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International Press Service

Ressort: Mixed News

Paris Heatwave Disrupts Surgery in Belgian Hospital.

Ghent, Belgium, 03.07.2026 [ENA]

A heatwave in Paris unexpectedly disrupted hospital care in Belgium. When servers hosting medical records overheated in the French capital, scheduled operations at a Ghent hospital had to be postponed, illustrating the growing vulnerability of global digital infrastructure.

On 25 June, scheduled operations at AZ Sint-Lucas in Ghent were cancelled after doctors temporarily lost access to electronic patient records. The problem did not originate in Belgium but at an external data centre in Paris, where extreme temperatures caused cooling systems to fail and servers to overheat. Similar disruptions also affected several other Belgian hospitals connected to the same infrastructure. The incident demonstrates how healthcare increasingly depends on remote digital services, where a local climate event can quickly trigger operational problems hundreds of kilometres away.

As climate change drives more frequent and intense heatwaves, the resilience of digital infrastructure is becoming a growing concern. Data centres require enormous amounts of electricity and constant cooling to keep servers operating safely, while globalisation has concentrated many essential services in a limited number of facilities. When one of these hubs is affected by extreme weather, the consequences can spread across borders within minutes. The disruption affecting Belgian hospitals serves as a reminder that adapting to a warming climate also means strengthening the infrastructure that modern healthcare and other critical services depend upon.

Although patient safety protocols prevented more serious consequences, the incident raises broader questions about climate resilience, digital dependence and cross-border infrastructure. As Europe experiences increasingly severe heatwaves, safeguarding critical services will require not only stronger healthcare systems but also more robust and climate-proof data networks.

Bericht online lesen:
https://berlin.en-a.eu/mixed_news/paris_heatwave_disrupts_surgery_in_belgian_hospital-94003/

Redaktion und Verantwortlichkeit:
V.i.S.d.P. und gem. § 6 MDStV: Sonny Plasschaert

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