

BEBRIT
Extreme Heat Risk Project



Rapid Review of Belgian Extreme Heat and Climate-related Policies

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Silent Spring Consultants is a research consultancy with expertise in extreme weather, climate change, nature-based solutions, urban sustainability and citizen engagement. They work with universities, businesses, government and community and voluntary organisations on a wide range of projects within their fields of expertise. More information about Silent Spring Consultants can be found at: <https://www.silentspringconsultants.com/>

This rapid review of Belgian extreme heat and climate-related policies was conducted as part of the **BeBrit Extreme Heat Risk Project** which is a research project led by Silent Spring Consultants focusing on learning, comparison and exchange about heatwave preparedness, responses and impacts in city case studies (Belgium, UK and around the world). More information about the BeBrit project can be found at: <https://www.bebritproject.com/>

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CONTENTS

Introduction.	3
Methodology	3
SECTION 1: WALLONIA	5
Summary of key findings	5
1.1 Climate Plans in Wallonia	8
1.2 Climate Adaptation Plans in Wallonia	8
1.3 Heat Plans in Wallonia	9
1.4 Heatwave Guidance and Messaging in Wallonia	9
1.5 Other Climate-related Policies in Wallonia	10
SECTION 2: FLANDERS	11
Summary of key findings	11
2.1 Climate Plans in Flanders	14
2.2 Climate Adaptation Plans in Flanders	15
2.3 Heat Plans in Flanders	15
2.4 Heatwave Guidance and Messaging in Flanders	15
SECTION 3 CITY OF BRUSSELS	16
SECTION 4 GERMAN-SPEAKING COMMUNITY	17
SECTION 5 CONCLUSION	17
5.1 Summary of Key Findings	18
5.2 Policy Recommendations	19
5.3 Limitations of the Review	21

INTRODUCTION.

Cities are central actors in local and regional adaptation planning when responding to extreme heat. To be able to respond effectively to the increased frequency and intensity of heatwaves, cities around the world are updating existing or producing new City Heat Action, Climate and Adaptation Plans. Planning an effective, robust, and flexible response to heatwaves is vital to reduce or eradicate heat-related excess mortalities. The presence of such policies at the city level provides an indication of the level of planning in place therefore, as part of the BeBrit Extreme Heat Risk project, Silent Spring Consultants conducted a desk-based rapid review of heat and climate-related policies to gain a better understanding of the local level of [un]preparedness to extreme heat at the city-level in Belgium. The research questions guiding the review were:

- What type of heat and climate-related policies are present or absent at the city level in Belgium?
- Are there similarities and differences in presence and absence of policies?

By 'heat and climate-related policies' we mean policies directly for extreme heat events and where we would expect mention of extreme heat for example, climate and adaptation plans.

METHODOLOGY

The desk-based rapid review was conducted in January 2024 by Silent Spring Consultants. Given the project's focus on extreme heat in **urban** areas, the decision was made to concentrate on places with 'city status' in Belgium. This status is granted to select municipalities by Royal Decree or by an act of law. This meant 137 cities were reviewed, 69 in Wallonia, 66 in Flanders, one in the German-speaking community and the capital city of Brussels. These 137 cities provided a diverse sample in terms of geographic location in Belgium and population size. Also, the number was manageable within the given time constraints, which prevented a review of all municipalities in Belgium.

We searched specifically for the following in each city:

- Heat Plan
- Climate Plan
- Adaptation Plan

Other climate-related plans were also noted e.g., Green Plans, Net Zero Plans.

How did we conduct the search?

The EU Covenant of Mayors website offers a searchable page for Local Climate Action. We refined our search to focus on Belgium and checked each city, recording in an Excel spreadsheet whether or not a climate plan existed, the date of the plan, whether it was for a single city or a joint plan and whether adaptation plans were in place.

Next, we conducted a Google search for city-specific Heat Plans (in Flemish for Flanders and French for Wallonia). This search identified mentions of heat plans or guidance in the media and on social media (e.g., city Facebook pages), which we documented in the Excel sheet. We further searched city websites for any Heat Plans and Heat Guidance.

Further to this, we noted other climate-related plans such as Green Plans, Net Zero Plans etc.

All this information was collated in an Excel database and a summary of findings is below (Section 1 Wallonia, Section 2 Flanders, Sections 3 Brussels, and Section 4 the German-speaking community).

SECTION 1: WALLONIA

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

We reviewed **69 cities** in Wallonia and the presence of heat-related policies are presented in the Tables below.

Table 1.1: Walloon Brabant

Heat Plan	Climate Plan	Adaptation Plan	Heat & Climate	Climate & Adaptation	Heat, Climate & Adaptation	No Plans
	Jodoigne Nivelles Wavre		Genappe Tubize	Ottignies- Louvain-la- Neuve		

Table 1.2: Province of Hainault

Heat Plan	Climate Plan	Adaptation Plan	Heat & Climate	Climate & Adaptation	Heat, Climate & Adaptation	No Plans
Binche Le Roulx Mouscron	Antoing Enghien Fleurus Lessines. Peruwelz Saint-Ghislain Soignies		Comines- Warneton, Fontaine- l'Eveque La Louviere Thuin		Charleroi Mons	Ath Beaumont Braine-le-Comte Chatelet Chievres Chimay, Leuze-en- Hainaut Tournai

Table 1.3: Province of Liège

Heat Plan	Climate Plan	Adaptation Plan	Heat & Climate	Climate & Adaptation	Heat, Climate & Adaptation	No Plans
Herstal Herve Limbourg Vise	Malmedy Spa Stavelot Eupen*		Hannut Huy Seraing Verviers Waremme		Liège	

* German speaking community

Table 1.4: Province of Luxembourg

Heat Plan	Climate Plan	Adaptation Plan	Heat & Climate	Climate & Adaptation	Heat, Climate & Adaptation	No Plans
Bastogne	Florenville Marche - en - Famenne	Durbuy Neufchateau		Arlon Bouillon Chiny La Roche-en- Ardenne Saint-Hubert Virton		Aubange Houffalize

Table 1.5: Province of Namur

Heat Plan	Climate Plan	Adaptation Plan	Heat & Climate	Climate & Adaptation	Heat, Climate & Adaptation	No Plans
Ciney	Beauraing, Dinant Gembloux		Andenne	Rochefort	Namur	Couvin, Fosses- la-Ville Phillippeville Walcourt

Key Drivers

We identified three key drivers behind the cities in Wallonia climate policies: first, the EU Covenant of Mayors whereby 47 of the 69 cities are signatories; second is the Futureproofed City¹ Tech Platform which 16 of the 69 cities are part of; third, we also noticed that an important role is played by the POLLEC² campaign that aims to help Walloon local authorities implement an Energy and Climate Policy, within the framework of the Covenant of Mayors.

1-Futureproofed Cities allows all municipal services to work together on a single online tool to carry out more climate actions and communicate them to their citizens.

2- POLLEC - Aware of the energy challenges, Wallonia supports the POLLEC project. Coordinated by APERE asbl, with the support of AwAC (the Walloon Air and Climate Agency) and UVCW asbl (Union of Cities and Municipalities of Wallonia).

<https://energie.wallonie.be/fr/pollec.html?IDC=9178>


Significant climate-related developments in Wallonia

As part of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Wallonia and the Climate Change Association organized a gathering of climate actors, the Climate Change Europe 2024 Wallonia Summit, with the main theme "Adaptation to climate change, nature-based solutions and resilience"³ (8 – 9 February 2024). The aim of this meeting was to produce an ambitious **Liège Declaration**.



Source: Climate Chance

This declaration is an important milestone in the work of the Belgian Presidency of the Environment and Climate Council. The objectives will be achieved through collaboration with state and European levels, as well as the active participation of actors in the climate community: local authorities and territories, companies, trade unions, associations, and citizens (non-state actors). Wallonia will thus contribute to the project, facilitating inclusive and participatory work towards a renewed European Green Deal after 2024. In particular, the Green Deal aims to strengthen European and cross-border coordination between all actors in the field of adaptation to climate change and other environmental risks.

Climate Chance Europe 2024 Wallonia Summit scce24wallonie.eu	Liège 08.02.24 09.02.24	
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Source: Climate Chance

³<https://www.climate-chance.org/sommets-coalitions/sommets-climate-chance/sommet-climate-chance-europe-2024/>

1.1 CLIMATE PLANS IN WALLONIA

36 out of the 69 cities (52%) have developed their own Climate Plan, an Action Plan for Sustainable Energy and Climate, following the EU Covenant of Mayors framework. There are a few exceptions: **Rochefort** shares a joint Action Plan for Sustainable Energy and Climate (2019) with the city of **Marche-en-Famenne** and one town; **Andenne** uses the Namur province's Sustainable Energy and Climate Plan (2017) as a roadmap instead of having its own; **Aubange** and **Bastogne** do not have formal written plans but maintain mitigation data in an Excel format; **Beauraing** and **Dinant** share a joint Energy and Climate Plan with two towns. Additionally, **Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve**, part of the PROXIMITY campaign for citizen-led ecological transitions, published its Climate Plan in 2023 under the authority of its newly established Ecological Transition Service.

1.2 CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLANS IN WALLONIA

14 out of the 69 cities (20%) have incorporated climate adaptation measures according to the EU Covenant of Mayors website. Among these 14 cities, eight have completed Excel spreadsheets detailing vulnerability analyses and adaptation goals as part of their commitments to the EU Covenant of Mayors. Four cities participate in the PROXIMITY campaign, initiated by Be Planet and the Transition Towns movement, which aims to create a network of collaborators for citizen-led ecological transition projects, some of which include climate adaptation measures. **Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve** published a study on vulnerabilities and climate change adaptation in January 2023, with Chapter 2 specifically addressing Urban Heat Islands and heatwaves. Additionally, **Liège** has developed a Canopy Plan that prioritizes urban tree planting as a central component of their climate adaptation strategy.

1.3 HEAT PLANS IN WALLONIA

25 out of the 69 cities (36%) have implemented a Heat Plan (*Plan Canicule*). One city, **Andenne**, does not have its own Heat Plan but falls under the Namur province's Heat Plan (*Plan Grandeurs Chaleurs*). These Heat Plans primarily aim to protect vulnerable residents and are managed by CPAS (Public Centre for Social Welfare). Typically residents voluntarily registering by completing a form by mail or online. Once registered, CPAS or other municipal staff regularly contact and visit these residents during heat periods. The criteria for joining the list varies between cities. For example, in **Thuin**, residents must be over 85 years old and receiving free meals to qualify for home visits during heatwaves, which includes about 200 people. In contrast, the age criterion in **Le Roeulx** is set at 65 years. Most Heat Plans also include the distribution of free water to vulnerable individuals. Some CPAS nursing homes have their own specific Heat Plans. Furthermore, in certain cities, garbage collection times are adjusted during heatwaves, starting an hour earlier at 5 am.

1.4 HEATWAVE GUIDANCE AND MESSAGING IN WALLONIA

The messaging and guidance regarding heatwaves and Heat Plans vary significantly across cities. Some cities provide dedicated webpages on their websites, while others use Facebook pages, local media or city magazines/newsletters to communicate. Out of the 69 cities, 15 offer guidance on heat without having a specific city Heat Plan. For instance, **Thuin** has a Heat Plan for its CPAS Nursing Homes and offers guidance on its website for other residents, including a link to the Wallonia Heat Plan. Fourteen of these 15 cities disseminate heatwave guidance through the various channels mentioned. Additionally, six cities in the province of Luxembourg provide joint heat guidance, focusing on making water taps and fountains freely available during heatwaves.

1.5 OTHER CLIMATE-RELATED POLICIES IN WALLONIA

19 out of the 69 cities have implemented additional climate-related policies. Fourteen of these cities have published their own Sustainable Energy Plans under the EU Covenant of Mayors, while **Enghien, Perulez**, and two towns collaborated on a joint Group Wallonia and Picardy Sustainable Energy Plan in 2016. Among the remaining five cities, **Rochefort** has been part of KICK Belgium since 2021, implementing a just transition plan within its NATURA 2000 area. Rochefort is also part of the PROXIMITY campaign and has adopted the Rochefort 2022 Communal Kick Action Plan (PACK), funded with €379,000, to promote biodiversity and sustainability. **Philippeville's** Environment Department manages a Zero Waste Plan, a communal rural development programme, a Flood Risk Management Plan, measures against invasive species, and a Communal Nature Development Plan. **Liège** has initiatives like Zero City, Smart City, and the Canopy Plan, central to its climate adaptation strategy. **Bouillon** has detailed CO2 emission calculations as part of the EU Covenant of Mayors. Lastly, **Andenne** is included in the Namur Sustainable Energy and Climate Plan (2017) and actively encourages citizen participation through its POLLEC: Local Energy-Climate Policy initiative.

SECTION 2: FLANDERS

Most Flemish cities do not have a separate heat plan, but some provide guidelines on their websites about what to do in the heat. Typically, cities use social media to announce when the Flemish Heat Plan is activated and direct residents to the Flemish government website for further information.

However, municipal OCMWs (Public Centres for Social Welfare), do have heat plans in place, primarily for residential care centres. Various labour sectors also have their own guidelines for heat and many events (e.g. festivals) have established heat plans as well.

All Flemish cities have signed the EU Covenant of Mayors, either individually or in collaboration with nearby cities and municipalities, such as those in the coastal or Leie regions. These cities cannot be found individually on the covenant, but under their group name.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

We reviewed **66 cities** in Flanders.

Table 2.1: Province of Antwerp

Heat Plan	Climate Plan	Adaptation Plan	Heat & Climate	Climate & Adaptation	Heat, Climate & Adaptation	No Plans
	Antwerp Geel Herentals Hoogstraten Lier Mortsel			Mechelen Turnhout		

Table 2.2: Province of Limburg

Heat Plan	Climate Plan	Adaptation Plan	Heat & Climate	Climate & Adaptation	Heat, Climate & Adaptation	No Plans
	Beringen Bilzen Dilsen-Stokkem Genk Halen Hamont-Achel Hasselt Herk-de-Stad Lommel Maaseik Peer Sint-Truiden Tongeren					Borgloon Bree

Table 2.3: Province of East Flanders

Heat Plan	Climate Plan	Adaptation Plan	Heat & Climate	Climate & Adaptation	Heat, Climate & Adaptation	No Plans
	Aalst Geraardsbergen Ninove Ronse	Lokeren		Deinze Dendermonde, Eeklo Oudenaarde Sint-Niklaas	Ghent	Zottegem

Table 2.4: Province of Flemish Brabant

Heat Plan	Climate Plan	Adaptation Plan	Heat & Climate	Climate & Adaptation	Heat, Climate & Adaptation	No Plans
	Aarschot Landen Leuven Scherpenheuvel- Zichem Vilvoorde Zoutleeuw			Diest Halle	Tienen	

Table 2.5: Province of West Flanders

Heat Plan	Climate Plan	Adaptation Plan	Heat & Climate	Climate & Adaptation	Heat, Climate & Adaptation	No Plans
	Blankenberge Damme Harelbeke Ypres Lo-Reninge Menen Nieuwpoort Ostend Oudenburg Poperinge Veurne Tielt Waregem Wervik		Kortrijk	Bruges, Izegem, Roeselare, Torhout		Gistel, Mesen

Key Drivers

We identified three key drivers behind the production of climate-related plans in Wallonia. First, all 66 cities are signatories of the EU Covenant of Mayors. Second, 21 of these cities are/or were part of the Futureproofed City Tech Platform. Third, significant new climate-related plans are emerging in Flanders at the Flemish government level.

The Flemish government, along with Flemish cities and municipalities, is participating in the Flemish Local Energy and Climate Pact (LEKP) to collectively achieve necessary energy and climate transitions. The Flemish Vice-Minister-President Bart Somers launched the LEKP in 2021, setting concrete objectives in four areas: nature-based solutions with a focus on urban greening, mitigation policies centred on collective residential renovations and cooperative energy projects, sustainable mobility solutions, and efficient water management, including reuse.

Flemish Climate and Energy Pact

The Flanders Climate and Energy Pact (LEKP) forms the foundation for structural cooperation, securing strong local climate and energy policy through mutual commitments. The Flemish Government commits to providing professional support to local authorities through the Climate Network and project-based support to local administrators, actively cooperating with local authorities to eliminate potential obstacles, liaising with research institutions to monitor progress, promoting policy measures funded by Flemish, Federal, and European budgets, and providing an additional budget of 10 million EUR from the Flemish Climate Fund.

Commitments by Cities and Municipalities

Cities and municipalities commit to achieving average annual primary energy savings of at least 2.09% in their buildings, reducing CO₂ emissions by 40% by 2030 compared to 2015 through establishing a real estate strategy for their buildings and technical infrastructure, installing publicly accessible LED lighting for all 1.2 million public lighting points by 2030, increasing the acceptance of renewable energy, and drawing up local heat and demolition policy plans. They also encourage citizens, businesses, and associations to achieve concrete and visible targets in these four areas.

Progress and Participation

As of now, 293 Flemish cities and municipalities have signed the Pact. There have been three iterations of the Pacts (LEKP 1.0, LEKP 2.0, LEKP 2.1), with only one of the 66 Flemish cities, Mesen, not signing the Pact. This collaboration highlights the strong commitment at both the governmental and local levels to drive forward energy and climate transitions.

Flemish Local Energy and Climate Pact

LEKP 1.0	LEKP 2.0	LEKP 2.1
Launched 4 June 2021.	Launched 8 July 2022.	Launched 16 December 2022.
LEKP 1.0 signatories		
7 cities		
LEKP 1.0 and LEKP 2.0 signatories		
26 cities		
LEKP 1.0, LEKP 2.0 and LEKP 2.1 signatories		
31 cities		

2.1 CLIMATE PLANS IN FLANDERS

59 out of 66 cities (89%) have a Climate Plan. Of these, 46 cities (78%) have their own individual Climate Plan. Thirteen cities have joint Climate Plans with nearby cities and towns: **Damme, Blankenberge, Torhout**, and six towns first published a joint Local Climate Policy for Northwest Flanders in 2015, updated in 2023. The Regional Southwest Flanders Joint Energy and Climate Action Plan (2020) includes **Harelbeke, Menen, Kortrijk, Waregem**, and nine towns. A joint Sustainable Energy and Climate Plan called "From Sea to Iron" was published in 2023, involving **Diksmuide, Veurne**, and five towns. **Tielt**, along with seven towns, published a joint Sustainable Energy and Climate Plan Midwest in 2016. **Ypres** and **Poperinge** have a joint Climate Plan. **Oudenburg**, along with two towns, published a joint Sustainable Energy and Climate Plan for the coastal woodland connection area in 2023. The four cities without a Climate Plan are **Borgloon** and **Bree** in Limburg, and **Gistel** and **Mesen** in West Flanders.

2.2 CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLANS IN FLANDERS

Fifteen of the 66 cities (23%) have an Adaptation Policy. There is a Regional Climate Adaptation Plan for East Flanders, produced in 2022, which each of the 11 local authorities must translate into a concrete plan for their city. This regional plan includes **Lokeren, Sint-Niklaas**, and nine towns.

2.3 HEAT PLANS IN FLANDERS

Nine of the 66 cities (14%) have a Heat Plan. These cities are:

- **Aalst** (East Flanders),
- **Brugge** (West Flanders),
- **Eeklo** (East Flanders),
- **Genk** (Limburg),
- **Halen** (Limburg),
- **Hasselt** (Limburg),
- **Kortrijk** (West Flanders),
- **Tienen** (Flemish Brabant),
- **Ghent** (Flemish Brabant).

Halle is currently working on a Heat Plan. **Tongeren** has a Rainwater and Drought Plan (2023), which lays the foundation for sustainable water management and climate adaptation. **Mortsel** also has a water and drought plan.



[f](#) [t](#) [v](#) /stadttienen

2.4 HEATWAVE GUIDANCE AND MESSAGING IN FLANDERS

Thirteen cities provide Heat Guidance. These cities often refer to the Flemish Heat and Ozone Plan, using its wording on their websites. Most cities providing only guidance do not have a city-level Heat Plan. Some cities communicate heatwave messages via their city Facebook pages.

SECTION 3: BRUSSELS

Table 3.1: Brussels

Heat Plan	Climate Plan	Adaptation Plan	Heat & Climate	Climate & Adaptation	Heat, Climate & Adaptation	No Plans
			Brussels			

The City of Brussels Climate Plan (2022) addresses heatwaves in two key chapters: Water in a section on the "Blue Mesh," emphasizing the use of water as a cooling resource in response to global warming and Biodiversity highlighting the role of nature in adapting to climate change and mitigating the urban heat island (UHI) effect.

The Heatwave Plan is outlined on a dedicated webpage which has a free phone number for isolated, disadvantaged, unemployed, elderly, or less able-bodied individuals to register. When temperatures exceed 28°C, the Maison's de Quartier teams activate the Heatwave Plan. Their primary goal is to combat the isolation and loneliness of vulnerable individuals. The actions taken by these teams includes: Regular contact with registrants; Distribution of water (jug, water bottle); Visits from trained teams to monitor the well-being of those visited; Checking living conditions (ventilation, fridge, fan, cleanliness, etc.)

The webpage also links to general heatwave guidance for the broader population and advice includes:

- Drink water regularly
- Wet your body and ventilate yourself
- Keep your home cool by closing shutters
- Check in on loved ones
- Eat enough food
- Avoid alcohol, sugary drinks and physical exertion

The page offers tips for helping pets during heatwaves and links to Brussels Environment and the Belgium Crisis Centre for more info. It also features a map of drinking water terminals in Brussels. Street Nurses, a non-profit, provides a brochure with locations of water fountains and public toilets for the homeless.

SECTION 4 GERMAN-SPEAKING COMMUNITY

There is one city in the German-speaking community, **Eupen**.

There is an **Integrated energy and Climate Plan** for all the German speaking community.

There is no Adaptation or Heat Plan. In Eupen, nature is very much at the heart of their approach to tackling climate challenges and there is a **Municipal Nature Development Plan**, which started 1997 but which seems to have ended 2018 (the last reports etc. on the website are dated from this time).

SECTION 5 CONCLUSION

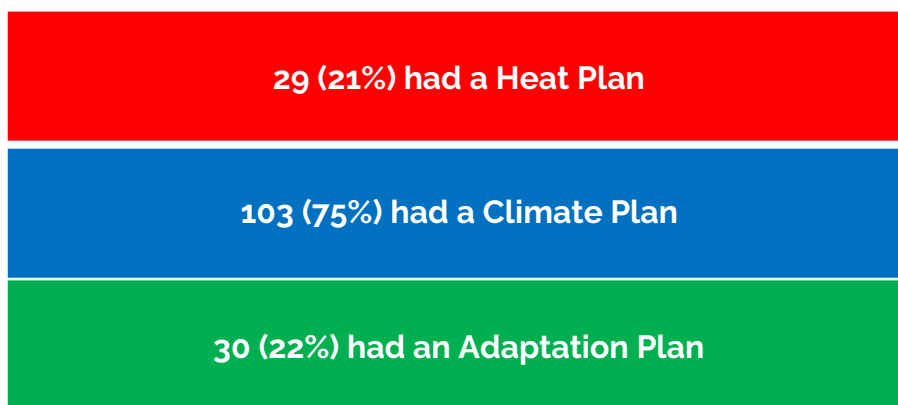
Our rapid review found that whilst most of the 137 cities have a Climate Plan, very few have a Heat Plan or Adaptation Plan. The heat and climate-related policy landscape across these Belgium cities is fragmented, revealing a need for more consistent and coordinated preparedness and adaptation efforts to address extreme heat and other climate risks effectively at the city level.

The primary drivers behind the development of city-level Climate Plans seems to be external to the state of Belgium, such as the EU Covenant of Mayors, which encourages cities to become signatories, supports the writing of climate plans to meet net zero targets and publishes the status of local climate action policies on their website. Another key player is the Futureproofed City Tech Platform, part of SWECO - a large, private architecture and engineering consultancy with an office in Belgium. The platform provides tools/technology to measure the progress and impact of cities' climate plans, although the cost for cities to use this service is unknown. At the regional level, the POLLEC campaign in Wallonia and the Flemish Local Energy and Climate Pact in Flanders also act as important drivers of climate planning.

5.1 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

RQ1. Presence of Heat and Climate-Related Policies in Belgium Cities

We found that of the 137 cities in Belgium reviewed:



RQ2. Similarities and Differences between Cities and Regions

- **2 cities in Flanders:** Tienen and Ghent, both in Flemish Brabant, are the only cities in Flanders with Heat, Climate and Adaptation Plans.
- **4 cities in Wallonia:** Namur (in Namur), Charleroi and Mons (in Hainaut) and Liege (in Liege) are the only cities in Wallonia with Heat, Climate and Adaptation Plans.

Heat Plans by Region

3 cities in Flanders, Brussels City and 25 cities in Wallonia.

City Climate Plans/Region

59 (89%) cities in Flanders, 36 (52%) cities in Wallonia and the capital Brussels.

City Adaptation Plans/Region

16 cities in Flanders and 14 (20%) in Wallonia

5.2 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, here are some recommendations to enhance heat and climate-related policies across cities in Belgium:

1. Increase the Adoption of Heat Action Plans in all municipalities, across All Regions

Given that only 21% of cities currently have a Heat Plan, there is a need to prioritize the development and implementation of these plans, especially considering the increasing frequency and severity of heatwaves due to climate change.

Recommendations:

Policy Development: Encourage all cities, especially those in Flanders and the Brussels-Capital Region, to develop comprehensive Heat Plans.

Funding and Resources: Allocate specific funds and resources to support cities in the creation and implementation of Heat Plans.

Best Practices: Establish a platform for cities like Tienen, Ghent, Namur, Charleroi, Mons, and Liege to share best practices and lessons learned from their existing Heat Plans. Develop the database of BeBrit Extreme Heat Risk Project and create an interactive tool to educate, raise awareness and share best practice from Belgium, Europe and worldwide.

2. Expand Climate Plan Coverage in Wallonia

With 89% of cities in Flanders having Climate Plans compared to only 52% in Wallonia, there is a significant gap that needs to be addressed.

Recommendations:

Regional Initiatives: Launch targeted regional initiatives in Wallonia to promote the development of Climate Plans.

Capacity Building: Provide training and capacity-building programs for city officials in Wallonia to enhance their ability to develop and implement effective Climate Plans.

Incentives: Offer incentives, such as grants or subsidies, to cities in Wallonia to encourage the adoption of Climate Plans.

3. Enhance the Development of Adaptation Plans

Given that only 22% of cities have an Adaptation Plan, there is a need to focus on increasing the number of these plans, particularly to improve resilience to climate impacts.

Recommendations:

Strategic Framework: Develop a national or regional strategic framework to guide cities in the creation of Adaptation Plans.

Integrated Planning: Promote the integration of Adaptation Plans with existing Heat and Climate Plans to ensure a comprehensive approach to climate resilience.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the progress and effectiveness of Adaptation Plans.

4. Address Regional Disparities

There are significant disparities in the presence of heat and climate-related policies between regions and language communities, particularly between Flanders and Wallonia.

Recommendations:

Equitable Resource Allocation: Ensure that resources and support are equitably distributed across regions to address the disparities.

Collaborative Networks: Foster collaborative networks and partnerships between cities in different regions to facilitate knowledge exchange and mutual support.

5. Promote Comprehensive Planning in More Cities

Encourage more cities to develop all three types of plans (Heat, Climate, and Adaptation) to ensure a holistic approach to climate resilience.

Recommendations:

Comprehensive Policy

Framework: Advocate for a comprehensive policy framework at the national level that mandates the development of Heat, Climate, and Adaptation Plans for all cities.

Pilot Programs: Implement pilot programs in cities that currently lack comprehensive planning to demonstrate the benefits and feasibility of having all three types of plans.

Stakeholder Engagement:

Engage a broad range of stakeholders, including local communities, businesses, and non-governmental organizations, in the planning process to ensure the plans are well-rounded and effectively address local needs.

By addressing these recommendations, Belgium can significantly enhance its cities' preparedness and resilience to climate-related challenges.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE REVIEW

Due to time constraints the review only covers places with city status in Belgium. This means the capital city (Brussels) all the major cities are included i.e., Antwerp, Ghent, Charleroi, Liège, Bruges, Namur, and Leuven and cities with smaller population sizes. Some are very small (5,000 or less) and here we see that some produce joint plans with neighbouring cities. We wanted to review places in different geographical locations with different population sizes, so the city status provided this and an almost equal number of cities in both Flanders and Wallonia. We acknowledge that we could have chosen municipalities, of which there are 581 in Belgium (300 in Flanders, 262 in Wallonia and 19 in the Brussels Capitol Region) and chosen places with a population size over a designated number but this selection process would have taken more time. The review we present here is illustrative of the heat and climate-related policy status at the time of writing and provides a snapshot in time.

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