

Climate and energy

Mobilising health groups to share evidence that phasing out fossil fuels can prevent climate change impacts and promote health.

In 2012, HEAL's climate and energy work expanded to include advocacy and research on the health impacts of coal power generation and shale gas exploitation. We continued to build the evidence and support from the health constituency at country level, with targeted work in Germany, Poland and Romania.

EU Presidency puts health on the climate agenda

HEAL took advantage of the Danish EU Presidency conference on climate and health to meet with Danish health minister Astrid Krag and to present materials at a stand to highlight the health benefits of climate action (shown below).



Evidence of health benefits mobilises for higher EU climate targets

HEAL reports and briefings on the health benefits of reducing greenhouse emissions have continued to raise policy and public awareness of the potential health savings and prevention from higher EU climate targets.



A briefing on the Commission's 2012 assessment on moving beyond 20% EU climate goal highlights why this analysis underestimates health benefits.

Promoting health champions to World Health Organization

During the WHO Europe conference on climate change and health entitled "Lessons learnt in the European Region", HEAL shared compelling resources and testimonies from climate and health champions across Europe and beyond. HEAL is a member of the WHO European Working Group on climate change and its impact on health (HIC).

Building the global climate and health movement

Co-initiator of Doha Declaration and Wellbeing

At the international level, HEAL was instrumental in promoting a climate and health statement at the UN Doha climate talks working as a partner in the Global Climate and Health Alliance. The Doha declaration on Climate, Health and Well-being was signed by 80 organisations and 1,200 individuals.

It sets out what needs to be done and how the health community can help solve what WHO has called the

greatest public health threat of the 21st century. HEAL member groups played a key role in gaining signatories.

The Doha declaration highlights how reductions in emissions can deliver many benefits to health worldwide:

"Reducing fossil fuel consumption simultaneously improves air quality and improves public health. Shifting to cleaner, safer, low carbon energy systems will save millions of lives each year."

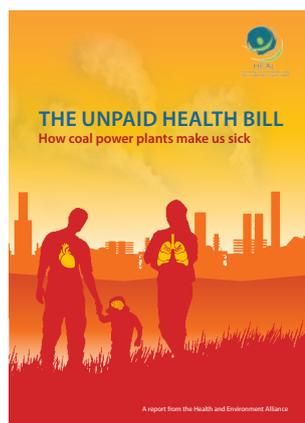
The Doha declaration will be used as an advocacy and organising tool within health and medical organisations at national, regional and global level to encourage more urgent and ambitious action on climate change.



Danish health minister Astrid Krag gave examples why tackling climate change will benefit our health.



Initiating a debate on coal and health in Europe



As part of its coal and health education and advocacy campaign to phase out coal power generation by 2050 in Europe, HEAL launched a landmark report in March 2013.

The report was developed by health, medical and economic experts from within the HEAL network, and the results released in six languages.

HEAL's report is the first ever to quantify the health impacts caused by coal power generation in Europe. This health bill reaches up to €42.8 billion in the EU every year.

The report also features testimonies from leading health advocates, medical experts and policy makers

on why they are concerned about coal.

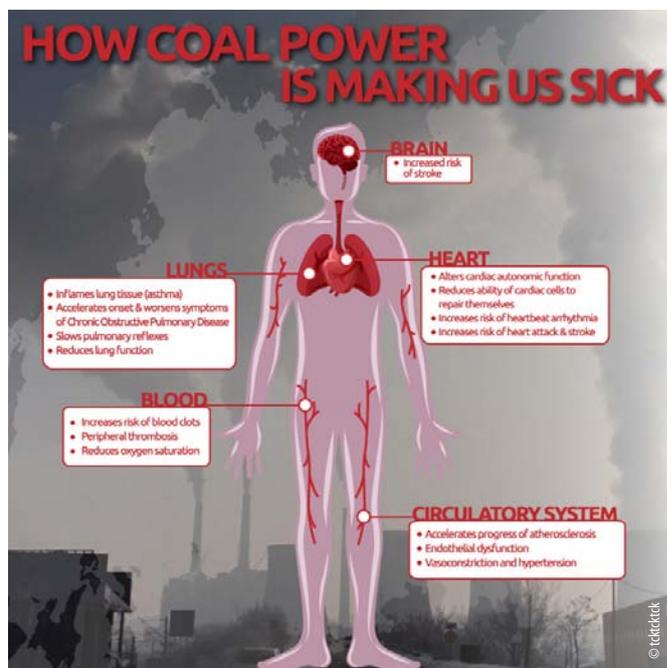
"The external costs to health from coal power generation are bigger than for any other energy source. The costs of reducing greenhouse gases are partially paid back because of lower health costs."



Professor Paul Wilkinson, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)

The report has been quoted by national politicians and articles about the report have appeared in the UK, France, Italy, Croatia, Germany, Romania, Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, USA, Cyprus, Greece, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, Cambodia, China, India, and South Korea.

The info-graphic (top right) appeared in an article about the HEAL report published in the Huffington Post entitled "Coal Kills, Time to kill Coal".



Shale gas: a dangerous experiment

As the European Parliament prepared a report on hydrofracturing, or fracking, of shale for natural gas, HEAL collaborated with others in an NGO policy statement

calling on EU member states to suspend existing fracking projects and ban new ones. HEAL also provides a platform for exchange for grassroots and national groups, for science and policy development sharing.



Shale drilling pad in Bulgaria.

MEDIA COVERAGE

Coal-fired power plants making Europeans sick: report, AFP, March 2013

Coal-fired plants cause huge health bill in Europe, Deutsche Welle, March 2013

Health groups call for phase out of coal-fired plants, British Medical Journal, March 2013



"Everybody is exposed to coal pollution as it is part of the pollution cocktail that we breathe. Pollutants released from the smoke stacks can travel over distances of several hundred kilometres."

Julia Huscher, Coal and Health Officer, HEAL was featured in the Tcktcktck, March 2013.