



HEAL reaction

Rankings of European cities' actions for cleaner air

Brussels, 31 March 2015 – The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) welcomes the second edition of the city ranking on air quality activities by the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and Friends of the Earth Germany (BUND).

The goal of this “Sootfree Cities” ranking is to evaluate which of the major cities in Europe are more ambitious – and which are less - when it comes to tackling air pollution **through transport policy measures**. (1) It provides a regular and important opportunity to bring public attention to the health and other benefits of cleaner air in Europe, according to Anne Stauffer, Deputy Director, Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL).

Ms Stauffer says: *“When city air quality improves, children’s health benefits quickly and significantly. This is particularly true for respiratory problems. A Europe-wide research project showed that living near a busy road could be responsible for 15 percent of asthma in children.”*

Ninety per cent of Europeans living in cities are exposed to levels of air pollution deemed dangerous to human health. City administrations have a responsibility to clean up the air citizens breathe and they have a raft of measures they can take. Where cities cannot control the source of the pollution, because emission levels are set at national or EU level or the pollution was emitted outside the city’s limits, cities need action at national or EU level to help them. This is why it is so important that Members of the European Parliament and EU Member States agree on an ambitious revised Directive on National Emission Ceilings (NEC), to further reduce transboundary pollution. (2)

Source of information in the quote: HEAL Information Release on outcome of EU-funded APHEKOM project research, 4 March 2011, **Research quantifies increased life and wealth from cleaner air**, <http://www.env-health.org/resources/press-releases/article/research-quantifies-increased-life>

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Notes:

(1) The city ranking evaluates the air quality activities of 23 European cities in 16 countries <http://www.sootfreecities.eu/>

(2) HEAL position on the revision of the National Emissions Ceilings Directive: http://env-health.org/IMG/pdf/nec_paper_final.pdf

The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) is a leading European not-for-profit organisation addressing how the environment affects health in the European Union (EU). With the support of more than 70 member organisations, HEAL brings independent expertise and evidence from the health community to different decision-making processes. Our broad alliance represents health professionals, not-for-profit health insurers, doctors, nurses, cancer and asthma groups, citizens, women’s groups, youth groups, environmental NGOs, scientists and public health research institutes. Members include international and Europe-wide organisations as well as national and local groups. Website: www.env-health.org. Follow HEAL on [Facebook](#) and Twitter [@HealthandEnv](#) [@EDCFree](#) and [@CHM_HEAL](#)