

To: President von der Leyen

CC: Secretary-General Ilze Juhanšone, Budget Commissioner, Health Commissioner,
Commissioners' Project Group on the Clean Industrial Deal

Brussels, 9 July 2025

Health for all: the next EU budget (MFF) as a driver for clean air for all

Dear President von der Leyen,

As you are about to present the post-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), the EU Healthy Air Coalition (EUHAC), a coalition of diverse constituencies of the health sector, urges you to ensure that the next EU budget will help the EU substantially advance towards clean air and the prevention of the major diseases caused by air pollution.

To safeguard the Union's security, equitable prosperity and wellbeing, ending harmful subsidies and providing ambitious and dedicated investments for clean air measures need to be firmly anchored in the next MFF as top priorities.

Based on the latest science, and our coalition's health expertise, we recommend a swift phase-out of direct and indirect EU funding for fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas) as well as biomass burning and the redirection of investments towards pollution reduction and prevention. A key lesson from the economic and social burden caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is the need to invest in preventing threats to health and the environment.

There's an urgency to act to protect health from air pollution, the **top environmental risk to health in Europe**, resulting in hundreds of thousands of premature deaths and hundreds of billions of euros of costs annually. Everyone is vulnerable to harm caused by air pollution. According to the European Environment Agency (EEA) [latest figures](#), the vast majority (94%) of the EU urban population remains exposed to PM_{2.5} concentrations above the World Health Organization (WHO) guideline level. The major driver for poor air quality in the EU is the [burning of fossil fuels](#).

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The large body of evidence demonstrates that **air pollution is a key cause for all major non-communicable diseases**, including cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, stroke, diabetes, dementia, and lung cancer, as well as acute respiratory infections, with growing evidence on adverse impacts on mental and neurological health. At the same time, **climate change and air pollution are interlinked**: [new studies](#) point to increased mortality rates for patients with cardiovascular and respiratory disease during heatwaves when air pollution is high.

Air pollution not only is a **major burden for our health, but also for public finances**. According to the Commission's Fourth Clean Air Outlook [published](#) in March this year, the health damages caused by air pollution are estimated at between EUR 290-950 billion per year by 2030 under the baseline scenario and burden already strained health care systems in EU member states. Moreover, all scenarios leading to cleaner air would increase EU GDP in 2030 compared to the baseline scenario.

Setting the next EU budget up to be a driver for clean air measures would recognise the clear **global momentum for urgent clean air action and fossil fuel phase-out and confirm EU leadership**. The [Declaration](#) of the Seventh Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (July 2023) recognises the importance of planning and investing in health-promoting and equitable environments to achieve resilient and healthy communities. Earlier this year, nearly [50 million people](#) from the health sector [called](#) for clean air action for better health ahead of the WHO 2nd Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health. We thank you in advance for considering our call and would be happy to meet with your relevant team members to provide further information.

Sincerely,

Anne Stauffer, Deputy Director
Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)

On behalf of the EU Healthy Air Coalition (EUHAC) founding members

Dr Ole Johan Bakke, President – Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME)

Dr. Wolfgang Fecke, Director – Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)

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

Dimitris Kontopidis, Chair – European Lung Foundation (ELF)

Dr. Milka Sokolović, Director General – European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)

Prof. Barbara Hoffmann, Advocacy Council Chair – European Respiratory Society (ERS)

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