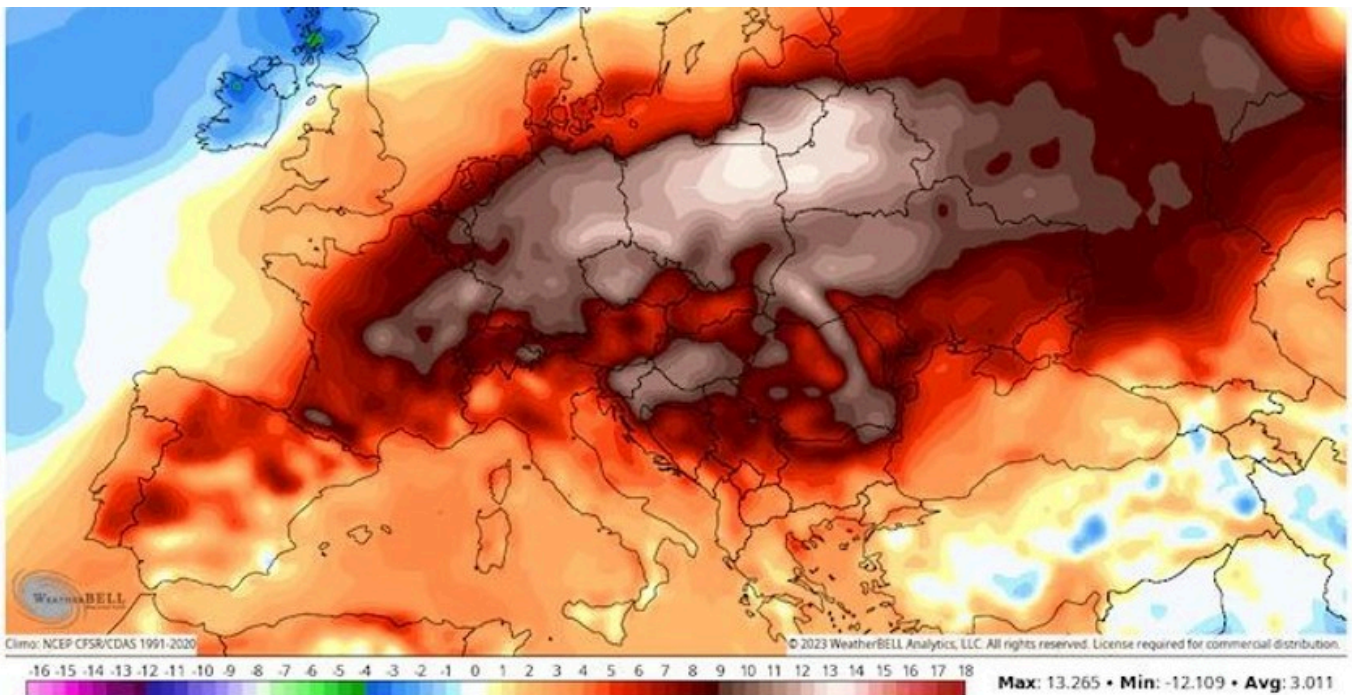# Warmest January Day on Record in Europe (2023)

written by Ms Zarka Khan | April 3, 2024

In January 2023, Europe experienced its third warmest January on record, a stark indicator of climate change's impact on the continent. This unusual warmth shattered temperature records across Europe, significantly affecting winter tourism and outdoor activities, notably forcing the closure of many ski resorts due to insufficient snow cover. Countries such as Italy and Spain saw temperatures soar above 25°C (77°F), with at least eight countries reporting their warmest January day on record. The warmth was not isolated to Southern Europe; even Central Europe experienced record-breaking temperatures, with Poland and the Czech Republic reaching up to 19°C (66°F).

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) explained this phenomenon as the result of a high-pressure zone over the Mediterranean clashing with an Atlantic low-pressure system, drawing warm air from Northwestern Africa across Europe. Moreover, sea surface temperatures in the eastern North Atlantic were 1°C to 2°C higher than average, contributing to the unusual warmth. This event exemplifies the direct consequences of climate change, with experts warning that extreme weather events will become more frequent and severe.

Furthermore, the warmth affected winter sports, with the ski World Cup in Adelboden, Switzerland, announcing reliance on artificial snow. Dr. Friederike Otto, a climate scientist, emphasized that the record-breaking heat was made more likely by human-caused climate change, underscoring the urgent need for climate action. The unfolding climate crisis represents a significant challenge for traditional winter sports and raises concerns about the long-term sustainability of ski resorts and the broader environmental impact of artificial snow production.