



## PRESS STATEMENT

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### **Cancer: MEPs urge prevention related to environmental causes**

Environment and health groups have welcomed a vote by the European Parliament today that will mean more research into cancer prevention as a result of exposure to chemicals in our everyday environment.

In a resolution drafted by Slovene MEP Alojz Peterle (EPP) and adopted today by show of hands, MEPs welcome the Commission proposal to set up a European Partnership for Action Against Cancer for the period 2009-2013 to support the Member States' efforts to tackle cancer.

All Member States are urged to set up integrated cancer plans, to help achieve the Partnership's long-term aim of reducing cancer by 15% by 2020. MEPs believe particular efforts should be directed towards the new Member States.

MEPs called for further action to promote a healthy lifestyle and reduce environmental and workplace risk factors as well as demanding increased EU investment in information and screening campaigns.

"We are delighted with the strong focus on cancer prevention, and particularly the recognition that environmental factors, including toxic chemicals, are playing a role in rising rates of some cancers," says Dr Lisette Van Vliet, HEAL, Toxics Policy Advisor at the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL).

She adds: "Today the entire European Parliament has underlined the need to pay attention to the growing body of science that shows chemical pollution in our environment and work settings contributes to Europe's high rates of cancer."

Prevention is the most cost-effective response, says the resolution, as one third of cancers are preventable. More resources should go into prevention, healthy lifestyles should be encouraged, and "information campaigns on cancer screening" should be "directed at the general public and all healthcare providers".

With more than 3 million new cases and 1.7 million deaths each year, cancer is the second biggest cause of death in Europe. The European Parliament wants EU governments and institutions to step up the fight against this disease.

The European Partnership for Action Against Cancer calls for more research into prevention, including the effects of harmful chemicals and environmental pollutants, nutrition, lifestyle and genetic factors.

The links between cancer and risk factors such as tobacco, alcohol and pharmaceutical and synthetic hormones should be investigated, says Parliament.

The MEPs also argue that cancer medicines, including treatments for rare and less common cancers, should be uniformly available to all patients who need them, and inequalities of access to cancer treatment and care must be reduced, including the new 'targeted' cancer drugs recently put on the market.

Contact:

Dr Lisette Van Vliet, Toxics Policy Advisor, Health and Environment Alliance, Tel. +32 2 234 3645.  
Email: [lisette@env-health.org](mailto:lisette@env-health.org) +32 2 484 614 528

Diana Smith, Communications, Health and Environment Alliance, E-mail: [Diana@env-health.or](mailto:Diana@env-health.or) Tel: +33 1 55 25 25 84

Chemical Health Monitor is an initiative of the Health and Environment Alliance ([www.env-health.org](http://www.env-health.org)).  
The project's website is in development at [www.chemicalshealthmonitor.org](http://www.chemicalshealthmonitor.org)

*The Health and Environment Alliance aims to raise awareness of how environmental protection improves health. It achieves this by creating opportunities for better representation of citizens' and health experts' perspectives in the environment and health-related European policy-making. Our membership includes a diverse network of more than 50 citizens', patients', women's, health professionals' and environmental organisations across Europe and has a strong track record in increasing public and expert engagement in both EU debates and the decision-making process.*