

Allergy&asthma in the context of the revision of clean air legislation – Perspectives from the civil society

EP Interest Group on Allergy and Asthma

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Brussels, Belgium

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Health & Environment Alliance : www.env-health.org

HEAL's member network

>70 organizations
in 28 countries

Doctors associations

Patient groups

Nurses associations

Public health institutes

Research institutes

Not-for-profit health insurers

Women's groups

Youth groups

Environmental groups



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Climate change is a medical emergency

- Health effects of climate change are being felt today
- potentially catastrophic risk to human health
- climate change threatens to overturn health and development gains of the last 50 years

<http://climatehealthcommission.org/the-report/>

Watts N, Adger WN, Agnolucci P, et al. Health and climate change: policy responses to protect public health. *Lancet* 2015; published online June 23.

[http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(15\)60854-62](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(15)60854-62)

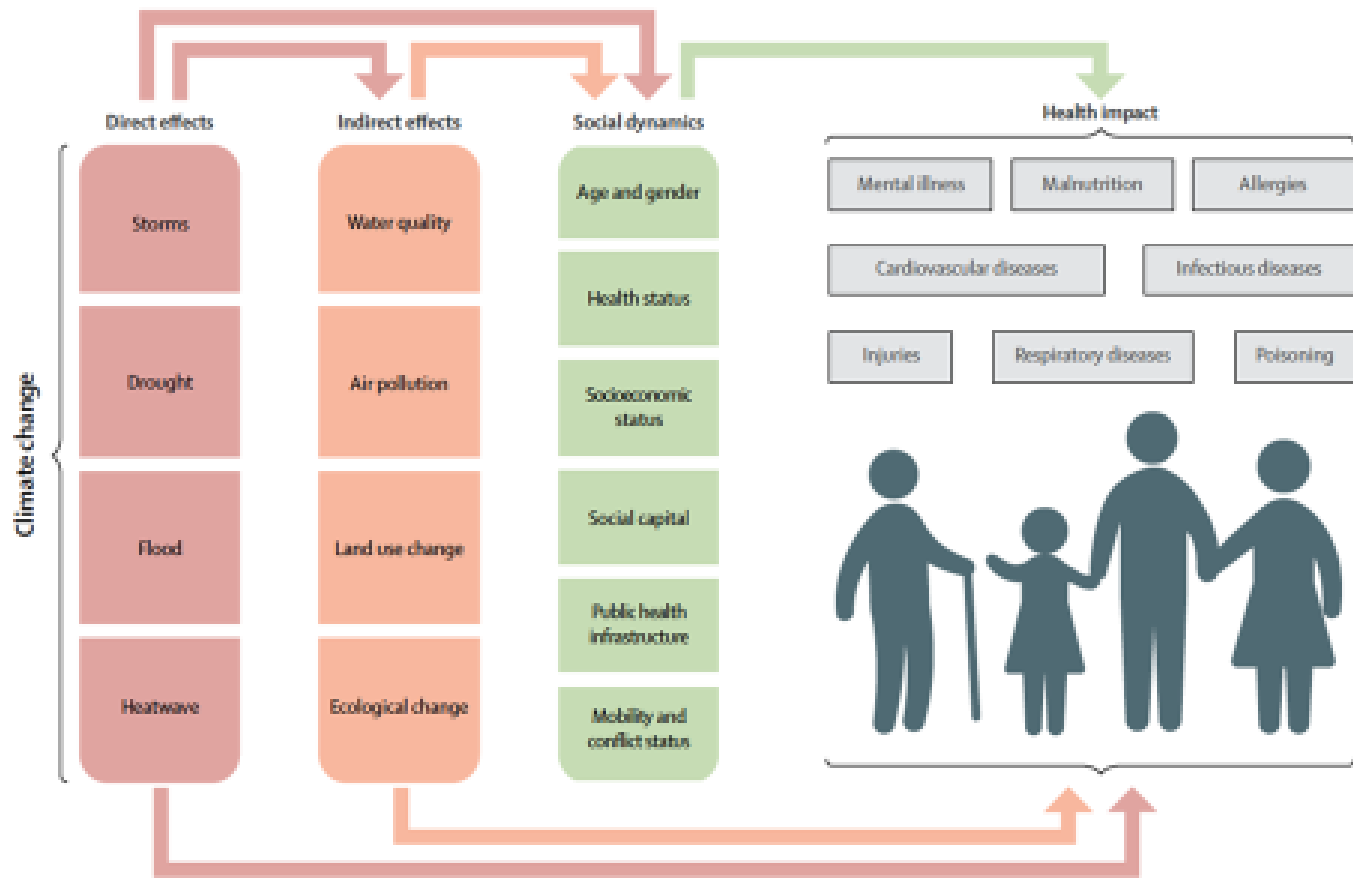


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Climate change and health: The Lancet



Direct and indirect health effects of climate change, Lancet study

Positive message:

- tackling climate change could be the greatest global health opportunity of the 21st century
- many mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change are no-regret options, leading to direct reductions on the burden of ill health. We will also see cost savings.

- 10 policy recommendations including:

call to governments for an early and decisive policy package which targets air pollution from the transport, agriculture, and energy sectors, and aims to reduce the health burden of particulate matter (especially PM_{2.5}) and short-lived climate pollutants, thus yielding immediate gains for society.

NEC needs to be made stronger

Ambition level:

- Commission proposal would still leave 50% of the health impacts in 2030
- EP impact assessment: synergies with climate&energy package: 75% gap closure is possible
- Make 2025 reductions binding for all pollutants



Improvements for NEC

2025 EP IA scenario Live saved annually

EU Commission Scenario	EU Parliament Scenario
281,213 premature deaths	238,348 premature deaths



42,865 lives saved every year compared to the Commission proposal (EU wide)

<http://www.eeb.org/air-o-meter/>

Improvements for NEC

2030 EP IA scenario Live saved annually

EU Commission Scenario	EU Parliament Scenario
281,213 premature deaths	238,348 premature deaths



19,824 lives saved every year compared to the Commission proposal (EU wide)



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NEC needs to be made stronger

Pollutants – Agricultural sector

- Methane: precursor for ozone, powerful greenhouse gas; methane reductions need to be in the new directive
- Ammonia: precursor for particulate matter.

Agriculture needs to contribute its part cleaner air in Europe

NGO position paper:

http://env-health.org/IMG/pdf/nec_paper_final.pdf



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Improvements for NEC

AGRICULTURAL EMISSIONS

Agriculture is the main source of ammonia (NH_3) and methane (CH_4) in the EU.



AIR QUALITY & HEALTH

Ammonia (NH_3) and methane (CH_4) are major contributors to Particulate Matter (PM) and ozone (O_3) - the most dangerous pollutants for human health.

PARTICULATE MATTER AND OZONE CAUSE



400,000+
premature deaths
in the EU



€300bill-€900bill.
in health-related costs
every year in the EU



NEC needs to be made stronger

Pollutants – Energy sector

Mercury: highly toxic heavy metal; damaging children's health and development

In the EU, power plants are the main source of mercury emissions, no EU emission limits yet for large combustion plants

EP ITRE Committee supports inclusion of mercury

NGO position paper:

http://env-health.org/IMG/pdf/nec_paper_final.pdf



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Materials

AIR QUALITY

BRIEFING

Air Pollution and Health in Bulgaria Facts, Figures and Recommendations



PUBLISHED December 2014

Air pollution is an important risk factor for health in Europe and worldwide. A recent review of the global burden of disease showed that it is one of the top ten risk factors for health globally¹. Worldwide an estimated 7 million people died prematurely because of pollution; in the European Union (EU) 400,000 people suffer a premature death². The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) predicts that in 2050 outdoor air pollution will be the top cause of environmentally related deaths worldwide³. In addition, air pollution has also been classified as the leading environmental cause of cancer⁴.

Impacts of air pollution in Bulgaria

Bulgaria has the highest rate of premature deaths due to air pollution in Europe. In 2012, 11,787 people in Bulgaria died prematurely from PM2.5 and ozone exposure. Furthermore, there were 2.1 million lost working days in 2010⁵.

WHY IS AIR POLLUTION A CONCERN FOR HEALTH?

Exposure to outdoor air pollution is associated with a broad spectrum of acute and chronic health effects ranging from infant effects to death⁶. While the impacts on respiratory and cardiovascular disease are well documented, new science also shows air pollution as an emerging risk factor for children's health and even diabetes⁷. Sensitive and vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, children, the elderly and those already suffering from respiratory and other serious illnesses or from low income groups are particularly affected.

The health effects of air pollution are well documented, even though the pollution mixtures in the air can be complex. Air pollution exists as a mixture of liquid and solid phases; a mixture of gaseous, volatile, semi-volatile and particulate matter, and its exact composition varies widely. The main pollutants for which numerous studies on health effects exist are particulate matter, ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, methane, mercury and black carbon.

AIR POLLUTION IN BULGARIA

Air quality in Bulgaria is a big concern: measurements show that citizens all over the country breathe in air that is considered harmful to health. For example, concentrations of PM2.5 and PM10 are much higher than what the EU and the World Health Organisation (WHO) have set to protect health.

Bulgaria had the highest PM2.5 concentrations of all EU-28 member states in urban areas over a three-year average⁸. For PM10, Bulgaria is also leading on the top polluted countries with 77 µg/m3 on the daily mean concentration (EU limit value is 50 µg/m3)⁹.

According to the WHO, 60 percent of the urban population in Bulgaria is exposed to dangerous (unhealthy) levels of particulate matter (PM10)¹⁰.

PM CONCENTRATIONS IN BULGARIA EXCEEDS EU AND WHO STANDARDS

27µg/m ³ BULGARIA* EU ANNUAL LIMITS	43µg/m ³ BULGARIA* EU ANNUAL LIMITS
70µg/m ³ EU ANNUAL LIMITS	10µg/m ³ WHO RECOMMENDATIONS
10µg/m ³ WHO RECOMMENDATIONS	20µg/m ³ WHO RECOMMENDATIONS
PM2.5	PM10

*Source: Environment Agency Bulgaria public air quality database. Air pollution, 2012

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AIR & HEALTH

Around 90% of Europeans living in cities are exposed to levels of air pollution deemed damaging for human health.

Although air pollution is rarely visible nowadays, Europe's air quality is still a huge problem. Air pollution is responsible for more than 400,000 early deaths in the EU each year [1]. Sensitive and vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, children, the elderly and those already suffering from respiratory and other serious illnesses or from low income groups are particularly affected [2].

The health effects of air pollution are well documented: not only is poor air quality a risk factor for heart and respiratory diseases such as asthma and chronic bronchitis, but it is also increasingly linked with harm to children's nervous systems and brain development, and even with diabetes.

The World Health Organization's Cancer Agency (IARC) also confirmed that outdoor air pollution can cause lung cancer [3].

Clearly the quality of indoor and outdoor air plays a major role in many chronic diseases in Europe with high costs for the individuals affected, national health services and the economy at large.

PARENT INFORMATION LEAFLET: CHILDREN WITH ASTHMA AND ALLERGIES

AIR POLLUTION AND HEALTH

New findings from the EU-wide research project European Study of Cohorts for Air Pollution Effects¹ (ESCAPE) make raising awareness of the effects on health of exposure to air pollution even more urgent. This leaflet developed by the ESCAPE project in collaboration with the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) explains the latest news on the links between outdoor air pollution and children's health. It also provides prevention tips for parents of children with asthma and allergies, who are especially vulnerable to exposure to polluted air.

WHAT DOES THE LATEST RESEARCH SHOW?

The EU-wide ESCAPE project confirmed the serious impact of exposure to air pollution on children's lung health. Specifically, it showed three new associations. First, that family exposure to fine particles and nitrogen dioxide in the air was related to low birth weight babies. Second, that school children exposed to higher levels of nitrogen dioxide, black carbon and fine particles had a lower lung function than other children. Third, that there was more pneumonia early in life in children exposed to traffic, and to higher levels of almost all pollutants studied.

The findings showed no clear relationships between air quality and rates of asthma and allergic sensitisation in children. However, even a large study such as ESCAPE, cannot answer all questions and needs to be judged in the context of other evidence.

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Climate and energy

Action against climate change can help improve people's health

You are here: Home page > News > Climate and energy

Climate change threatens the basic elements of life such as access to food, water, shelter and clean air - which in turn severely impacts human health. Decisions on responding to climate change need to put health at the centre.

News on our policy work
Health community commitment brings gains in Lima
Participants at the Climate and Health Summit, organised alongside the official UN climate negotiations in Lima (UNFCCC COP20), heard that the health community's strong engagement on climate change is increasingly acknowledged by international negotiators. [Read more...](#)

Clearer air could offer major health benefits in the Balkans
Three briefings released by HEAL highlight the heavy toll on health: breathing exposure to poor air quality in Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro; energy production and use is of particular concern as a source of air pollution. [Read more...](#)

Publications
Air pollution sources and health problems (PL)

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• Coal's unpaid health bill

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EUROPEAN RESPIRATORY journal

OFFICIAL SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL OF THE ERS

Ten principles for clean air

B. Brunekreef, I. Annesi Maesano, J.G. Ayres, F. Forastiere, B. Forsberg, N. Kunzli, J. Pekkanen, and T. Sigsgaard



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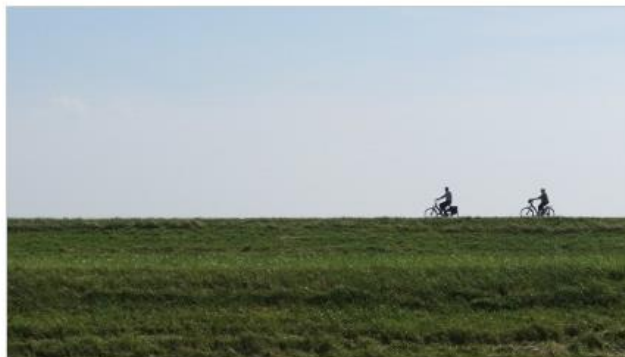
Know your air for health

Know your air for health



Breathing in dirty air has immediate effects – such as coughing and wheezing – but recent research shows that the long-term effects of polluted air on health are far greater. Asthma and lung diseases such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) can be a consequence of the air we breathe.

As European organisations representing asthma, allergy, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) groups, and medical, scientific and health experts from across Europe, the European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Association (EFA) and the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) call on decision-makers at the local, national and European level to support stronger air policies that protect our health from air pollution.



English (en) ▾

Twitter

Tweets

 **EFA** @EFA_Patients 3m
GLOBAL CALL to end #coal and invest in healthy communities and #GlobalHealth: bit.ly/1FUQYg #airpollution #asthma #airwebreath

 **Health&Environment** 21h @HealthandEnv
Challenge of #airpollution #climatechange for people in cities: heatwaves & heat traps; we need liveable cities bit.ly/1B4OdCC #SOER

[Sign up to HEAL news](#)

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Thank you for your attention!

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