



Information release:

CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH GOOD PRACTICE AWARD

Brussels, Monday 21 April 2008 - Climate change is already happening and poses a severe threat to public health. Addressing the challenge presented by climate change and our high carbon lifestyles requires local and regional action. That is why the **Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)** and the **EUropean REGional Health Authorities (EUREGHA)** network are jointly launching a Good Practice Award for local and regional projects that simultaneously promote human health and protect the climate.

The competition has two awards categories: **climate change mitigation** and **climate change adaptation**, aiming to showcase **health focused projects** where establishments have reduced their carbon footprint or are preparing themselves for the inevitable changes that climate change will bring.

Already, many unsung initiatives are making a difference on the ground. Take for example, the Comunitat Valenciana (Spain), which has developed a regional weather surveillance system that allows for more precise weather forecasting of temperature extremes potentially harmful to human health, and which provides 3-day forecasts of regional temperature.

Or, Addenbrooke Hospital's (UK) 'Access to Addenbrooke's' strategy, which, thanks to interest-free loans for pedal cycle or motorcycle/scooter purchase, a car-share scheme and discounted weekly bus tickets, has resulted in impressive shifts from car commuting to healthier and more sustainable modes of transport: bus use is now at 23% (from 12% in 1999) and cycling is up to 25% (from 21% in 1999).

Through this competition we hope to collect many other living, breathing examples of transferable climate change and health protection measures to enable successful projects to be applied across Europe.

If your region, health facility or university has any experience in the field of climate change and health that you would like to share, we warmly invite you to enter our good practice competition. Your contribution could help to empower other institutions to follow a low carbon future and better prepare for climate change.

All competition entries will be assessed by an independent panel of judges. Awards will be announced at the "**Climate Change and the Challenges for Public Health: Engaging the Regions**" Conference held at the Committee of the Regions in Brussels on the 24 June 2008. Winners will be invited to participate in the conference. Their travel and accommodation costs will be paid for by the organisers.

Competition entries will be posted on the good practice in climate change and health website.

Eligible participants include local and regional health, environment, energy and transport authorities, health care establishments, and academic institutions.

Competitions closing date: 15 May 2008

For more information see: <http://www.env-health.org/climatechangeawards>

Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), <http://www.env-health.org> is an international non-governmental organisation advocating environmental protection as a means to improving health and well-being. Member groups and organisations represent health, environment, women, health professionals and others. The group has a diverse membership of 50 groups (6 international organisations, 11 European networks and 24 national/local organizations) including non-governmental organisations, professional bodies representative of doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers, academic institutions and other not-for-profit organisations.