



Brussels, 14 January 2020

Joint letter calling on European Commission to translate European Green Deal communication's ambition into concrete clean air steps in its 2020 Work Programme

Dear Executive Vice-Presidents Timmermans and Dombrovskis,

Dear Commissioner Sinkevičius,

Re : Clean Air Actions under the 2020 Work Programme of the European Commission

As representatives of civil society working on clean air from the health, environmental, climate and transport angles, we are writing to you to express our support for the EU Green Deal's commitments to the zero emission and zero pollution ambition put forward in the Commission strategy, including closer alignment of the current EU air quality standards with the science-based guidelines of the World Health Organization, a zero pollution action plan, and the revision of measures to address pollution from large industrial installations.

Air pollution is the top environmental threat to health, leading to 400 000 premature deaths per year across the EU. It is a leading risk factor for major chronic diseases including cancer, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. New studies also show a link between air pollution and obesity, diabetes and neurological conditions. Vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, the poor, or those already ill are particularly at risk. A recent Eurobarometer survey¹ shows European citizens strongly feel the public health and environmental urgency to act on clean air, and we urge you to start tackling pollution already in 2020, not 2021 or later.

We call on you to translate the ambition stated in the very introduction of the Communication on the European Green Deal, namely that "the policy response must be bold and comprehensive and seek to maximise benefits for health, quality of life, resilience and competitiveness", into concrete clean air steps in the 2020 Work Programme of the European Commission.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_19_6351

This includes, for 2020:

- Updating minimum requirements for air quality plans and monitoring by immediately adopting implementing legislation to strengthen minimum content of air quality plans and ensure consistent and accurate air quality monitoring also clarifying the current requirements for number and location of sampling points
- Enforcing existing legislation by promptly launching infringement procedures and taking Member States to the Court of Justice of the European Union when they fail to protect people's health and the environment
- Setting a clear roadmap to align EU legally binding air quality limit values with the World Health Organization guidelines (update expected soon) and for a pathway towards zero emission and zero pollution in all sectors, including industry, transport, buildings and agriculture.

Many thanks in advance for the follow up you will give to our demands.

Kind regards,

Genon K. Jensen, Executive Director, Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)

Jeremy Wates, Secretary General, European Environmental Bureau (EEB)

James Thornton, CEO, ClientEarth

William Todts, Executive Director, Transport and Environment (T&E)

Christer Ågren, Air Pollution Expert Air Pollution & Climate Secretariat (AirClim)

Susanna Palkonen, Director, European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA)

Sascha Marschang, Interim Secretary General, European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)

Prof. Barbara Hoffmann, Chair of the European Respiratory Society Environment and Health Committee (ERS)