



Artsen
voor Milieu
VLAMM



Brussels, 8 March 2010

To: Members of the European Parliament Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI Committee)

Concerning: Proposals to amend the European Parliament draft report on the “Commission White Paper: ‘Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action’ (2009/2152 (INI)).”

Upcoming ENVI Vote on 16 March on Adapting to Climate Change:

Strengthen health protection and include health co-benefits in adaptation policy

Dear Member of the ENVI Committee,

We, the undersigned leading European health and medical organisations are writing about the upcoming ENVI Vote on the “Commission White Paper: ‘Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action’ (2009/2152 (INI)). We welcome that the ENVI draft report has its own chapter on ‘Health and social policies’, but would urge you to strengthen your draft report by voting for the amendments (Annex I below) that would take into consideration the range of climate-related health impacts, promote protection of public health, take into account health co-benefits, and recognise the important role of the health sector in adaptation.

Please support amendments: 9, 14, 76, 78, 81 and 171.

As you are aware, climate change will affect people, their economies and ecosystem in disproportionate ways. For example, those already ill, the poor and disadvantaged populations, children and the elderly would be most at risk. The health sector will need to be at the forefront responding to the effects of climate change, and developing adaptation measures which do not add further to the climate problem. Increased awareness and resources are needed to ensure this happens and provide support for the sector’s efforts in reducing its climate footprint as recently highlighted in the WHO/HCWH discussion paper: ‘Healthy Hospitals, Healthy Planet, Healthy People:

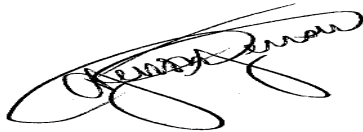
Addressing climate change in healthcare settings¹.

We are pleased to see amendments about the need to halt global warming at 2°C, and that current pledges do not go far enough in order to prevent even more drastic health impacts from climate change, such as increased deaths from respiratory and vector borne disease, for example. Science suggests that a reduction in greenhouse gases by at least 40% below 1990 levels by 2020 is the *minimum* required to keep global warming well below the dangerous 2°C level. Action at this level would significantly improve people's health, reduce Member States' rising healthcare costs, and protect our fragile ecosystems.

Finally, we would ask you to support amendment 78 on ensuring that adaptation measures that are promoted are also those that provide "health co-benefits". The benefits to health of tackling climate change can offset much of the costs of global action, as is outlined in the IPCC's 4th Assessment report, chapter 8 on human health². European studies have also clearly shown that stronger greenhouse gas emission reduction targets can protect health. For example, research commissioned by HEAL, CAN and WWF in 2008 has shown that a 30% target would result in estimated health benefits measured in monetary terms of up to 76 billion Euros per year from 2020 onwards.³

We look forward to working with you to ensure that health becomes a cornerstone of international and EU climate change mitigation and adaptation policy.

Sincerely,



Genon K. Jensen,
Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)
On behalf of:

Health Care Without Harm Europe (HCWH Europe)
European Respiratory Society (ERS)
Climate and Health Council (CHC)

¹ World Health Organization and Health Care Without Harm, April 2009. Healthy Hospitals, Healthy Planet, Healthy People: Addressing climate change in health care settings. Available at: http://www.who.int/globalchange/publications/healthcare_settings/en/index.html.

² IPCC Fourth Assessment Report – Chapter 8 – Human Health; <http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/wg2/ar4-wg2-chapter8.pdf>

³The co-benefits to health of a strong EU climate change policy, 2008, CAN Europe, Health and Environment Alliance, WWF http://www.env-health.org/IMG/pdf/Co-benefits_to_health_report_-september_2008.pdf
See also: recent study on health co-benefits: Lancet Series report on Health and Climate Change, 25 November 2009 <http://www.thelancet.com/series/health-and-climate-change>

International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE)
AerztInnen fuer eine gesunde Umwelt, AeGU (ISDE) Austria
The Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME)
Vlaamse Artsen voor Milieu & Maatschappij (VLAMM).

Annex I

Please support the following amendments in the Vote on 16 March 2010 in ENVI Committee

Amendment 9
Bas Eickhout, Michèle Rivasi

Motion for a resolution
Recital C a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

Ca. whereas the target of halting global warming at +2°C would still mean a warming scenario for Europe, marked by extreme regional climate changes, and whereas the current pledges notified to the UNFCCC would add up to warming of +3.5-4°C if implemented,

Amendment 14
Bas Eickhout, Michèle Rivasi

Motion for a resolution
Recital D a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

Da. whereas, according to the European Respiratory Society, for every Celsius degree increase in temperature over a given city-specific threshold, mortality amongst those with respiratory problems increases by 6%,

Amendment 76
Bas Eickhout, Michèle Rivasi

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 15

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

15. Welcomes the proposals of the Commission to develop guidelines and surveillance mechanisms on the health impact of climate change by 2011; underlines the increasing risk of propagation of vector-borne diseases;

15. Welcomes the proposals of the Commission to develop guidelines and surveillance mechanisms on the health impact of climate change by 2011; underlines the increasing risk of propagation of vector-borne diseases ***and the serious impacts on respiratory health;***

Amendment 78
Bas Eickhout, Michèle Rivasi

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 16

Motion for a resolution

16. Notes that the health impacts of climate change are likely to impact the hardest on the most deprived communities **and** the poorest populations; regards it as essential for adaptation measures to be considered in the context of health inequalities;

Amendment 81
Peter Liese

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 17 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment 171
Bill Newton Dunn

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 30

Motion for a resolution

30. Supports the proposal of the Commission to set up an impact and adaptation steering group; asks the Commission to ensure that this group includes representatives of Parliament as observers;

Amendment

16. Notes that the health impacts of climate change are likely to impact the hardest on the most deprived communities, the poorest populations **and the most vulnerable groups, such as children, the elderly and those who are already ill**; regards it as essential for adaptation measures to be considered in the context of health inequalities, **and for such measures to encourage action that promotes health co-benefits**;

Amendment

17a. Recognises the role the health sector plays in adaptation; calls on the EU to support action to reduce the sector's carbon footprint, and to ensure adequate financing for adaptation measures in the health sector;

Amendment

30. Supports the proposal of the Commission to set up an impact and adaptation steering group; asks the Commission to ensure that this group includes representatives of Parliament as observers; **calls on the Commission to ensure that the steering group pays particular attention to the most severe health impacts of climate change, such as increases in weather-related deaths and vector-borne disease**;