

## ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE HEAL SECRETARIAT

### WORK PROGRAMME MARCH 2007 – MARCH 2008

The working year 2007-2008 was a very intense one for the Health & Environment Alliance. During this period, HEAL achieved a much greater involvement of member organisations and other groups in the EU policy debate and decision-making process. Thanks to our efforts, it is no longer only the traditional environmental community that are articulating their concerns, support and solutions for strong EU environmental policies, it is also health professionals, patients, local and regional groups and health authorities, young people and scientists. HEAL also accomplished progress in the amount of attention given to health, especially in debates on pesticides, climate change, chemicals at the European level, through direct contacts with policy-makers and awareness-raising activities. Last but not least, HEAL increased its visibility through participation at several major European and international conferences and forums, as well as extensive media coverage on HEAL activities and environmental impacts on human health.

In 2007-2008, activities were carried out in the following policy priority areas:

1. Climate change
2. EU Environment and health action plan and CEHAPE
3. Chemicals
4. Mercury
5. Pesticides
6. DEHP
7. Air quality
8. Resources and waste
9. Sustainable development
10. Public participation, Aarhus Convention, Environmental Justice
11. Network development

#### 1. Climate change

Climate change and health has moved swiftly up the agenda in Europe and worldwide over the past year in the lead up and following the Bali negotiations. Public acceptance that climate change is happening has given way to urgent questions about future impacts on health and the quality of life in Europe. Encouraged by its members, HEAL responded promptly with a first conference and briefing paper in October 2007, which attracted early evening television coverage on EuroNews in 7 languages. These activities were achieved with very limited resources but have opened up many important avenues warranting attention.

The potentially far-reaching adverse health effects due to climate change, sometimes of an irreversible nature, are not yet effectively responded to by EU, National and Local policy. If the EU fails to, or delays adopting the robust climate change policies ahead of the United Nations Climate Change conference in Copenhagen in 2009, the health consequences and costs of policy inaction will be severe.

So far the levels of public and public health community engagement and awareness and around climate change have been limited. What is also clear is that the benefits to health of a strong climate change mitigation policy have not as yet been highlighted by the Commission, MEPs and Ministers in their deliberations. However, reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions can create a "virtuous circle" that has significant co-benefits to health, such as a reduction in air pollution and associated decrease in respiratory system diseases.

To underline these and other health benefits of climate change policy, in this reporting period HEAL has worked to engage the public health community and has successfully placed health within the climate change discussions. In 2007-2008, HEAL has successfully achieved the following:

- ***First major conference on climate change and health, and policy briefing***

HEAL and the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) organised a very successful and low carbon impact **conference on "Climate change and the challenges for public health:**

**priorities for EU Action"** to increase the health community's advocacy capacity and input into the EU climate change policy debates. The conference took place in Brussels on 2 October 2007 and was the first in a series of four events held during the month of October on climate change and health issues. The conference aimed to highlight the public health issues around climate change with a focus on adaptation strategies and highlighting how the healthcare sector can play a leading role in limiting carbon emissions. Two interventions were made through video conference to reduce the carbon imprint of the event. The event received a great deal of interest from European and national media in covering the climate change story from a health angle, and participants had the opportunity to hear firsthand some of the Commission's ideas on how the EU could add value in preparing for effective adaptation strategies to address human health toll of climate change. The conference was attended, amongst others, by representatives from the Permanent Representation of Hungary to the EU, Veolia water, North West Health Brussels Office, German Environment and Health Initiative e.V., Euractive, EuroHealthNet, Spanish Ministry of Health and Consumer Affairs, European Chemicals Industry Council (CEFIC), Red Cross EU Office, Chartered Institute for Environmental Health (CIEH), UK Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), and the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Cyprus to the EU.

Immediately following the conference, HEAL and its members launched an educational and policy briefing with recommendations for EU policy developments and agreed to launch a far-reaching "Health proofing climate change" campaign in 2008. The **policy briefing on "Climate Change and health – Protecting the most vulnerable"** presents a review of the latest IPCC and WHO scientific evidence on climate change and health as well as key findings from selected European countries. The briefing puts forward specific recommendations to EU policy-makers, the WHO, health professionals, the public and NGOs and policy recommendations. By highlighting the current EU policy framework on climate change, and providing recommendations for action, it has provided a solid base for greater policy advocacy work by HEAL, its members and health professionals in various fora. These include the EU consultation on the Green Paper, the European Parliament's new committee on climate change, or Council discussions. **The briefing has also been used to inform discussions within preparatory work for the World Health Organisation Resolution on Climate Change and its annual World Health Day in 2008 on Protecting health from climate change.** One example of its success is that HEAL recommendations mirror many of the policy solutions put forward by WHO and the European Parliament's climate change resolution; a focus on the most vulnerable groups and win-win-win scenarios for public health.

- **List serve on "Climate change and health"**

HEAL launched a new **specialised public list serve on "Climate Change and Health"** open to NGOs, policy-makers, stakeholders, scientists, etc. Its main objectives are to share information and updates, stimulate ideas to feed into the EU policy-making process and identify opportunities for action at national or EU level in the field of climate change and health. New groups of climate change stakeholders are identified and invited to join the list serve on a weekly basis, helping to raise awareness of European climate change policy and the links between climate change and health. Since its launch in June 2007, the climate change and health list serve has grown to over 120 subscribers from across the policy community, both in Europe and internationally. This includes civil servants from national health ministries, scientists, environmental and health NGOs and medical professionals.

- **Collaborating with the World Health Organisation in preparation for World Health Day 2008 on Climate Change**

HEAL participated and contributed to the **World Health Editors' Network (WHEN) meeting on "Communicating climate change and health – briefing and workshop"**, 23-24 January 2008, Geneva. The meeting aimed to brief the communicators' network on the issues around climate change protection and health and to seek advice on how to make this issue more relevant for audiences in the various sectors and groups, particularly the health care professionals. HEAL was an official supporter at the above-mentioned WHEN meeting which gathered more than 30 journalists, campaigners, scientists and academics at the World Health Organisation. HEAL gave a **presentation** on the EU policy framework and mitigation opportunities for public health.

- **Highlighting the health impacts of climate change in policy briefings and letter to decision-makers**

In November 2007, HEAL responded to the **2007 EC consultation on its Green Paper** (published on HEAL website: [http://www.env-health.org/IMG/pdf/Green\\_Paper\\_2007\\_consultation\\_LONG.pdf](http://www.env-health.org/IMG/pdf/Green_Paper_2007_consultation_LONG.pdf)). In January, HEAL wrote a letter **sent to MEPs on the Climate Change committee; Commission officials; national health ministries** outlining the health recommendations contained in the HEAL briefing, and requesting greater consideration of the health impacts, particularly in protecting vulnerable groups.

- **Participating as a key stakeholder in several meetings and events, and addressing the public health community**

HEAL secretariat staff or HEAL member organisations participated in the following meetings: the WHO/EC meeting on “*Public health responses to extreme weather events - heat waves*”, Bonn, 22-23 March 2007, the European Centre for Disease Control Workshop on “*Infectious diseases and environmental change*”, 29-30 March 2007, Stockholm, the first *Stakeholder conference on EC’s Green Paper “Adapting to climate change in Europe - options for EU action”*, 3 July 2007, Brussels, the DG SANCO’s *Stakeholder workshop “The consequences of climate change on human and animal health”*, 24 October 2007, Luxembourg which was part of the consultation process conducted by the European Commission to prepare for a possible Working Paper on Climate Change and Health, which was subsequently scrapped in early 2008. HEAL also gave a presentation at *European Alliance against Malaria and Red Cross / EU Office conference “Climate Change and Health: repercussions and responses in the developing world”* co-organised with the WHO Regional Office for Europe in Brussels on 22 October 2007.

- **Information and communication activities**

HEAL wrote **briefings** and email alerts to inform HEAL membership on EU policy developments (i.e. EU Green Paper consultation and institutional response) and latest scientific evidence on climate change and health. HEAL also wrote **articles** for HEAL website section on climate change (<http://www.env-health.org/r/93>) and highlighting members’ activities on climate change. HEAL contributed to the Green 10 policy discussions on climate change and briefed WHO on key developments in the climate change file.

## 2. EU Action Plan on Environment and Health & CEHAPE

HEAL supports precautionary health and environment policy and actively participates within its two main frameworks: the EU Environment and Health Strategy and the WHO Pan European environment and health process, which includes the Children’s Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE).

### 1) Implementation of the EU Action Plan on Environment and Health

In 2007-2008, HEAL undertook several initiatives and activities promoting the implementation of the EU Action Plan, such as:

- **Providing input into Commission’s Mid Term Review of the EU Action Plan on Environment and Health 2004-2010**

HEAL and its members welcomed the **Commission’s Mid Term Review in June 2007**, and have provided consolidated expertise, positions and support for consideration by the Council and European Parliament throughout the reporting period. For example, HEAL worked with the Portuguese Presidency and members to ensure that the Council prioritized providing Council Conclusions to show political support, and commitment to EU human biomonitoring activities. Within the European Parliament deliberations on the Environment and Health Action Plan, HEAL met with the rapporteur Frédérique Ries, provided background information to the EP political coordinators and met with the external consultant preparing an EP report

on the Mid Term Review. It provided extensive policy support to members and highlighted member's activities in this area.

In 2007, HEAL hosted a young volunteer in the framework of a project entitled "Discovering the dimensions of environment and health at European level through voluntary service". The project was co-funded by the European Commission YOUTH Programme. The project aimed to proactively engage the volunteer in HEAL's advocacy activities, and to promote youth participation in environment and health policy issues. Through delegating her with ownership of specific tasks around the Pan-European Environment and Health process and Vienna Inter Ministerial Conference, the objective was to allow her to acquire knowledge of the environmental health issues in EU policy-making, and how youth could be making a contribution to this process. She attended a **youth conference organised by the European Commission in Luxembourg**, 23-25 March 2007. She gave a presentation on the CEHAPE Best Practice Awards contest (see below) and the EU action plan.

- ***Participating in and disseminating results of environment and health research projects***

As a broad environmental health civil society platform, HEAL represented its members on **DG Research environment and health** projects and sat as an official member of:

- **INTARESE:** HEAL was also invited to become a member of the INTARESE Policy Advisory Group. The project is designed to **support implementation of the European Environment and Health Action Plan**, by providing the methods and tools that are essential to enable integrated assessment of environment and health risks. HEAL participated in the INTERASE Steering Group meeting in Prague during the reporting period (20-22 November 2007), wrote website articles on the latest developments concerning INTERASE and consulted its member organisations for input into the project.
- **NewGeneris:** HEAL is involved in the research project. **New Generis: Newborns and Genotoxic exposure risks ([www.newgeneris.org/](http://www.newgeneris.org/))**. The New Generis' objective is to investigate the role of prenatal and early-life exposure to genotoxic chemicals present in food and the environment in the development of childhood cancer and immune disorders. HEAL is a member of the Policy Advisory Group and attended one meeting. It widely disseminated news from the project through its list serves and website articles. HEAL also highlighted relevant EU work to the New Generis project team such as the Slovenian Presidency work on Cancer, and the COST initiative on Cancer and Genomics.
- **ESBIO:** HEAL participated in the final ESBIO stakeholder meeting in September 2007, and widely disseminated the results to its members. In January 2008, a HEAL expert was asked to provide an NGO perspective in a follow-up meeting between member states, "A European approach to human bio-monitoring: next steps", on a number of issues concerning political and financial support for the EU pilot project, planned activities and suggested actions.

HEAL also sought out other input into FP7 research projects, disseminated information to relevant decision makers and gave stakeholder policy perspectives to the scientific community.

- ***Advancing specific issues within the EU Action Plan: Indoor Air Quality and Emerging Issues***

HEAL took an active role as an official member of the **DG SANCO EU Indoor Air Quality Expert Working Group**. HEAL participated in the expert group on 25<sup>th</sup> May in Luxembourg, and alongside DG SANCO, the Consumer Organisation BEUC and the chemicals industry representative from CEFIC, worked to provide a draft outline for the Working Group's 2008 Work Programme. HEAL also highlighted the latest WHO global health impact of indoor air pollution. **HEAL** also participated in the EnVIE indoor air workshop '**Impact of indoor air quality on health**' held in Brussels on March 5 and 6 2008. The aim of the workshop was to collect the most updated information, identified in the context of the EU-funded research projects, on the evidence of the impact of indoor air quality on health and relate this to EU Policy input. Two members of HEAL executive committee presented: Peter van den Hazel and Marie-Christine Dewolf. HEAL made interventions on both days asking that EnVIE cover

a wider framing of IAQ in the context of sustainable buildings and societies and asking for the key messages of researchers to be advocated/communicated to the key decision makers.

HEAL monitored and elicited NGO expertise on the need for an EU **Green Paper on indoor air quality (DGSANCO)** and responded to the EU Public consultation on the SCHER preliminary report on Risk assessment on indoor air quality on 3 April 2007. At the beginning of 2007 the Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks (SCHER) had adopted a preliminary report on the risk assessment of indoor air quality to provide the Commission with a sound scientific basis for developing and implementing policies on indoor air.

HEAL monitored, publicized and provided input when relevant to the work of the **SCENIHR and EFSA on identifying emerging issues**, and the **Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks (SCHER)** to ensure they provide a comprehensive framework for the identification of new and emerging issues. To highlight the work of the scientific committees, HEAL flagged up the new DGSANCO scientific committees' newsletter, disseminated information and processes for responding to public consultation on draft committee opinions. HEAL disseminated information to its members and on its website on an **EU consultation on Code of Conduct for Responsible Nanosciences** and Nanotechnologies Research and on a consultation on SCENIHR report for assessing risks of nanomaterials. Some of HEAL members responded to these consultations. HEAL also disseminated information on an **EU consultation on electromagnetic fields (EMF)**: <http://www.env-health.org/a/2371>;

HEAL consulted members and partners for the development of a **fact sheet on Nanotechnology and health risks** ([http://www.env-health.org/IMG/pdf/HEAL\\_Nano\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_April\\_2008.pdf](http://www.env-health.org/IMG/pdf/HEAL_Nano_Fact_Sheet_April_2008.pdf)), and signed up to a **Declaration on the Principles for Nanotechnologies and Nanomaterials Oversight** (<http://www.env-health.org/a/2618>) developed by an international coalition of consumer, public health, environmental, and labour organizations concerned with various aspects of nanotechnology.

- **Information and communication activities**

HEAL launched an updated online **Health and Environment Primer** (<http://www.env-health.org/a/2843>) which defines basic environmental health concepts and maps out recent developments in the environment and health arena. It covers European policy developments in an accessible and approachable way combining history with information about relevant organisations and providing web-page references. It is aimed at policy-makers in the health and environmental sectors, including politicians, NGOs, academics, local authorities, women's and youth groups, and those working in the health sector, including health ministries, hospitals and health care centres, and health professionals and carers, patient and European citizen's groups.

HEAL coordinated the **HEAL SCALE list serve and working group** to disseminate reports, briefings and other information, exchange views and provide input on the implementation of the EU Action Plan. HEAL also wrote articles for the **Environment and Health website section and newsletter** related to the implementation of the EU Action Plan.

## **2. Implementation of the Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE)**

Since 2004, HEAL has contributed substantially to the CEHAPE implementation process. HEAL has also been instrumental in facilitating public participation by including more stakeholders from the non-governmental sector in the CEHAPE process. Governments and civil society met to assess the CEHAPE implementation process during the Vienna Intergovernmental Mid Term Review (IMR) which took place on 13-15 June in Vienna, hosted by the Austrian government and organised by the World Health Organisation (WHO). HEAL was an official member of the steering body for this conference, and co-organised all of the health NGO participation.

In collaboration and with the financial support of its member organisation the International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE) Austria, HEAL carried out the following three major advocacy events:

- **NGO preparatory conference "Taking Stock of Progress since the Budapest 4th Ministerial Conference on Environmental and Health", 11-12 June 2007**

A preparatory conference was coordinated on 11-12 June by the Health & Environment Alliance, Eco-forum via WECF Women in Europe for a Common Future and the Austrian Doctors for the Environment (ISDE AUSTRIA), and involved representatives from the scientific community attending the parallel INCHES scientific conference. The programme was developed through four specialised electronic list serves, representing each of the Regional Priority Goals, which enabled NGOs from across the 53 countries of the European Region to contribute.

- **Beyond Budapest: NGOs report on progress on children's environment and health at the Vienna Inter-Ministerial Review Conference, 13-15 June 2007**

HEAL co-organised NGO participation in the Vienna IMR which consisted of coordinated interventions throughout the conference programme and a platform on the second day to provide an NGO assessment which was presented in the form of a lively 45-minute newscast with "reporters from the field" highlighting projects, concerns, challenges and recommendations on the four Regional Priority Goals. The reports from the four RPGs highlighted a number of common themes needing special attention and provided recommendations for governments on the way forward to the next Ministerial Conference in 2009.

- **Children's Environment and Health Best Practice Award**

HEAL successfully co-organised and coordinated the competition, selection, materials, press work and ceremony of a **Children's Environment and Health Best Practice Award** which was presented during the Intergovernmental Mid-term Review of the Budapest Declaration in Vienna on 13 June 2007 and coordinated with ISDE Austria and WECF. The contest aimed to share inspiring, innovative and concrete activities that have made a difference in improving children's environmental health across the Pan-European Region of the WHO. Over 100 contestants submitted entry forms for their projects under the five award categories: (1) Water and sanitation; (2) Accidents and injuries; (3) Air pollution; (4) Chemicals; and (5) Youth participation. The categories reflected the four regional priority goals of the CEHAPE, while the fifth theme, "Youth participation" was new. The contest was very successful: entrants representing 32 out of the 53 countries in the WHO European region. The jury selected 3 projects for each of the four Regional Priority Goal and 3 for youth activities. The 15 winners from 11 countries (Romania, Bulgaria, Armenia, Portugal, Austria, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Hungary, Russia and Georgia) were invited to present their work in Vienna where the high-level Intergovernmental Mid-Term Review Conference took place. Five awards were presented to the successful applicants – one winner and two runners-up for each category.

The contest allowed the exchange of best practice, and helped urge governments and foundations to invest in programmes ensuring that successful and effective projects like the ones awarded can be made widely known and replicated throughout the countries of the European region and beyond. Roll up banners of the 15 winning projects were produced in English and Russian and displayed during the Vienna IMR and given to the winning participants to enable further dissemination of good practice at local and regional level. In conjunction with the awards, HEAL elaborated and published a 16-page **booklet entitled "CEHAPE Awards – Environmental-friendly measures that improve child health"**. The publication provides an overview of the awarded projects for the 5 categories and includes picture images of their implementation. It also provides an introduction to the judges who gave their time and expertise to choosing the winners.

- **International Scientific Conference**

HEAL co-organised the **international scientific conference** with member organisation **INCHES: Children's Environmental Health Conference, Vienna, 10-12 June 2007**, and developed a specific symposium session on the **CEHAPE and EU environment and health policy** at which presentations were given by HEAL Executive Director and ISDE Austria, as well as three HEAL Executive Committee members. HEAL contributed human and financial resources such as the conference rental, and co-sponsoring a conference reception. The conference, attended by more than 200 participants including scientists, doctors and NGOs,

provided an international forum for the latest research findings in paediatric environmental health and for minimising childhood exposure to environmental contaminants. See <http://inchesnetwork.net/activities.html>. HEAL's Executive Director co-published an abstract for the INCHES meeting on its Stay Healthy, Stop Mercury campaign.

- **Other activities, information and communication**

HEAL was also involved in the preparation of the youth programme at the Vienna IMR. HEAL's youth volunteer attended a **youth conference organised by the European Commission in Luxembourg** in preparation for the Vienna meeting, 23-25 March 2007. She gave a presentation on the CEHAPE Best Practice Awards contest (See under Public Participation section for more details). She also participated in the Youth Programme during the Vienna IMR, which provided recommendations from young people to environment and health ministers.

HEAL worked with member organisation the **European Child Safety Alliance towards CEHAPE Regional Priority Goal II** for the protection of children from injuries and reduction of accidents, for example in April 2008 through a joint press release "*Governments presented with opportunities to reduce child car seat prices*", published at <http://www.env-health.org/a/2513>, and wide dissemination of the **ECSA good practice guide** entitled "*Child Safety Good Practice Guide: Good investments in unintentional child injury prevention and safety promotion*". HEAL is a member of the **VOICE coalition** for the protection of vulnerable road users. HEAL publicised the European VOICE awards on Child Safety on its website at <http://www.env-health.org/a/2721>

HEAL continued to develop and update its "**Healthier Environments for Children**" **CEHAPE implementation website**: [www.children.env-health.org](http://www.children.env-health.org). HEAL launched this website in 2006 to share information about the non-governmental groups involved, their issues and campaigns. Its contents will also help monitor what is being achieved so that this information can be reported to meetings of the World Health Organization (WHO), national governments and NGOs on the Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE). This website is linked from the official WHO CEHAPE implementation website under "What are NGOs doing" for each country page: <http://www.euro.who.int/eprise/main/who/progs/eehc/ctryinfo/ctryinfo>

HEAL coordinated the **HEAL Children's list serve and working group** and disseminated reports, briefings and other information, facilitated the exchange of views and provided input regarding EU environment and health policy and its relation to the WHO CEHAPE process. Examples include national, WHO and EU institutional reports on children's health and the impact of the environment.

In the framework of a partnership project with HEAL member the International Society of Doctors for the Environment Austria, HEAL co-published a brochure on **Children's Environmental Health** for doctors, highlighting the EU policy frameworks, in German. The brochure was widely distributed during the Vienna Mid Term Review conference, and further disseminated in Austria and Germany among medical professionals.

### 3. Chemicals policy

During the early stages of REACH implementation, the EU's new chemical safety legislation, HEAL has oriented its activities along two main axes. The first, within the NGO Chemicals Taskforce joint activities, to **monitor and actively participate in the setting up of the European Chemicals Agency**, and bring in the health perspective and expertise to the Agency's work. Through representation on Management Board, HEAL closely scrutinized the nomination process for the Executive Director, and gained recognition of health groups as a stakeholder.

The second element is the launch of the **Chemicals Health Monitor project**, which aims to improve public health by ensuring that the key scientific evidence on the links between chemicals and ill-health are translated into policy as quickly as possible. It is succeeding in mobilising a critical mass of new voices and experts from the health and scientific community, to bring their concerns about REACH to policy makers, other medical professionals and the wider public. For example, the International Society of Doctors for the Environment's President wrote an open letter to the ECHA's director requesting that REACH deliver real public health benefits. Subsequent to this, discussions in the ECHA Management Board requested that health stakeholders be included as a priority group. The Italian Medical Federation (FNOMCeO) comprising all regional medical associations, has co-published a briefing in Italian with HEAL on REACH and public health, and similar initiatives are planned in other EU member countries.

## **1. Health NGO representation in the European Chemicals Agency**

HEAL addressed key policy-makers in the initial phases of the REACH implementation process through joint publications, comments, submissions and policy input letters, and by participating in key meetings and conferences.

- ***Policy input, representation and publications***

HEAL participated in joint NGO work, via the **Chemicals Taskforce**, preparing the monitoring on the new European Chemicals Agency on issues of transparency, independence and compliance with deadlines as well as by informing the public. For this purpose, HEAL co-edited and co-issued the 12-page joint publication "**My Voice – How you can demand better protection of human health and the environment from hazardous chemicals**" in August 2007, and the joint publication "**Navigating REACH – an activist's guide to using and improving the new EU chemicals legislation**".

HEAL also wrote several letters in collaboration with other NGOs, such as an **open joint letter** to Commissioners Dimas and Verheugen on 25 May 2007 urging them to ensure that new European Chemicals Agency will:- guarantee that members of the Management Board and Agency Committees do not have conflicts of interest; that NGO observers to the Agency's bodies have access to all relevant documents and meetings; transparency; use the REACH system to act against the use of chemicals of very high concern and phase them out, rather than preserve the status quo.

HEAL participated in the joint NGO representation to the **Management Board of the European Chemicals Agency**. HEAL also participated in the meetings of the **Competent Authorities for the implementation of REACH**, and joint NGO meetings **with Commission officials**.

Last but not least, HEAL attended meetings and delivered presentations to highlight the role of the health community and the human health angle in debates related to the REACH implementation.

- ***Information and communication***

HEAL provided briefings and reports on EU-funded research and scientific meetings relevant to chemicals issues in REACH, and wrote website and newsletter articles, sent emails to relevant list serves, within HEAL and for partner NGOs.

## **2. Chemicals Health Monitor: linking chemicals and disease for policy change (or how REACH can help)**

The project was officially launched in June 2007 at the Intergovernmental Mid-term Review of the Pan European WHO Children's Environment and Health process in Vienna. In this first year, the Chemicals Health Monitor project built on existing resources to create a significant impact. Thirty-five non-governmental organisations and 20 individuals expressed an interest in being involved in the project, and many more are receiving weekly digest on health, chemicals and EU chemical law (REACH). Governmental experts from the UK, Sweden and the Netherlands expressed interest in setting up meetings or workshops to learn more about

the project's resources on the links between disease and chemicals, and the relation to key REACH decisions in the coming years. All materials from the project have been peer-reviewed by recognised scientific experts on specific issues, drawn from HEAL's expert pool on international and EU environmental health research projects and from published literature.

HEAL used opportunities for promotion and discussion through presentations at various events, for example: "Health in the Enlarged EU Conference" (Workshop on Children's Chemical Contamination) in Bratislava, Slovakia April 2007, co-organised by HEAL and member organisation Women in Europe for a Common Future; the "Second Workshop on Low Dose Effects of Chemicals with Special Consideration of Phthalates" in Berlin, Germany, April 2007; the "European Commission's Green Week Session on Human Health and the Environment" in Brussels June 2007; at the conference "Regulating Chemical Risks: Science, Politics, and the Media" conference in Stockholm, Sweden, June 2007.

**Outreach and coalition-building:** Strategic work on attracting several new important players had also begun. The Europe-wide gathering of national doctors' associations, known as the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME), represents a significant partner in the promotion of health prevention policies via REACH. CHM has begun a dialogue with CPME on educating & involving interested members on REACH and public health. Secondly, HEAL approached Europa Donna, the largest European association of breast cancer experts, including medical professionals, scientists, women advocates and patients concerning their view on environmental policies, and contributing to HEAL's work on environmental and chemical contamination factors in breast cancer.

Specific **activities** included:

**=> Building the CHM project structure:**

HEAL developed a new logo, promotional material (postcard and brochure), house-style design and dissemination databases to increase the visibility and outreach of project resources, and established a **Chemicals Health Monitor Steering Committee** of doctors, scientists, environmentalists and communicators from nine key groups, including the International Society of Doctors for the Environment and Health Care Without Harm, was established. The Steering Committee acts as an advisory body providing general guidance on the development and implementation of the project goals, objectives and activities.

**=> Developing information and advocacy material:**

HEAL developed a **Chemicals Health Monitor website – an online source of information about chemicals and diseases**. It provides a comprehensive compilation of recent information and evidence about the links between chemical contaminants in the environment and ill-health. Information is searchable by disease. The website also highlights how this evidence could be used for the REACH implementation process.

HEAL also developed a regular chemicals health **news digest**, the **Chemicals and Disease News Bulletin**, a weekly newsletter providing a digest of information on the impact chemicals on public health taken from media sources and scientifically referenced publications (journals and magazines). Publication on a weekly basis ensures that readers are always up-to-date concerning the state of scientific research.

HEAL provided **regular updates and calendar information** on REACH Implementation developments, and tracked health issues pertaining to the work of the new European Chemicals Agency on the Chemicals Health Monitor website, through the HEAL chemicals list serve and working group, and HEAL website and newsletter articles.

HEAL elaborated and provided 6 **Chemicals Health Monitor fact sheets and briefings** for lay public and policy-makers on the latest science of health effects from specific chemicals. The three key areas have focused on REACH and public health, children and chemicals, and breast cancer and chemicals. The publications are available in several languages and can be downloaded from the project website.

- **Briefing:** “*What Will New EU Chemicals Legislation Deliver for Public Health?*” (English, Italian, French, German, Polish, Hungarian, Czech and Slovenian) introducing the new EU law called ‘REACH’, and the health problems linked to chemicals; how REACH can bring health benefits; the types of chemicals causing concern; and how members of the health sector can give input to the law’s implementation.
- **Briefing** – “*Chemicals Compromising Our Children*” (English, German, Russian and Italian), discussing the problem posed by industrial chemicals for the healthy development of children’s brains. The briefing argues that given past experience, a more precautionary regulation is needed, and makes specific recommendations for actions at national, EU and international level to eliminate exposures to developmental neurotoxins. It also mentions how health professionals can contribute.
- **Briefing for the health and medical communities, scientists / researchers** – “*Breast cancer and exposure to hormonally active chemicals: An appraisal of the scientific evidence*” (English only). The report reviews the scientific evidence that certain chemicals may be implicated in breast cancer, and focuses on the role of hormone disrupting chemicals. Written by Professor Andreas Kortenkamp, Head of the Centre for Toxicology, School of Pharmacy, University of London, UK, the report was peer reviewed by Professor Jan Ake Gustafsson, Dr Julia Brody from the Silent Spring Institute, USA, and Prof Alastair M Thompson, Professor of Surgical Oncology at the University of Dundee.  
Printed copies:
- **Briefing for general public and breast cancer patients’ groups** - “*Factors influencing the risk of breast cancer*” (available in English, French, Spanish, German, Italian and Russian) summarising the key information on all the risk factors with particular focus on the role of chemicals. .
- **Leaflet: Breast Cancer: Preventing the preventable** (available in English, French, Spanish, German, Italian and Russian) describing the evidence that hormonally active chemicals may be implicated in breast cancer. Written for sufferers and a wide public audience, the leaflet highlights the risk factors for breast cancer, the views of several scientific groups concerning the role of chemicals, and what people can do and which policy actions are needed to minimize exposure. to such chemicals..
- **Breast cancer portfolio:** “*Emerging risk factors for breast cancer - A collation of scientific papers related to the potential role of chemicals*”, a selection of key papers that make the case for chemical exposures playing a role in some cases of breast cancer. (English only)

**=> Organising and attending conferences, providing presentations:**

HEAL provided **14 presentations** on the **Chemicals Health Monitor** at NGO, scientific, governmental and medical community events, including for example at the “**Second Workshop on Low Dose Effects of Chemicals with Special Consideration of Phthalates**” in Berlin, Germany on 27 April 2007, and at the “European Commission’s **Green Week** Session on Human Health and the Environment” in Brussels, 13 June 2007.

**=> Personal meetings with health and medical associations on national level:**

**=> Contributing to the EU Human Biomonitoring debate:**

HEAL participated in the **ESBIO** project and widely disseminated its findings, as well as other relevant pollutant inventories to bolster work on chemicals subject to the REACH authorisation process. For example, information was disseminated to the Human Biomonitoring and Health list serve on HBM activities in EU, Ethical Issues in Biomonitoring, and EU Ministers’ push for quick progress on human biomonitoring. HEAL also established and continued to facilitate a **Human Biomonitoring list serve** for members, partner NGOs and other stakeholders.

HEAL collected information and developed a structure for a brochure on **WHO’s breast milk monitoring survey** that includes chemicals which may fall under REACH’s authorisation procedure. HEAL also identified scientists with relevant expertise and knowledge of this issue to review a draft of this publication. HEAL also made submissions and helped ensure that the **new EU Biomonitoring Program** will specifically look at how

REACH data can be used in its work in order to promote protective policies. Input from a HEAL biomonitoring expert also provided scientific advice to the REACH Implementation Plan developments to promote important safety distinctions when determining chemical restrictions levels.

## 4. Mercury

In 2007, HEAL focused primarily on the legislative proposals contained in the EU Mercury Strategy which were being discussed, i.e. the export ban and the measuring and control devices to be added to the Limitations on Marketing and Use Directive. Building on the successful results of the “Stay Healthy, Stop Mercury campaign” carried out in the 2006-2007 grant period, HEAL continued to mobilise health groups around the health impacts of mercury contamination and the urgent need to eliminate mercury.

HEAL pursued its objectives through outreach to the World Health Organisation and health ministries, co-sponsoring a major scientific conference with INCHES in Vienna, and wide dissemination of our successful report (“Halting the child brain drain”) and fact sheet series. HEAL also co-organised a major conference on Dental Amalgams with EEB to bring expertise and public opinion into the EU policy considerations around the health and environmental impacts of amalgams. We were successful in many of our policy aims for the two legislative files mentioned above, and in our outreach and mobilisation work.

HEAL activities in this area were developed and implemented in close cooperation with member organisation European Environmental Bureau (EEB) – Zero Mercury Campaign and other partners from the health community.

- **Policy input and follow up Stay Healthy Stop Mercury campaign**

The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), in cooperation with the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and the Zero Mercury Working Group, held a **Conference on “Dental Sector as a Source of Mercury Contamination”** in Brussels on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2007. On this occasion, HEAL and Health Care Without Harm Europe (HCWH) launched the last fact sheet of the “Stay Healthy Stop Mercury” campaign on **“Mercury and Dental Amalgams”**. Invited speakers as well as other participants included representatives from the European Commission, the Danish Environment Protection Agency, the Swedish Chemicals Agency (KemI), the Council of European Dentists (CED), the International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology, Occupational health experts, Researchers, Patients ‘ groups and NGO representatives. The key outcomes of this conference are the press release (“*A real mouthful: Why mercury fillings should be banned*”) and conference report (entitled “*Dental Sector as a Source of mercury Contamination*”). Lisette van Vliet, HEAL Toxics Policy Advisor, gave a presentation on “Lifecycle of dental amalgam: public health concerns”.

HEAL, on its own and as a part of the “EEB Zero Mercury Working Group” monitored development of **legislation on ban of mercury exports and the amendment to the ‘Limitations Directive’ on certain measuring & control equipment containing mercury**. HEAL sent lobby letters at critical junction of decision-making, for example on **Mercury export ban and safe storage of surplus mercury** and **Measuring & Control Equipment containing mercury**.

HEAL participated and gave a presentation at the **WHO Meeting “Reducing Health Risks from Mercury Exposures in European Region of WHO”**, Bonn Germany 7-8 November 2007 ([http://www.euro.who.int/chemsafety/News/20071121\\_2](http://www.euro.who.int/chemsafety/News/20071121_2)).

HEAL further disseminated the **report** on mercury and health “Stopping the Child Brain Drain” produced and translated into German during the previous grant period as well as the campaign **fact sheets** (“*Mercury and health*”, “*Mercury and health care*”, “*Managing small mercury spills*”, “*Mercury and fish consumption*” and “*Mercury and vaccines*”). This information material was disseminated via different channels (e-mailing, mailing, conferences and meetings). We sent the report to national and WHO experts who were considering setting up a methyl mercury HBM programme; and to the Spanish public health institute and Cyprus health ministry.

- **Information and communication activities**

HEAL submitted an **article on “Mercury, fish and childbearing: what every woman should know to protect children and the planet”** to a leading global Women and

Environment's magazine (Women and Environments International). The article highlights the EU and international policy changes needed to reduce mercury's impact on health. This printed and on-line magazine reaches worldwide subscribers and mobilises new constituencies for policy debate and action.

HEAL monitored related developments in UNEP, SAICM, IFCS and their implications for EU action, and wrote **articles** for the HEAL website section – Mercury ([www.env-health.org/r/81](http://www.env-health.org/r/81)) and for the electronic newsletter. HEAL also sent **email briefings and alerts** to members and partner NGOs on policy developments, scientific abstracts and/or full articles (mercury and its impacts on human health, biomonitoring), new reports (from governmental (EU and other countries) as well as non-governmental sources (UNEP, WHO and NGOs).

## 5. Pesticides

In 2007-2008, HEAL achieved considerable successes in contributing to and informing the EU policy formulation process in relation to the pesticides policy reform. Our main achievements can be summarised as follows:

- Involvement of several new, previously un-mobilised, health and patients' groups (cancer groups, asthma and allergy groups, doctors, paediatricians etc.) in the policy debate on the health effects of pesticides thus increasing public participation in policy making;
- Health became a more prominent message in the policy debate;
- Legislative draft proposals for cut-off criteria for the sale and use of pesticides were expanded to include neurotoxicity and parliamentarians pledged to protect vulnerable groups more proactively by banning pesticide use in and around areas used by children, such as residential areas, parks, public gardens, school grounds and playgrounds.

HEAL activities in this area were developed and implemented in close cooperation with member organisation Pesticides Action Network (PAN) Europe and other partners from the health community.

- **Advocacy work: *My child's health campaign***

Ahead of the first reading vote by the European Parliament in October 2007, HEAL launched a postcard campaign "*My child's health*". The objectives were to share the scientific evidence on the negative health impacts to children's health and to highlight what the European Parliament could do immediately to reverse this trend. It aimed to alert MEPs to action needed to protect children from unnecessary pesticides use and urge them to support a pesticide reform to take the most dangerous pesticides off the market, and make children's spaces pesticide-free. Groups were encouraged to use the postcard to send to their local, regional and national governments to influence discussions in the Council in the coming months. The postcard features referenced scientific evidence summarising the hazardous health effects of pesticides. HEAL successfully mobilised its membership and partners to send the postcard to MEPs by patients' and women's groups, doctors' associations, other health and environmental organizations and individual citizens from across the EU.

HEAL provided tools for its members to send letters to the editor. The postcard campaign was bolstered by media coverage from physicians from HEAL's network who wrote letters to the editor which were published in several national newspapers. For example, the International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE) Austria sent a letter to the editor of Austrian newspaper "Kronenzeitung" which was published on 12 October. The letter highlighted the hazardous health effects of pesticides and urged MEPs to vote for a more protecting EU pesticides legislation. The Irish Doctors for the Environment sent a letter to the editor of the "Irish Examiner" which was published on 17 October entitled "MEPs should vote to protect child health": <http://www.env-health.org/a/27> .

HEAL, the International Society of Doctors for the Environment and the Cancer Protection and Education Society sent a joint letter to the group of "**MEPs Against Cancer initiative**" highlighting the links between pesticides and cancer (17 October 2007).

HEAL was also a partner organisation in the **EU Pesticide Watch Campaign**, an on-line information resource supported and maintained by a coalition of European NGOs working to promote public health and the environment. The objective of the website is to help the public contact their MEPs and call for better European legislation on pesticides.

HEAL also participated in strategy meetings with policy makers and other NGOs to assess the status of pesticide legislation, refine the policy input and advocacy plan, provide presentations on the health perspective.

- **Information and communication activities**

HEAL closely monitored the legislative process towards the approval of the new EU pesticide policy package and developed joint papers, press releases and a campaign in response to crucial junctures of the legislation in progress, and provided robust facts to underscore our policy position. HEAL wrote **briefings** and email alerts to inform HEAL membership on policy developments and latest scientific evidence on pesticides and health. HEAL wrote **articles** for HEAL website section on pesticides (<http://www.env-health.org/r/68>), and contributed to the health and pesticides ad-hoc NGO list serve and working group set up under PAN Europe umbrella, composed by PAN Europe partners and HEAL members.

## 6. DEHP

HEAL in collaboration with Health Care Without Harm Europe (HCWH) has advocated for restrictions on the use of phthalates, particularly DEHP, in medical devices within the context of the revision of the EU Medical Devices Directive (93/42/EEC). It has focused on highlighting the health concerns about DEHP, namely that it is classified as a reproductive toxin (for humans) and the unusually high exposures to DEHP leaching from medical devices is particularly harmful to vulnerable groups such as babies and dialysis patients.

In 2007-2008, HEAL has identified policy opportunities within EU legislation, EU scientific committee work and dialogue with industry to highlight the need to replace phthalates with safer substitutes. Specific activities included:

- Continue to advocate for the **restriction of DEHP in Medical Devices Directive** in 1<sup>st</sup> reading through letters and press briefings
- Monitored and reported on the linkages between the recommendations of the **EU Risk Reduction Strategy on DEHP** to ensure these are translated into policy under existing and new legislation. **HEAL and HCWH jointly sent a letter and developed model advocacy letters for members** to member states concerning their upcoming vote on the Reduction Strategy Commission Recommendations (Measures & Communication). We argued for a stronger overall recommendation than the Commission proposal, and specifically one that would deal with direct risks to health consistent with the final Risk Recommendation Strategy.
- HEAL sent out email information **briefing on Final EU Risk Assessment of DEHP** via emails to relevant list serves.
- HEAL liaised with the SCEHNIR committee and monitored the development on the **SCENIHR preliminary report on DEHP and Medical Devices** and circulated the HCWH press release on the draft opinion.
- **HEAL participated** in the DG Health and Consumer Stakeholder Dialogue Session with the Scientific Committees, (22 March 2007), with an intervention on SCENIHR work on medical devices.
- HEAL sent electronic alerts, wrote articles for HEAL website and newsletter.
- HEAL participated in joint NGO work, via the **Chemicals Taskforce**, and provided information on DEHP and phthalates to various discussions, meetings and publications, with regard to preparation for the REACH Candidate list.

## 7. Air quality

HEAL has advocated for the highest possible level of health protection in the EU air quality legislation, one that at a minimum offers the same level of health protection as the World Health Organisation's new Air Quality Guidelines (AQG), and one that is ambitious enough to significantly reduce the number of deaths and ill health, with a particular attention for vulnerable groups including children. HEAL together with leading health networks including the European Respiratory Society, the European Federation for Asthma and Allergy Patients, the European Public Health Alliance and the International Society for Doctors for the Environment has ensured that the public health community is heard at key times during the regulatory process on air quality. HEAL has also highlighted the links between other externalities (of a public health nature – noise, accidents and physical exercise) in light of both the revision of the National Emission Ceiling Directive due to a climate change commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- ***Advocacy work: health protection as a driver for better air quality – Second Reading Thematic Strategy and Air Quality Standards***

In 2007-2008, HEAL advocated for its policy positions to be considered in the **second reading in the European Parliament on the Thematic strategy on air pollution and air quality standards**. In their actions on the second reading, HEAL and active member organisations such as the European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients Associations, the International Doctors for the Environment and the European Respiratory Society reiterated their position in first reading that standards must offer a level of protection for all, including those most vulnerable, based on WHO Air Quality Guidelines; there must be no weakening of existing standards; new legally binding limit value or strongest possible % reduction of PM2.5 exposure. In a number of policy letters and emails to European Parliamentarians and other key decision makers, the organisations brought forth the most recent significant scientific studies pointing out that their results had not been considered in the health impact assessment or economic costs analysis of the Commission. This new information provided rationale to both the Commission, Council and certain Parliamentary groups to significantly change their positions based on sound scientific and technical evidence with which to better negotiate a second reading.

HEAL closely followed and provided substantial policy input in cooperation with member organizations all along the second reading of the Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution and on the revision of the NEC Directive and the impact on Member States of not having fulfilled current EU air quality legal requirements, for example HEAL sent a **joint letter** on 25 June 2007 with HEAL member organisations EFA, ERS and ISDE entitled "Negotiations for second reading air quality limit values" to Members of the European Parliament. The letter provided an analysis of Council and Parliament's positions to date, accompanied by answers to questions raised at first reading that had not been adequately dealt with by Parliament .

For the second reading on air pollution in the European Parliament, HEAL suggested **amendments on information and reporting requirements for vulnerable populations**.

There is also a requirement for the European Commission to consider the protection of vulnerable groups within its reporting analysis of best practice. HEAL sent a **letter** to European Parliamentarians in the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee (ENVI) ahead of their second reading vote on the air quality file in October 2007 urging them to use their vote not only to combat climate change, but also to significantly improve people's health, particularly children's, by supporting air quality limits based on WHO health standards.

HEAL members gave expert advice at various events and through correspondence regarding the health effects of air pollution and relevant policy options directly to Environment Ministers, European Parliamentarians, the European Commission, the World Health Organisation, journalists and other stakeholders including the research and scientific community..

HEAL participated in several **workshop, conferences and high-level policy meetings** on air quality, and provided presentations on the health perspective.

## 8. Resources and waste

In 2007-2008, HEAL joined forces with other NGOs (particularly Health Care Without Harm) to represent the public interest in continuing to eliminate unnecessary hazardous chemicals from consumers' and medical products. Specific activities included:

- Contribution to the **stakeholder consultations on the “Invitation for Comments on Topics for Information Supply regarding the Review of Directive 2002/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (RoHS)”**. The NGOs recommended that manufacturers develop and design clean products that avoid the use of hazardous chemical components at the source in order to be able to address health and environmental problems.
- Participation in the workshop on **Preliminary results of the “Study on Directives 2002/95/EC on the restriction of the Use of Certain Hazardous Substances (RoHS)”** (3<sup>rd</sup> July 2007).
- Contribution to the **stakeholder consultations on the review of Directive 2002/95/EC (RoHS) Directive: technical changes to the scope of the directive, definitions and facilitating implementation**. Final document submitted 13 February 2008.

## 9. Sustainable development

Human health is at the centre of the three pillars of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) and is recognised as such in the EU Sustainable Development Strategy. Sustainable development is thus a key area for which HEAL provides expertise and carries out campaigns, mainly in partnership with the other Green 10 organisations. In 2007-2008, HEAL managed to highlight the health dimension of sustainable development and the health benefits that could be gained from a more sustainable management of resources and expenditure through EU policies and budgetary processes. HEAL also brought sustainable development within the public health debate, particularly as far as the new EU Health Strategy is concerned.

- HEAL participated in **Green Week 2007 “Past lessons Future challenges: Changing our behaviour”**, June 2007 with:
  - **Joint stand** with the Green 10 group of environmental NGOs
  - **Ideas tree**: participants in Green Week were invited by the Green 10 to write down their ideas for a more sustainable Europe. The “ideas tree” was presented on the last day of Green Week to members of Commissioner Dimas' cabinet
  - **Quiz** “Test Your Knowledge of Environmental Issues” developed by the Green 10, presented at Green Week and available online at: <http://www.green10.org/>
  - Joint Green 10 leaflet **“Face the Future”**
  - **HEAL presentation at Green Week** during session: Future scenarios: human health and the environment
- HEAL attended the **“Beyond GDP” international conference** on 19-20 November 2007. The conference, organised by the European Commission, European Parliament, Club of Rome, OECD and WWF, aimed at clarifying which indices are most appropriate to measure economic, social and environmental progress, and how these can best be integrated into the decision-making process and taken up by public debate. These alternative indices should be integrated in the forthcoming Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan (SCP).
- HEAL proactively asked for the Environment and Health chapter of the **EEA Belgrade Report** for consultation. As this was not published or forthcoming, HEAL presented the views of member organisations to the EEA at the presentation of their draft Belgrade Report at the DG SANCO working group on Environment and Health (see Environment and Health chapter for details). Clarification was given to the EEA on the implications and nuances in terms of sustainable development of the environmental burden of disease.
- HEAL sent a letter to Environment and Health Ministers on 18 December 2007 on the Mid Term Review of the EU Environment and Health Action Plan 2004-2010 highlighting the **conclusions of the Environment for Europe Belgrade Conference**
- HEAL distributed information to members on the **mid-term review of the 6<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Programme**. HEAL suggested improvements and additions on

Environmental Health during the European Parliament's reporting on the mid-term review to make health and indoor air pollution a priority of environmental legislation. HEAL has taken a lead at European level on ensuring that the mid-term review of the EU Action Plan on Environment and Health 2004-2010 has been considered in the context of the Sustainable Development Strategy.

- HEAL attended the G-10 **meeting with Environmental Council** on December 19, at the Portuguese Permanent Representation in Brussels

## 10. Public participation, Aarhus Convention, Environmental justice

In 2007-2008, not only has HEAL monitored and publicised developments within the Aarhus Convention implementation process particularly in the EU, but we have also promoted its principles across the different policy areas. In fact, the principles of the Aarhus Convention are cross-cutting with other crucial environmental health policy priorities such as chemical regulations, the EU environment and health monitoring system and pesticides use. Specific activities included:

- **HEAL submitted comments on the draft elements for a long-term strategic plan for the Aarhus Convention** on 30 April 2007. The plan, which was expected to be approved at the next Meeting of the Parties in June 2008, was prepared by the Convention's Ad Hoc Expert Group on Long-Term Strategic Planning. Stakeholders were invited to comment on the plan. HEAL asked for a more explicit reference to health information, which needs to be related to and integrated into environmental information to be consistent with the main goals of the Aarhus Convention.
- HEAL disseminated information on and responded to **EU institutions' consultations** thus promoting the access to information and public participation pillars of the Aarhus Convention.
- HEAL Executive Committee member attended on behalf of HEAL the **International ECOs Strategy meeting "Reinforcing the Aarhus Convention"** on 17-18 December 2007 in Vienna and wrote meeting report. HEAL **signed the Vienna Declaration** and widely disseminated it to membership.
- A joint Green 10 letter was sent to the President of the European Investment Bank (EIB) P. Maystadt on 8 February 2008 requesting that the EIB organise a participative review of the bank's transport lending policy starting with a stakeholder consultation in line with the spirit and letter of the Aarhus Convention on Access to information, public participation and access to justice translated into EC Regulation No 1367/2006.
- HEAL participated in and contributed to the European ECO Forum's Public Participation Working Group (run by the European Environment Bureau) and activities and disseminated information through **HEAL Public Participation virtual working group**.
- HEAL wrote articles for the HEAL website and newsletter on the status of the Aarhus Convention implementation, developments at the EU level, and other related processes such as the Environment for Europe process, and publicized the EU PRTR and other similar registers that could be used as a model by the EU institutions through its website and newsletter.

## 11. Network development

In 2007-2008, HEAL further expanded and developed its network of member organisations, and we managed to recruit seven new member organisations from different geographical regions. HEAL also succeeded in building capacity and engaging its members around environment and health EU policies. In particular, HEAL activities included:

- The **HEAL Annual General Assembly** and a **Policy Coordination Expert Meeting on Climate Change and Health** (in cooperation with the European Public Health Alliance) were organised on 2 October 2007 in Brussels. Around 30 member organisations were represented at the event. The business agenda included discussions on HEAL priorities for 2008 and long-term strategic goals, new membership approval, discharge of 2006-2007 annual accounts and approval of 2007-2008 provisional budget. Participants were

encouraged to take examples of their work (e.g. publications, brochures, postcards etc.) to the meeting and share them with other members. The annual general assembly was followed by a workshop on climate change and health (see the climate change section for more details). On the second day of the Annual General Meeting (3 October 2007), a **training session** was organised in order to build capacity and strengthen advocacy skills of member organisations at national level. The topics were: (1) Institutional set-up of the EU; (2) Overview of the EU legislative process and role of national lobbying for HEAL members; (3) Tools for advocacy at EU and national level – case study of the new EU pesticides policy. On the same day, HEAL members also made an organised visit to the Council of Ministers where a representative of the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU, Directorate-General I - Protection of the environment and consumers, health, foodstuffs, education/youth/culture/audiovisual affairs - Environment Unit, explained to them the way the Council functions and makes its deliberations. After that, HEAL members were accompanied by a representative of the NGO Corporate Europe Observatory on a walking tour in the EU quarter with explanations on the main EU “lobby” centres.

- On 13-14 February, HEAL organised a **Policy Coordination Expert Meeting on chemicals policy** and REACH implementation in Brussels in the framework on the Chemicals Health Monitor project. Ten participants (including three representatives from HEAL membership, three staff members and four other NGO experts) attended the meeting to discuss EU and international policy opportunities in 2008, and to brainstorm on planned or potential activities around chemicals and diseases for the coming year. One of the sessions focussed on coalition building and outreach strategy to the medical and public health community. Advocacy meetings with Members of the European Parliament were also organised as part of the event.
- **HEAL hosted and facilitated a meeting** by member organisation the International Society of Doctors for the Environment – ISDE Europe on 15 February 2007, and provided a presentation on EU affairs.
- HEAL provided regular **electronic information and policy opportunities** through members’ list serve and thematic virtual working groups on: chemicals policy, EU Environment and Health Action Plan, public participation and children’s environment & health. Two new thematic virtual working groups were set up during the reporting period on climate change and biomonitoring, open to members and other NGOs.
- HEAL constantly updated its website with articles on its main environment and health policy priorities and other related issues (see relevant sections for more details). The **HEAL website** aims to be an easily accessible “one-stop shop” for health and environment-related policy information from within the EU institutions as well as a cost-efficient, timely and easily adaptable platform to increase awareness, carry out advocacy and press campaigns, and reach a diverse audience of Internet visitors, including journalists. The HEAL website also includes a section “Secretariat and membership news” (<http://www.env-health.org/r/104>) providing visibility to HEAL members’ initiatives, as well as a Members’ only section for internal documents, staff reports from conferences and meetings and consultation purposes. **The HEAL website is officially linked to in the DG SANCO public health portal “Health EU”:** [http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/index_en.htm)
- HEAL published **9 issues of its monthly newsletter** reaching over 2000 subscribers including national and EU policy-makers, health professionals and NGOs in the EU and internationally.