



A lake of meltwater on the tongue of the Rhone glacier near Goms, Switzerland. Photo: AP

Swiss glaciers have 'no chance of surviving long term' after losing 5.5pc of ice in 2026

JAMEY KEATEN

Glaciers in Switzerland lost 5.5pc of their ice volume this year, the second-biggest percentage drop on record because of heatwaves and low winter snowfall, experts have said.

"Alpine glaciers have no chance of surviving in the long term under such conditions," Glamos, the Swiss glacier-monitoring service, and Swiss Academy of Sciences said yesterday.

The trend has worsened in recent years - over the last five years alone, the volume of ice in Switzerland has declined by nearly a fifth, the experts said.

The report testifies to the latest concerns that global warming is wreaking havoc on Europe, the world's fastest-warming continent.

"The warming that we are experiencing now can be attributed 100pc to anthropogenic climate change. It's as simple as that," said Matthias Huss, who heads Glamos.

"Without human emissions or fossil fuels, we wouldn't have any warming at the moment."

The record retreat of glacier ice in Switzerland came in 2022, when summer heat, low winter snowfall and an unusual smattering of reddish dust blown in from the Sahara darkened the glaciers and caused them to absorb more heat.

Dr Huss said the snow cover in winter was important for two reasons.

"On the one hand, it protects the bare ice from melting. The longer you have snow, the longer you avoid the loss of old ice," he said. "On the other hand, the snow is important also for generating new food for the glacier."

"The more snow you have, the higher the potential to keep some of the snow

at high elevation and to form new ice."

The great thaw in Europe's Alps is not alone - experts say global warming helped to destabilise a Himalayan slope that collapsed in August and unleashed catastrophic flooding across Nepal.

Satellites have shown vast shrinkage of glaciers in places such as Greenland and Antarctica over the last half-century or so.

In Switzerland, in absolute terms, volume lost has been less than that in 2003, but the percentage decline this year is greater.

That is because the total volume today is roughly a third of that 23 years ago. Then, the relative loss was 3.5pc of total ice volume in Swiss glaciers.

Such accelerated ice melt has had an impact in Switzerland - the loss of 581 billion gallons from July to September amounts to four times the annual consumption of water in the country of about 9.1 million people.

Switzerland gets more than half of its electricity from hydropower.

But the impact of accelerated glacier melt ripples far beyond. Switzerland is the water tower of Europe, and feeds some of the continent's most important rivers - the Danube, Po, Rhine and Rhone.

The experts say the "extreme melting" faced by Switzerland's glaciers this year included a decline in the average thickness of individual glaciers between about two and four metres, and a reduction of up to 20 metres on the tongue of some glaciers.

The expert teams have fanned out to assess run-off and crevasses caused by the running water through the glaciers, in part by dumping red dye into the streams to track the water flows.



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Jamie Carragher - Page 48



Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

NOTICE PURSUANT TO: SECTION 177AE OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (AS AMENDED) AND THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2001 (AS AMENDED)

N25 GLENMORE BUS STOP RELOCATION SCHEME, GLENMORE, COUNTY KILKENNY

Notice of Planning Application to An Coimisiún Pleanála for Approval

Notice is hereby given that Kilkenny County Council intends to seek the approval of An Coimisiún Pleanála under Section 177AE of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) to construct the N25 Glenmore Bus Stop relocation scheme.

The proposed development is the construction of a new off-line bus stop to replace the existing bus stop on the N25 at Glenmore, Co. Kilkenny. The proposed location is close to the existing location but is off the main N25. The proposed location shall have direct access from the L7539 and exit onto the L7510 local road network. Public lighting, car parking, accessible car parking, electric vehicle charging bays, bus shelter, associated signage and bicycle parking will be incorporated as part of the development including all site development and landscape works. Site enabling works in the form of infilling will also be required on the proposed site. Surface water drainage will be in the form of soakaways within the site boundary.

A Natura Impact Statement has been prepared as part of the application for approval in respect of the proposed development.

An Coimisiún Pleanála may give approval to the application for development with or without conditions or may refuse the application for development.

A copy of the plans and particulars of the proposed development and the Natura Impact Statement will be available for inspection between Friday 9th October 2026 and Monday 23rd November 2026 (inclusive of both dates) at the following locations:

- The consultation website of Kilkenny County Council at <https://consult.kilkenny.ie/en>
- The Planning Section of Kilkenny County Council, County Hall, John Street, Kilkenny City, R95 A39T between the hours 9am to 1pm & 2pm to 4pm Monday to Friday (Excluding Public Holidays). Contact (056) 7794019 or planning@kilkennyccoco.ie
- Municipal District of Piltown Area Office, Ferrybank Shopping Centre, Ferrybank, Co. Kilkenny X91 DE42 between the hours 9am to 1pm & 2pm to 5pm Monday to Friday (Excluding Public Holidays)
- The offices of An Coimisiún Pleanála, 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1, D01 V902 between the hours 9:15am and 5:30pm Monday to Friday (Excluding Public Holidays)

The Natura Impact Statement and the Plans and Particulars of the proposed development may be inspected free of charge at the locations above or purchased on payment of a specified fee (which shall not exceed the reasonable cost of making a copy).

Any submissions and observations on the proposed development in relation to -

- the implications of the proposed development for proper planning and sustainable development in the area concerned,
- the likely effects on the environment of the proposed development, and
- the likely significant effects of the proposed development on a European Site, if carried out,

may be made in writing to An Coimisiún Pleanála, 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin, D01 V902.

Any submission/observation must be received by An Coimisiún Pleanála not later than or before 5.30pm on Monday 23rd November 2026.

A person may question the validity of any such decision by An Coimisiún Pleanála by way of an application for judicial review under Order 84 of the Rules of the Superior Courts (S.I. No. 15 of 1986) in accordance with section 50 of the Planning and Development Acts, 2000 to 2019.

Practical information on the review mechanism can be accessed under the heading Publications - Judicial Review Notice on the Board's website www.pleanala.ie or on the Citizens Information website www.citizensinformation.ie

Dated this 02nd October 2026.

Mary J Mulholland, Director of Services,
Kilkenny County Council.

