at bus stops, many of which lack sufficient shade. To address this, Maribor began implementing Nature-based Solutions in 2024 to cool selected bus stops located in the hottest areas. These solutions will continue to be tested and implemented throughout 2025.



Figure 1: A street in Maribor with new trees and a climate/friendly redesign. Image Credit: © Csaba Lajtman.

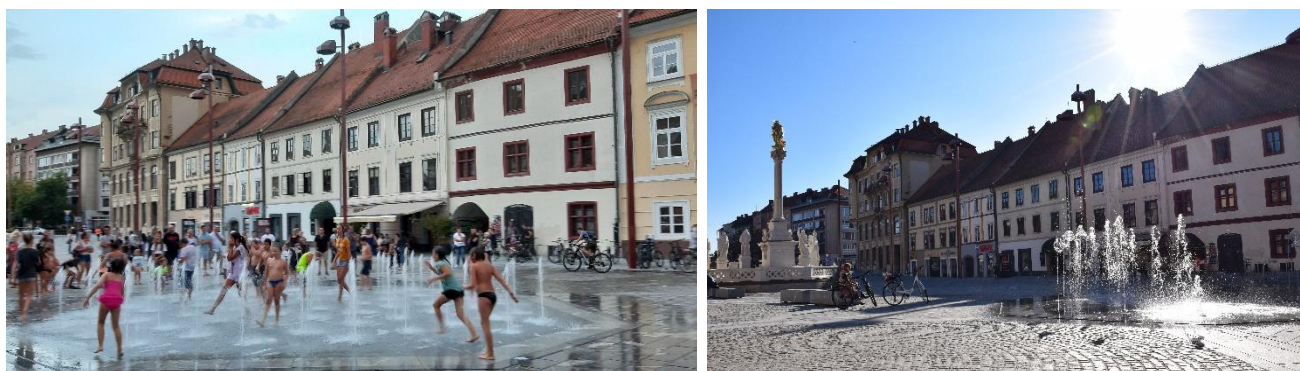


Figure 2: Left: A square in Maribor with a fountain where children are playing. Right: The same location in a more panoramic perspective. Image Credit: © Gordana Kolesarič.

Coordinated development and implementation of Maribor's heat action strategy and plan

The City Heat Action Plan Steering Group, working closely with government departments, environmental agencies, health and emergency services, urban planners, and educational institutions, coordinates overall implementation of the heat action plan. This collaborative approach reflects the cross-sectoral nature of heat-related challenges and the need for integrated solutions. Through the Ready4Heat project, Maribor has also established a local stakeholder network to collectively address heat stress by planning and implementing the heat adaptation measures together. This network includes organisations representing vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, people with chronic illnesses and disabilities.

"Preparing the plan with strong stakeholder engagement gives the plan its relevance and ensures effective implementation."

Vlasta Krmelj, Director of the Energy and Climate Agency of Podravje, who prepared the action plan for the Municipality of Maribor

Early stakeholder engagement – carried out through workshops and surveys with educational and healthcare institutions, community and voluntary organisations, and chambers of commerce – played a crucial role in shaping the Action Plan. These sessions provided valuable insights into how heatwaves affect different population groups and encouraged discussion on suitable adaptation and mitigation measures. This early involvement also helped define the specific responsibilities of each stakeholder for the implementation phase.

- **Educational institutions**, such as schools and kindergartens, are essential for putting preventive measures in place and ensuring the safety of children.
- **Healthcare institutions** and organisations (health centres, general practitioners, home nursing services, midwives, paediatric clinics, counselling centres, social welfare institutions) are key to providing medical advice and treatment during heatwaves.
- **Community and voluntary organisations**, such as pensioners' clubs, various associations for the elderly, disability societies, voluntary fire brigades, the Red Cross, and other humanitarian

organisations, as well as civil protection, play an important role in disseminating information and supporting vulnerable groups during heatwaves.

- **Chambers of commerce and crafts, companies with a large number of outdoor workers, and workers' associations** can contribute by ensuring appropriate care for outdoor workers and by promoting occupational health during extreme heat.

Summary

Maribor, Slovenia's second-largest city, is preparing for a future with almost twice as many hot days and more frequent tropical nights. The city's Heat Action Plan, developed with support from the Interreg Ready4Heat project, focuses on vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and children. Heat and climate maps based on Copernicus data now highlight areas at heat risk. The project prepared climate maps, which show the locations of sensitive infrastructure to heat. The measures include providing shade for playgrounds with green pergolas, planting over 3,000 trees, reviving urban vineyards and creating nature-based cooling areas at bus stops. Greening public spaces, parks and schoolyards and establishing health services and voluntary organisations helps support vulnerable populations. Officially adopted in 2025, the heat(-response) strategy demonstrates strong city ownership and political commitment. By combining Nature-based Solutions, innovation in governance (through a stakeholder involvement approach in decision-making), and community networks, Maribor offers a model that other Central European cities facing rising heat stress can replicate.

Further information

The work presented in this adaptation story is part of the [CitiesRefresh](#) Campaign of the EU Covenant of Mayors.

The EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy is an initiative supported by the European Commission.

- [EU Covenant of Mayors' Website](#)
- [CE0100067-Ready4Heat-D.1.3.2-Maribor-strategy-and-action-plan.pdf](#) (in Slovenian)

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