



Press release

Health groups call for 40% target on carbon emissions

Brussels, 1 February 2010 - Health Care Without Harm Europe (HCWHE) and Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) are calling on EU Heads of States to increase the European target on climate change.

They are seeking a 40% unconditional emissions reduction target by 2020 compared to 1990 levels. The reductions should be made through domestic action, which they say could bring substantial benefits in improving people's health and reducing healthcare costs.

The two groups put out a joint position statement after the Copenhagen talks in December 2009 urging the EU to take a stronger leadership role.¹ Now they are concerned that the EU and its 27 Member States will miss another opportunity to lead the fight against climate change and to protect health. This new request comes prior to the informal EU Council meeting on 11 February, where climate change is expected to be on the agenda.

By pledging a 40% emissions reduction target, the EU could re-claim its leadership role and help foster a breakthrough for a fair, ambitious and binding climate change agreement at the COP 16 in Mexico later this year², the groups say.

Under the Copenhagen Accord, industrialized countries were asked to register their formal emissions reduction pledges for 2020 with the UNFCCC Secretariat by 31 January 2010. The EU and its Member States have committed to an independent quantified economy-wide emissions reduction target of 20% by 2020, compared to 1990 levels, with a conditional increase to 30% "under the conditions set out by the European Council of December 2009"³.

HEAL and HCWHE consider this position to be inadequate.

"Climate change is already causing hundreds of additional deaths each day around the world, and higher temperatures and more frequent extreme weather events are exacerbating some of the major causes of diseases. A 40% domestic target, would significantly improve people's health in Europe, reduce rising healthcare costs and protect our fragile ecosystems," explained Dr Pendo Maro, Senior Climate and Policy Advisor, Health Care Without Harm Europe (HCWHE) and Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL).

The health sector is committed to a fair, ambitious and binding international climate change treaty that provides for public health, drastically reduces greenhouse gas emissions, promotes alternative, renewable energy and provides significant funding for developing countries to adapt and mitigate⁴.

¹ HEAL and HCWH Post Copenhagen Position Statement
http://www.noharm.org/europe/news_hcwh/2010/jan/hcwh2010-01-05.php

² The meeting is expected to take place November-December 2010.

³ 5794/10, Letter by the (Spanish) Presidency and the Commission to the UNFCCC Executive Secretary, 27 January 2010.

⁴ HEAL and HCWH Letter to Spanish Presidency concerning EU pledges to the UNFCCC for 31 January 2010. http://www.env-health.org/IMG/pdf/HEAL_and_HCWHE_letter_to_Spanish_Presidency_concerning_EU_UNFCCC_pledges_for_31_January_FINAL.pdf

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***The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)** aims to raise awareness of how environmental protection improves health. It brings together more than 60 organizations working at the European level. Website: www.env-health.org*

***Health Care Without Harm** is a global network of more than 470 organizations in 52 countries working to transform the health care sector so it is no longer a source of harm to people and the environment.*

