



# ACTIVITY REPORT 2015

Promoting public health through a healthy environment in Europe and beyond



**HEAL**

Promoting environmental policy that contributes to good health

# ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS



## A watchdog for health protection against toxic chemicals

Four HEAL initiatives on chemicals were widely recognised as useful by the European health and environment community and covered in EU policy and national media.

1. **HEAL's support, participation and swift reaction when the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled that the EU Commission had acted illegally by initiating an impact assessment instead of bringing forward criteria for identifying endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) helped raise public awareness across Europe, and political support on the Commission to release the EDC criteria after a huge delay.** Strong media coverage leading up, during and after the ruling by HEAL and EDC-Free Europe through briefings, letters and media work are widely considered to have contributed to the Health Commissioner's announcement that the criteria would be presented before the summer of 2016.
2. **HEAL's worked tirelessly to highlight the health concerns to halt the re-authorisation of glyphosate, the most widely used herbicide in Europe and globally.** Following the World Health Organization's (WHO) International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classification of glyphosate as a probable carcinogen, pressure from health and environmental groups including HEAL in the form of petitions, advocacy, media work and briefings have contributed evidence and kept up pressure on the Commission to ban glyphosate.
3. **HEAL has brought public and parliamentary attention to concerns related to EDCs and other chemicals in an overlooked area - food packaging materials.** Advocacy work, presentations, a policy briefing and media work have contributed to a better understanding and knowledge of the health impacts of chemicals in food contact materials, and contributed to an own-initiative EP highlighting the gaps in regulating toxics in food packing.
4. **HEAL's work in relation to current threats to health protective legislation related to chemicals in Europe.** These came about primarily with the emergence of the so-called Commission "Better Regulation" agenda and in relation to the US-EU transatlantic trade and investment partnership (TTIP) talks. HEAL has taken the message to Members of the European Parliament (MEP), the EU Commission and other policy makers; also to the European office of the WHO; HEAL member AIM, a global organisation of independent health insurers, and the Green 10.

**Steady media coverage** has been achieved in top European press including Politico, ENDS Europe and Chemical Watch during the year. Coverage of EDCs has been strong in national media such as Le Monde, the BBC and the Guardian. HEAL featured in at least five TV and radio documentaries broadcast in Belgium France, Germany, and the Netherlands.

## Paris climate conference COP21: a leader uniting a strong European health community



Without any doubt, HEAL helped achieve the high profile that health aspects of climate change achieved at the UNFCCC COP21 climate conference in Paris in December 2015 which contributed to the ambitious outcome of the negotiations.

A HEAL overview of activities, successes and collaborative work with WHO and other global health partners is available [here](#).

Prior to COP21, HEAL engaged with the health and medical community in a series of webinars and conferences. In Paris, HEAL hosted a successful event with the French medical association (Conseil National de l'Ordre des Médecins - CNOM), the World Medical Association (WMA) and the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA). *"Climate change is above all a question of public health"* was a key message, especially used in extensive media coverage in France (Le Monde) and reached EU policy makers via Euractiv. The meeting demonstrated that climate action offered a major public health opportunity – and presented examples of the health community's expertise and involvement on climate change.

HEAL also co-hosted the [Climate and Health Summit with the Global Climate and Health Alliance](#) which brought together over 300 health and medical participants to call for an ambitious Paris outcome and issue a declaration with an unprecedented number of health signatories. HEAL's high-level official meeting during the second week was hosted by Prince Albert of Monaco and addressed by WHO Europe, bringing together about 200 COP21 delegates, UN representatives and leading scientists, and HEAL participated in an official [COP press conference](#) hosted by WHO.



### **"Healthy energy" – a concept that links health, environment and energy sectors**

This year, HEAL has used a new approach to support the European medical and health community in advocacy for both cleaner air as a crucial issue in health prevention and for the public health opportunity that climate mitigation offers.

"Healthy energy" allows health sector experts and groups to relate disease resulting from poor air quality to its solution, namely the phasing out of coal and fossil fuels. It provides the context for sharing EU and WHO figures on health impacts of air pollution and for our own research findings on health costs from coal to show the public health benefits of phasing out coal. As a result, EU Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovic "talked health" citing HEAL's EU figures on coal health costs in climate discussions.

The "healthy energy" framework was used at COP21, in letters to the G20 in Turkey and in personal discussion with Commission representatives, and MEPs. When HEAL launched new figures in a report, it was able to share them with cabinet advisors to the Bosnian president of Europe's Energy Community. The report prompted 45 news items in European media, including prime-time TV in the region, and initiated a public debate on a healthy energy future particularly in Serbia, with a reaction of the Energy Minister (took place under the new work programme 2016).

In Germany, Poland and the UK, HEAL continued to increase the engagement of health and medical experts as well as the public. For example, when the Lancet Commission on health and climate was launched, HEAL's findings appeared in The Times (UK) and on national public radio in Germany. As a result, 50 German health organisations and individuals signed on to a call to the German health minister. In Poland, the HEAL team was invited for direct contact with the EU Environment Commissioner and sent letters to the new government leaders in Poland after the election. Evidence provided for court cases on health impacts have resulted in the halting of the building of three new power plants. Exceptional media coverage has been achieved, including prime-time television. Findings on health costs from coal in Turkey were also published adding to HEAL series covering the EU, Poland, Germany, Romania, and the UK.



## AIR QUALITY, ENERGY AND HEALTH

### Activities

#### **Advocacy with EU institutions and Poland to strengthen the draft National Emissions Ceilings (NEC) Directive**

In 2015, HEAL's key policy priority with the EU institutions was the draft NEC Directive. HEAL's advocacy built on the successful rallying of health, medical, environmental and civil society groups to prevent the withdrawal of the NEC in December 2014. Advocacy work with the EP started in March/April 2015 when HEAL sent [2 letters](#) ahead of an ENVI Committee discussion on the draft report. MEPs were urged to include five priorities in their NEC position: significantly stricter emission reduction commitments for 2025 and 2030; stricter emission reduction commitments for 2020; legally binding emission reduction commitments for all pollutants for 2025; legally binding emission reduction commitments for mercury, methane; and rejection of flexibilities.

Advocacy efforts also included 1) highlighting the results of the 2015 ranking of European cities on air quality, 2) a HEAL/EEB briefing on [air quality & mercury pollution](#) for MEPs to underline the demand for mercury emission standards in NEC, 3) A HEAL Poland infographic and letter sent to Environment Minister Grabowski urging him for support of the NEC, 4) HEAL recommendations on the EP vote on Directive on Medium Combustion Plants (available upon request).

Ahead of the key first reading vote in the EP ENVI committee in July, HEAL engaged and led input of the public health community which culminated into a [statement](#) of over 60 health, environmental and animal welfare organisations shared with ENVI MEPs on 14 July. A letter was sent to Croatian and Bulgarian ENVI MEPs and a HEAL presentation on the demands of the health community was given on a panel for the [EP's Interest Group on Allergy and Asthma](#) on 1 July. HEAL's communications efforts included coordinating a Twitter storm together with a [press release](#), (EN, PL) stressing that the result of the vote was welcome news for all those suffering from air



pollution in Europe. As a result of advocacy efforts, MEPs supported the introduction of an emissions cap for mercury, which will tackle particularly mercury pollution from coal plants. Key support came from MEP Peter Liese (EPP).

October 2015 saw HEAL and health partners active for the upcoming plenary vote of the EP on the draft NEC Directive. HEAL led input by the public health community and initiated social media activities including a thunderclap and twitter storm (reached almost 400,000 people, in addition to all MEPs). In addition, a [letter](#) was sent together with partners of the Clean Air Coalition to all MEPs. HEAL in Poland also sent a letter to all Polish MEPs on 19 October including a [briefing](#) on the NEC. Following the vote on 28 October, HEAL issued a [press release](#) welcoming that MEPs stood up for citizens health in their resolution, as they supported legally binding targets set for 2025, even though a new emissions cap for mercury was not included. This support has to be considered against fierce lobbying by the agricultural sector, pushing for great exemptions and unambitious emission reductions.

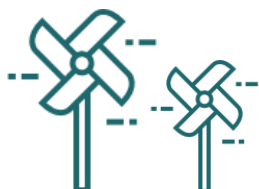
While voting in the EP was positive, deliberations with EU member states were less successful, where a majority of countries were opposed to a higher ambition level. HEAL rallied signatories from the health side to issue [public health recommendations](#) for a strong NEC, signed by 17 leading public health organisations in Europe. The call was published days before Ministers adopted their position in December. Demands were already presented at a special meeting with the Luxembourg Minister Carol Dieschbourg and the Green10 in June 2015.

Advocacy activities included dedicated work to change the Polish government's position. HEAL in Poland published a press release on the Polish Environment Ministers' position ahead of EU Council meeting (16.10); a [Briefing](#) on how the NEC directive relates to Poland (19.10), a joint NGO postcards sent to Polish MEPs (22.10), an [Open call to Polish MEPs](#) for clean air (23.10); and an ad in Gazeta Wyborcza together with European Respiratory Society (24.10).

The outcome of the Council deliberations was unfortunately a weakening of the EU Commission proposal, with introductions on flexibility and a weaker ambition level overall. Trilogue negotiations on the NEC between the EP, the Council and the Commission were started under the Dutch EU Presidency in February 2016. HEAL was a key organisation to gather signatories for an [open letter of 76 non-profit organisations](#) (more than 10 HEAL members endorsed it) sent to the Dutch EU Presidency, European Parliament negotiators and the Commission on 23 February. The letter puts forward five priorities for the negotiations - a 52 percent health improvement by 2030; legally binding targets for 2025; rejection of unnecessary flexibilities; keeping of methane emission reduction commitments, and addressing mercury emissions; access to information and to courts. A final assessment of how well our advocacy work fared will be provided with the LIFE+ report for 2016.

### **Additional activity: Dieselgate scandal**

HEAL followed and contributed to advocacy activities on the scandal on fraud emissions tests in VW diesel vehicles, exposed in the United States. In November HEAL sent a [joint letter to EU President Donald Tusk](#), EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and EP President Martin Schulz, underlining



that the scandal was symptomatic of a better regulation agenda in favour of cutting compliance costs and replaced the public regulator with corporate co- and self-regulation. The scandal requires a fundamental re-think of the way in which EU and national institutions legislate and enforce environmental, consumer and health standards. The EU institutions was urged for four immediate actions including an EU investigation, the establishment of an EU oversight for type approval for motor vehicles, a strengthening of enforcement of environmental legislation and suspension of fraudulent companies from the EU lobby register.

In winter 2015 HEAL joined Transport and Environment (T&E), Eurocities and others for advocacy work with the European Parliament, as MEPs were debating whether or not to accept new real world driving emissions tests for diesel cars. HEAL called to reject these new standards as they would allow for an increase in diesel emissions and set a negative precedent for other areas of air quality. A [letter](#) was sent in December outlining concerns. In January, HEAL continued its advocacy in view of an upcoming decision on whether or not to allow relaxed emission standards for air pollutants for cars. In a [letter](#) by several organisations including HEAL, MEPs were asked to reject the implementing measure for the RDE test. When the vote was delayed to February, HEAL urged members to contact their national MEPs in support of a rejection. Social media activities took place with a last push to target S&D MEPs ahead of a vote. A letter was sent in February to all MEPs highlighting HEAL's concerns and urging them to reject the RDE measure.

## **Poland: Engaging Policy-makers and the public on cleaner air**

Poland is one of the countries with the worst air quality in Europe, with six out of ten most polluted cities. In 2015 HEAL continued to highlight the contribution of coal-power generation to air pollution, as 85 percent of the country's electricity is produced from coal power, and many residents continue to rely on coal burning for heating their homes.

One of HEAL's most successful activities was a [report](#) launched in October 2015 on the health costs of the future coal plant Leczna from air pollution. The report presented a new calculation on the future air pollution health costs in the vicinity of Leczna, as well as for Poland; and a new calculation on public financing for coal, following the methodology of the IMF. It showed that Leczna would lead to health costs of up to 2.8 million EUR in the Lublin region, and for the whole of Poland costs of up to 24.05 million EUR. The report was launched at a press conference on [20 October at the Polish Press agency](#) and was presented to local authorities of the Lublin region. Several testimonies from medical professionals and a concerned mother were included. HEAL published a briefing in [English](#) and [French](#) on the Leczna analysis, widely shared by GCCA, as the French energy company ENGIE was one of the main investors. In November, it was confirmed that [ENGIE had abandoned its plans for Leczna](#), which can be seen as a direct result of HEAL's intervention, together with other Polish NGOs.



Spirometry testing during a HEAL [event in the centre of Katowice as part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Polish Spirometry Days](#) was another success. The event raised awareness of citizens of air quality in Poland, and how coal power contributes to this. Katowice in Silesia is one of the most polluted cities in Poland.

While there were no political developments on the application of the Transitional National Action Plans (TNP) in Poland, 2015 saw successful outcomes regarding the prevention of the building of three new coal power plants. These were facilitated by the HEAL's health evidence provided for public consultations or lawsuits: first, the above mentioned decision to abandon the future Leczna plant in Nov 2015; second, the [revoking of the construction permit](#) for the future Polnoc power plant in January 2016 by the province of Pommerania. In its decision, the court cited HEAL's evidence on the health costs as one of the reasons to revoke the permit; third the investor's decision to put the [future Cieczott plant in hold](#), as a response to the overturning of the environmental permit in April 2015 – again HEAL had provided a health cost assessment for this project in a public consultation.

***HEAL carried out advocacy on the following policy files of relevance for air quality in Poland:***

- Spring 2015: HEAL was in regular contact with leading Polish health figures as the government deliberated a new Public Health Bill. Comments were [submitted](#) for a public consultation.
- National Air protection programme: HEAL was the only Polish NGO invited to participate in the environment ministers launch of the National Air Protection Programme. HEAL pointed out that the proposals were insufficient to improve air quality in a [press release](#), and participated in a Greenpeace press conference. HEAL submitted comments on the draft programme and presented health demands in a meeting with DG Environment on 22 April.
- HEAL attended a meeting with [EU Environment Commissioner Vella on Polish and EU air quality legislation](#), where the Commission was warned to be watchful if the Polish government took ambitious measures for cleaner air, in view of an infringement case by the EU. Prior to and in the meeting, HEAL carried out a Twitter action to the Commissioner and the Polish environment minister, highlighting the air quality situation in Poland, the health impacts and urging Commissioner Vella to push the government for clean air measures.

**Advocacy activities with the new Polish government**

Prior and after elections in Poland in autumn 2015, when the right wing Law&Justice party gain the majority of seats, HEAL targeted its activities at the political parties and new ministers. In summer 2015, HEAL sent letters to all political parties underlining the health impacts of air pollution and urged them to take it up as an issue. HEAL invited candidates of the Silensia region to a Spirometry event. In December 2015, HEAL sent letters to new ministers (environment, social policy, energy and healthy) to highlight the air quality threat in Poland as well as a joint letter of Polish environmental health specialists on most pressing issues in environmental health, to Ministry of Health.

## Increased impact of communication activities including social media

HEAL in Poland has continued to have a high number of articles on air quality, energy and health in the Polish media and good access to key Polish journalists, due to continued HEAL outreach. Autumn saw the most successful single media action of HEAL so far. On 24 November HEAL in Poland organised a [webinar for journalists](#) on a recent smog episode in Poland - over 10 key journalists participated. Prior to this, HEAL starred on [Polish breakfast TV in June](#) and then on the Polish [popular news channel Polsat TV](#), which has 2 million viewers on average. In total, 2015 saw 235 articles in media coverage including features on leading Polish TV channels. Dedicated publications helped to increase the impact with the public, policy-makers and health groups. In May HEAL published [a brochure](#) for patients on the health threats of air pollution.

HEAL in Poland has a strong social media presence and uses Facebook and Twitter to educate and engage on air quality, energy and health. On average 1 tweet and 1 FB post is sent a day, yet October and November 2015 were busier months with advocacy on the NEC, webinars and the Leczna report. In order to increase its social media impact, HEAL published a series of 21 infographics in autumn 2015 and spring 2016, explaining the problem of smog and air pollution and the impacts on health.

## Engagement with health and medical groups, and collaboration with environmental NGOs

Participating in relevant conferences was a core element of the 2015 strategy. Presentations were given in 15 events in total by 14 March 2016. HEAL also regularly participated in exchanges with other civil society groups on the climate and energy situation in Poland. Collaboration with environment and local groups in Poland increased - HEAL became a member of the Zakopane 2020 – [Zakopane without smog](#) campaign, and also the [Take a breath campaign](#). HEAL also became a member of the [More Than Energy campaign](#), a nation-wide coalition in Poland, bringing together local governments, institutions, NGOs and individuals wishing to improve energy efficiency and increase renewable energy sources.

## Western Balkans (south east Europe): Pushing for cleaner energy to keep EU air standards

HEAL's focus on the Western Balkans countries owes to the fact that air quality there is particularly poor and that emissions from these countries cross borders, harming people's health and causing health costs. Working towards the 2030 goal of reaching good air quality means to ensure that it is also good in EU accession and neighbouring countries – coal power should be tackled in particular. The fact that air pollution from coal power generation causes significant health costs in EU and European countries is a key finding of HEAL's report on [The Unpaid Health Bill – how coal power plants in the Western Balkans make us sick](#) launched in March 2016. The report provides the first-ever data of the public health costs of polluted air from existing coal-fired power plants in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia and Kosovo and estimates that coal power costs Europe up to 8.5 billion EUR a year. Calculations on the health costs of future coal plants are also provided.





The report consists of: Technical report by Dr. Mike Holland (in EN, SER); EU report on the Unpaid Health Bill (in EN, SER); factsheet on Serbia (in EN, SER); on Bosnia and Herzegovina (in EN, BOS); on Macedonia (in EN, MAC); on Montenegro (in EN, MON); and Kosovo (in EN, ALB). A [video](#) explaining the methodology by Dr. Mike Holland is also available (EN with Bosnian subtitles) together with testimonies and quotes from health and medical experts of the Western Balkans countries.

The report was launched with a press conference and press release in Sarajevo, Bosnia, organised with SEE ChangeNetwork and brought together about 20 journalists. A [press release](#) was published in Bosnian and English. A special report preview was given to DG Environment in a meeting on 10 March.

By working with a consultant, HEAL gained successful media coverage with 45 news features in Western Balkans media (TV, print, radio), including two features in Voice of America, an article in Blic, Serbia's leading newspaper and a TV feature on Serbia's prime time TV. The report also featured in 5 EU news items, including Politico (more coverage in 2016 work programme). HEAL shared the report findings on social media and by email with members of the EP's delegation on Montenegro, Serbia, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

### ***The report builds on advocacy activities that HEAL carried out throughout 2015:***

In June at a press conference in Serbia, HEAL together with the Serbian ministry of health launched a statement ([EN](#) and [Serbian](#)) saying that air pollution from coal plants in Serbia is causing unnecessary and expensive lung and heart problems in Serbia and Europe. The State Secretary of Serbia, Prof. Dr Berislav Vekic called for the inclusion of health concerns and protection when developing energy policies. Prof. Marija Jevtic, who works together with HEAL in Serbia brought the statement and the evidence to a conference on 5 June in Belgrade. Here is a press release in [EN](#) and [Serbian](#).

On World Environment Day, 5 June, HEAL provided a [quote for a press release](#) from the SEE Change Network from South East Europe, calling on the governments of the region to act promptly and put forward ambitious and fair climate commitments. HEAL commented on the recently adopted WHO resolution on air quality, highlighting that by going for ambitious national GHG reductions, Balkans leaders had a unique opportunity to improve air quality and boost the health of their citizens.

When EU Vice-President Maros Sefcovic visited Serbia, HEAL took the opportunity to urge him to talk health in his climate talks with Serbian decision-makers, with a successful outcome. HEAL sent Sefcovic [a letter](#) showcasing that Serbia still heavily relies on coal power for energy production and plans to increase its capacity. Coal plants are a major contributor to carbon emission and air pollution. HEAL underlined demands in a [special blog in Euractiv](#). During the meetings, Sefcovic stressed that public health was the top of "threats and implications" of climate change, and he mentioned HEAL in a tweet as well as a blog. Yet, it was disappointing to see that the Serbian nationally intended contribution to tackling GHG emissions was way too low to reap significant health benefits. At the end of June, HEAL sent a letter to members of the EP's delegation for Serbia on the health benefits of greater climate ambition mitigation in Serbia (available upon request).

Other successes include strengthening ties between the Serbian Ministry of Health and Energy, where HEAL organised a high level meeting on health and energy. HEAL gave an [interview](#) for the Open School Belgrade, highlighting public health threats from coal and Serbia's climate ambition.

## Highlighting the threat to children's health from mercury from coal power generation

Autumn 2015 saw HEAL trying out a new angle to prevent coal power generation in the Western Balkans - the health effects from mercury pollution. On 20 October, HEAL launched a briefing on "[Stopping the child brain drain – the emerging public health threat from increasing mercury exposure in the Western Balkans](#)". The [Serbian version](#) was launched at an [expert workshop in Belgrade/Serbia](#), supported by the Ministry of Health at high level. Dr. Vesna Knjeginjic, the assistant minister for public health and health care programs of Serbia stated: "Reducing the levels of mercury in the environment leads to a decreased risk for our health, and particularly protects children who are most vulnerable to its effects. It is important to develop and implement mechanisms to better control pollution, and to ensure the greatest possible reductions of mercury emissions." This quote was used in a joint [press release](#) with the Ministry of Health that was shared with Serbian media outlets. The roundtable in Belgrade, co-organised with the Serbian ministry of health, brought together 6 experts and 4 journalists. Discussions focused on the sources of mercury

emissions and the role of health professionals in reducing mercury exposure. HEAL presented the briefing to the meeting and invited experts to consider mercury emissions from coal power plants more closely.

These activities were further honed with a [webinar for health and environmental groups](#) from Serbia, organised by HEAL. The webinar brought together 13 participants to hear Džejna Milaković-Ramadani, Ministry of Health, Republic of Srpska; Mihail Kocubovski, Member of the Minamata Convention expert group on Mercury, and Public Health Institute Macedonia; and Bjanka Čuturilo, NGO CEKOR, Srbija present their views. The recording of the webinar in Serbian is available on [Youtube](#).

Last but not least, HEAL monitored air quality developments in Bulgaria, as one of the countries with the worst air pollution in Europe. In April 2015, HEAL gave a quote to a journalist from the French L'Édition du Soir. Then in the summer, a letter was sent to Bulgarian ENVI MEPs regarding the major opportunity for air quality in their country with a strong NEC – ahead of a key ENVI vote.

## Results

The outcome of activities are a mixed picture. On one hand, due to HEAL's outreach and engagement activities, an unprecedented number of health groups carried out advocacy work on the **NEC Directive**. Traditionally, health and medical groups were more engaged on the EU's Ambient Air Quality Directive, so this shift to a policy file that focuses on emissions and is more technical is positive. Due to this large "health backing" feeding into the coalition of environmental and climate NGOs, the **EU Commission proposal in the first reading in the EP was improved**. HEAL's strong contact with the EPP's Environment Committee (ENVI) coordinator MEP Dr. Peter Liese, as well as dedicated social media activities helped to secure a positive outcome. At least in the European Parliament, HEAL reached its objective defined for NEC. On the other hand, convincing EU member states on the need for a more ambitious NEC and air quality measures was more challenging. Despite advocacy with the Luxembourg EU Presidency and key member states, HEAL and others could not prevent a weakening of the draft proposal, particularly regarding the insertion of additional flexibility.

Despite targeted advocacy and social media with Polish decision-makers, the country's position remains one of the most opposing ones. Yet, this goes back to forces beyond HEAL's control, as the new government is very much pro-coal and against EU measures.

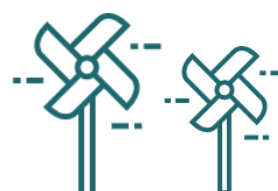
In 2015, HEAL was able to take up an **additional advocacy activity with the dieselgate scandal**, which meant that a transport issue was covered. Feedback was received from MEP that HEAL's advocacy was needed, even though in the end the EPP and S&D members voted to allow a weakening of standards.

Concerning HEAL's overall activities to **improve air quality in Poland** there have been some positive developments in 2015. The provision of health economic evidence by HEAL led to the prevention of the building of 3 new coal-fired power plants (overturning of permits or shelving by investors), which will help to improve or at least not worsen air quality. HEAL's internal target of halting the building of one plant was well surpassed with these developments. With the report on the future coal plant Leczna and Polish subsidies for coal, HEAL managed to broaden and strengthen the health economic arguments which can then be used by other environmental or health groups or the public. 2015 was another record year for media coverage in Poland, meaning that HEAL was able to initiate public debates on air quality and what a healthy energy future should look like. HEAL's calculation of the health impacts of a smog episode in Southern Poland in November, presented in a dedicated webinar to journalists, led to a record number of features in the media. This was honed by media appearances on Polish breakfast TV, reaching millions of Polish citizens and increased update and sharing of HEAL's messages on social media, meaning that we are able to reach more citizens than ever before. This helps to build

public support and pressure for further local or national air quality measures. We were also successful to relay our advocacy demands on cleaner air with decision-makers, regarding for example the National Air Program or the Public Health Bill. Yet, accessing and reaching the new government has become much more challenging.

Developments were also positive concerning **air quality in the Western Balkans region**. First, because of HEAL's advocacy, Vice-President Sefkovic "talked health" with decision-makers in Serbia in the summer of 2015, showing that air quality and healthy energy are of key concern for the EU when it comes to the accession of EU member states. New evidence in "The Unpaid Health Bill" initiated critical public and policy debates on the consequences of the region's dependency on coal power, particularly in Serbia. HEAL's new evidence provides much needed support for local environmental groups and individuals, who have become more active on demanding cleaner air in the countries. **With a briefing on mercury and a webinar**, HEAL was also able to lay the ground for using a new argument on why the Western Balkans countries should move to cleaner energy.

*In the medium term*, the following developments have particularly contributed to reaching the 7 EAP's aim of significantly improving air quality by 2020: the European Parliament's insistence on stronger emission reductions in the NEC; the shelving of 3 future coal plants in Poland, the provision of new evidence on the health costs of air pollution in Poland and the Western Balkans, which led to increased public debates. These developments will then help to reduce the rates of or prevent chronic disease such as heart and lung disease, and provide for a healthier future generation.



# CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY



## Activities

### **COP21, Paris: Building health momentum for a new international climate agreement**

The lead taken by HEAL on engaging the health and medical community for UNFCCC COP21 in Paris, the level of health sector activities during the two week proceedings and the historical outcome was one of the highlights of HEAL's work in 2015. Through various activities HEAL was able to mobilise a record number of (new) health stakeholders on advocacy for an ambitious climate agreement; and we also strengthened engagement with the WHO as an institutional health actor.

### **On the road to COP21**

HEAL organised a series of **webinars *On the Road to COP21*** for the health and medical community. A kick-off webinar in June 2015 took place [on the new findings on climate change and health from the world-renowned medical journal, the Lancet](#). HEAL issued a press release in [English](#) and [German](#) on for the Lancet launch. The German press release included a quote by MEP and Dr. Peter Liese, and was disseminated to 200 key journalists in Germany, as well as through the Tree Alert, and international news outlet. Other webinars included one on the role of the health sector in mitigating climate change with (information [here](#)) and one in French to discuss specifically the French contribution and activities to COP21. Presentations available [here](#). Prior to COP21, HEAL kept partners of the Collaborative on Health and the Environment up to date and HEAL moderated a [CHE call](#).

**Collaboration with the French Medical Association (Council – CNOM) and outreach in France** (as the hosting country) was another cornerstone of activities prior and during COP21. Following initial talks with CNOM, HEAL signed on to a [call](#) to French authorities to give greater priority to health at the COP21 climate summit. The French Public Health Association, the French Society of Environmental Health and the French Medical Council, were supported by HEAL and several European and international health organisations. HEAL had previously launched a French language listserve on “Climat et Sante”, to share information on COP21 and advocacy opportunities.

Speaking engagements further honed this collaboration: Prior to COP21, in June HEAL's Executive Director spoke at a panel session at the conference [“Climat, Sante, Inegalites: Quelles Solutions”, organised by the French Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Women's Rights](#). A strong plea for climate action emerged, with participants underlining the significant health benefits that could be achieved through ambitious mitigation. In July, HEAL's Deputy Director participated on a climate panel for the conference on “All Actors of Rupture” in Paris. HEAL also spoke at an expert meeting at the University of Paris Descartes, on climate change. Input was also given from the health non-governmental side for a side event “Can we maintain and improve human health without fighting climate change”.

Outreach took place for the European and international level: The **exchange and working together with the WHO** before and during COP21 proved to be of high value for HEAL. Prior to COP21, HEAL became a partner of the WHO's global campaign on [Our climate, our health](#) aimed to engage health professionals in the lead up to COP21, and endorsed the corresponding call to action. For the Annual conference of the European Public Health Associations, HEAL [organised a workshop on coal power generation and climate change](#).

### Activities during COP21, including media

[HEAL's high level health delegation](#) brought together members and partners from Turkey, Germany, Serbia, France, Romania, Sweden and Poland, and the HEAL Secretariat, and helped to amplify the voice of medical and health professionals, working closely with medical associations and the WHO.

Friday, 4 December saw the kick-off of HEAL activities with an event on **"Health professionals in action for healthy energy and climate"**, organised in collaboration with the French Medical Association (CNOM), the World Medical Association (WMA), and the International Federation of Medical Students (IMFSA). The event was a great success, bringing together around 50 participants from around the globe, paving the way for greater health collaboration. Participants heard from health experts from Turkey, Poland, Serbia, Germany, Australia, from medical students and others on their activities to tackle climate change and provide for a healthy energy future. Key political representatives included the Deputy Mayor of Paris, and WHO's Dr. Maria Neira. HEAL, CNOM, WMA issued a press release in [EN](#), [FR](#), [ES](#); and a press release in [Turkish](#) by the Turkish Medical Association also informed on the event. The event was also

included in the December newsletter by CNOM [here](#). Particularly successful was the outreach and engagement on social media, which saw the participation of health experts from all around the world for live tweeting and sharing. HEAL used videos, quotes and information from the presentations on social media to enable them to attend virtually. A storify of tweets is available [here](#) and the event was web-streamed live on [YouTube](#).

Saturday, 5 December saw the **Global Climate and Health Summit** take place, an event which brought together several hundred health professionals. HEAL was the local implementing partner, organised by the Global Climate and Health Alliance and the WHO. A global medical consensus for urgent action was presented in the form of declarations representing over 1,700 health organisations, over 8,000 hospitals, and 13 million doctors, nurses and health professionals in every part of the sector and in every continent (information shared in a press release).

During the second week of COP21, HEAL [co-organised an official COP21 side event on "Health central to climate action"](#) where high-level experts and advocates called for strong, effective action on climate change to protect humanity and future generations. Prior to the event, HEAL's Genon K. Jensen spoke at a [press conference](#) with WHO's Regional Director for Europe, Zsuzsanna Jakab.





HEAL saw the **outcome of the Paris climate change negotiations** as a positive step towards greater health protection. HEAL's thoughts on the Paris Agreement were shared in a [press release](#), building on [HEAL's message to climate negotiators](#) that was published ahead of COP21.

**Communications at COP21:** Media outreach and social media activities were central to HEAL's activities. One highlight was a HEAL contribution to Outreach magazine, one of the most widely read publications during COP21. "[Why health concerns should prompt an ambitious Paris package](#)" put forward evidence

on the benefits to health of climate action and examples of health professional action in various countries. The article builds on a [letter to the editor to the Annals of Global Health](#) by HEAL's Executive Director in which she argues that the Paris climate treaty offers an extraordinary public health opportunity that should not be squandered and puts forward 5 prescriptions for a healthy future for COP21 negotiators. Earlier in October, HEAL was included in the magazine of French member C2DS, and was also a co-author of an article on the engagement of health professionals globally, in *New Solutions*.

### **Stepping up the EU's climate and energy commitments for 2030 (and preventing fracking)**

The EU was a key actor for a successful outcome of the Paris agreement. With the engagement activities listed above, HEAL always highlighted the key role that the EU played in a successful Paris outcome. In addition, HEAL sought exchanges with the Luxembourg EU Presidency to advocate for a productive outcome.

Dedicated media work was carried out on the EU's climate ambition:

- A HEAL [health quote](#) was provided for the launch of a new report by the New Climate Institute on the benefits of more ambitious climate action, featured in the Guardian (March).
- As the energy situation in the EU is a key consideration for its overall climate ambition, HEAL highlighted energy production in its work. For the June launch of the Atlas on Global Coal, HEAL provided health expertise and reviewed the relevant chapter.
- Leading health advocates in the UK used HEAL figures in a letter to the [editor of The Times](#).
- HEAL expertise was provided for the launch of the CAN Europe coal map, which resulted in HEAL being quoted in [the Guardian](#).

Post COP21, HEAL was the only health non-governmental actor to join the coalition for higher ambition, which brings together businesses, cities, trade unions, and non-profit organisations, working to increase the EU ambition level for climate action. On 1 March, the coalition published a [statement](#) to EU Heads of States and Government, Climate and Environment Ministers, the Commission and the EP with 4 demands, including the call to ensure consistency of the EU's ambition with the Paris agreement. Collaboration with this group is ongoing for the proposals on the non-ETS sector.

Regarding fracking, there were little policy developments at EU level that we could feed into in 2015. In September, HEAL signed on to a [letter](#) to Heads of States and Parliamentarians to oppose fracking. Then HEAL signed on to a statement for the Global Frackdown Month, and shared the information on it in [our newsletter](#). In addition, HEAL continued to share information on new health evidence on fracking at its dedicated listserve and also information on policy developments via social media.

## Germany: Making the health case for energy transition and climate mitigation

As Germany is the largest economy in Europe and has in the past shown climate leadership, HEAL strategically engaged in the country to ensure it had a progressive position for COP21, with a mix of advocacy, mobilisation of health actors and media work. HEAL made sure that domestic politics on “energy transition” and particularly on coal power were health-friendly and climate ambitious. Spring 2015 saw intense debates in the German public and among policy-makers on a planned **climate levy for old coal power plants (particularly lignite plants)**. HEAL and member WECF urged [German chancellor Merkel, economic minister Gabriel and health minister Groehe](#) to go ahead with the levy as it would be good for climate and health. HEAL shared this information with a coalition of German climate and environmental NGOs. HEAL provided a quote for a large civil society gathering in the German state of Nordrhein-Westfalen against existing coal plants, which was quoted by AFP. Unfortunately lobby pressure from the coal industry, particularly trade unions, was too strong, and the levy was changed into a capacity payment, meaning that German taxpayers actually pay plant operators for old, inefficient and loss-making coal plants. Yet, this outcome was beyond HEAL’s control. The debate did show that HEAL’s continued engagement in Germany was necessary, as public health concerns did not play a key role in the debates, and doctors were not much involved.

HEAL continued with **engagement activities for health and medical groups** and at the end of September invited health and medical groups to sign a [German call for Action on climate change and health developed by HEAL](#). The call follows the findings and policy demands of the Lancet Climate Commission published in June 2015, which puts forward seven recommendations on how health protection and climate mitigation can be promoted jointly. HEAL delivered the call that was endorsed by 50 organisations and individuals to German Health Minister Groehe.

Another key push for engagement and outreach with the media was the **launch of the Lancet findings on climate change and health for Germany, on 12 October**. HEAL issued a [press release](#) in German which was shared with the over 200 media contacts in Germany. The launch was featured on radio Deutschlandfunk and in an article in the leftwing taz daily paper. This focus on the climate change and health were further developed with a [dedicated briefing](#) on the co-benefits to the health of Germans from climate change mitigation measures: “Klimaschutz als Präventionsstrategie”. The briefing aims to shed light on a neglected topic among the German public on how measures to tackle climate change such as cleaner energy, active transportation or changed food production will also provide for significant benefits for people’s health.

HEAL initiated a **new collaboration with the German Society for Environmental Medicine – Hygiene – Occupational Medicine**, to publish articles in a special climate and energy section in their bi-monthly specialised journal, reaching about 500 doctors and health specialists.



## **Turkey: initiating public debates and engaging the health sector to prevent new coal-fired power plants**

In May HEAL launched the report “[The Unpaid Health Bill – how coal power plants in Turkey make us sick](#)” at a press conference in Ankara, Turkey together with Turkish Medical Association, Doctors for the Environment Turkey, Turkish Occupational Medicine Society, Turkish Respiratory Society, Turkish Society of Public Health Specialists, and Turkish Thoracic Society. The report demonstrates that the 20 existing coal plants already cause health costs of up to 3.6 billion EUR a year (Turkish prices) – from premature death, chronic lung disease and heart conditions associated with exposure to polluted air from coal plants. Plans to build 80 new coal power stations and thus quadruple capacity would lead to skyrocketing health costs, HEAL and Turkish health organised warned. Press release in [English](#) and [Turkish](#).

A [toolkit on “coal power generation and health in Iskenderun Bay, Turkey”](#) was launched ([EN](#) & [TK](#)) at a meeting in Iskenderun (Hatay province) in collaboration with the Hatay, Mersin, Osmaniye and Adana Chamber of Medicines, the Hatay Greater Municipality, the Environment and Consumer Protection Society, and the Iskenderun Environmental Protection Society. It brought together more than 50 participants from the four provinces in Iskenderun Bay region, including an MP of the Hatay province in the national parliament, a mayor from a nearby town under environmental threat of future coal plants, environmental director of the greater municipality, doctors who are members of Adana, Hatay, Mersin and Osmaniye chambers of medicine, medical students, members of other professional organisations, representatives of local environmental NGOs, representatives of fishermen and farmers in the region, and local and national journalists. Key medical representatives from the region provided quotes. Two earlier capacity building workshops with Turkish health and medical groups had prepared this toolkit.

Presentations of the health economic evidence to health and medical conferences include to the Turkish Thoracic Society Air Quality Working Group (September); 8<sup>th</sup> public Health Congress of the Society of Public Health Specialists, and European Public Health Conference Milan (October); at a panel of the Istanbul Climate Summit (November); and article in [EKOIQ](#), a periodical on green business/green life on its 54th issue.

## **Tackling fossil fuel subsidies to increase climate ambition and protect health**

This additional activity was not foreseen at the start of the work programme 2015 but it turned out to be promising both politically as well as for engaging health stakeholders on climate and energy policy developments. In addition, the evidence shows the major link between public financing for coal, gas, oil and health. On 2 September, HEAL signed on to an [open letter](#), endorsed by over 60 CSO to G20 Finance ministers, calling on them to deliver on their commitment to phase out fossil fuel subsidies, as well as support an ambitious outcome of COP21. On 14 November, ahead of a G20 leader’s summit in Turkey, HEAL teamed up with CSOs to issue an urgent [call to end all subsidies for fossil fuels](#).

## Results

HEAL's advocacy and communications outreach around **COP21** proved to be an overwhelming success, both in terms of the outcome of the Paris agreement, and in terms of the health and medical stakeholders mobilised for advocacy. Regarding health stakeholder engagement, the following results apply: the event on 4 December brought together about 80 participants from among health and medical groups; while over 300 people participated in the Climate and Health Summit on 5 December.

HEAL's social media activities prior and during COP helped to ensure this strong interest and engagement. Due to live tweeting and active presence on Twitter, HEAL saw a rapid growth in average tweets per day, outreach and in followers' numbers, proving that social media was an effective channel of communications throughout COP21. The hashtag #ClimateHealth was trending on Twitter on various occasions thanks to HEAL's strategic approach in its use throughout COP21.

The unprecedented engagement of health and medical groups in climate policy deliberations is also evidenced by the fact that a global medical consensus on Paris brought endorsements and declarations from over 1,700 health organisations, over 8000 hospitals, and 13 million doctors, nurses and health professionals in every part of the sector and in every continent. This is a huge increase to the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Conference, in which only a handful of health and medical experts participated. This health engagement, also in the form of advocacy of HEAL's

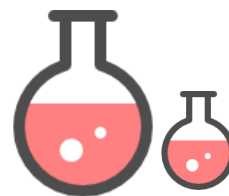
delegation at COP meant that decision-makers were well aware of the health arguments and support of the health sector for an ambitious Paris agreement. This awareness is also evident through the 200+ participants at the HEAL/WHO 9 December event. The advocacy and communications of HEAL and the overall health sector, prior to COP, at Le Bourget, at the national and international level, was instrumental in reaching the Paris outcome. Prior to COP, there were at least 3 statements available from leading medical/health groups, including the German call to action, the Lancet findings, the statement by the French medical associations, and others; and two of them called for a coal phase out.

**HEAL's activities in Germany** also led to an increase in the number of health stakeholders engaged on climate change, as evidenced in the 50 endorsements by organisations and individuals of the climate call to action of autumn 2015, and the leading German health professionals that participated in the launch of the Lancet findings for Germany in Berlin. Through the regular articles in the GHUP specialised journal HEAL reached new health specialists.

*In the medium term*, the Paris agreement and the increased number of health and medical actors will contribute to implementing the 7 EAP's priority objectives 2 and 3. However, as with many policy files, the devil lies in the detail, in this case the implementation of Paris at national level is key, as well as how the EU Commission and member states will carry forward to commitment to limit global warming in the respective EU policy files. For these policy processes health advocates play a key watchdog and expertise role.



# CHEMICAL SAFETY AND REACH IMPLEMENTATION (CHM)



## Activities

### **REACH implementation**

The focus of 2015's work continued to be providing health expertise for chemicals that were under assessment for being placed on REACH's candidate list, meaning that they would be subject to future restrictions. The decisive debate last year was on the request to re-authorise the chemical DEHP in PVC plastic, which both went through the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) committees as well as through the EU Commission. With the participation in a workshop on health valuation (Jan 2016), HEAL increased its input on socio-economic inputs to ECHA fora. HEAL worked with member state representatives on the classification of BPA and was pleased to see that in February, the Commission and member states agreed to [classify BPA as a presumed human reproductive toxicant \(category 1B\)](#).

### **Phasing out DEHP under REACH**

Following the recommendation by both the RAC and SEAC ECHA committees to re-authorise DEHP in PVC plastics, HEAL's advocacy work concentrated on member states representatives and EU institutions. HEAL urged the EU Environment Commissioner not to re-authorise DEHP. For an upcoming EP report on DEHP (Nov), HEAL urged members to share their concerns on the continued use of DEHP with MEPs. When the ENVI committee decided to go for an objection to the Commission's proposal, [HEAL welcomed this vote](#). Engagement with members contributed to the successful resolution on the rejection of the re-authorisation. At the end of HEAL's 2015 work programme, the DEHP re-authorisation was back in the REACH member state committee, and HEAL members were urged to contact national environmental and health contact points, using a [letter](#) by HEAL, EEB and others.

### **ECHA member state, CARACAL (competent authorities) and REACH Committee**

HEAL's Senior Chemicals Policy Officer participated in a June meeting when committee members decided to adopt the Swedish and Dutch proposals to include two more substances respective substance groups to the list of chemicals of high concern (SVCH), and urged committee members to support this inclusion. For the October meeting, HEAL issued submissions for the 7 SVHCs nomination consultation. HEAL participated in an ECHA Health Valuation Workshop and shared a HEAL Technical Briefing on [Willingness to Pay and Cost of EDC-related diseases](#). Ahead of a REACH committee meeting in March, HEAL and other public interest groups [urged committee members for their support](#) of the Commission's proposal to identify four phthalates (DEHP, DBP, BBP, DIBP) as substances of very high concern, due to their EDC properties. The latest information on human biomonitoring (HBM) was shared by HEAL with member state representatives, including an article co-authored by Genon K. Jensen and Lisette van Vliet on policy recommendations on European HBM, published in Environmental Research (Sep 2015).



## ECHA EDCs expert group

This group, established in February 2014, focuses on evaluating substances with EDC properties, providing informal, non-binding scientific advice on questions related to the identification of EDCs. HEAL was represented by a scientific expert – first Chris Talseness and then Marjorie van Duursen in this expert group. As a first step, following the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the expert group in February 2015, HEAL submitted comments on the chemical DCHP, which was under review as a possible EDC in June 2015. HEAL expert Marjorie van Duursen then participated in the next meetings, where the possible endocrine disrupting properties of various substances were discussed.

## Chemicals Health Monitor – improving the knowledge base on chemicals

The activities described above already contributed to improving the knowledge base on chemicals, through the distribution of materials to member state representatives and dedicated communications work, in addition through dedicated media work as part of the EDC free Europe activities. The last CHM newsletter in German was published on 20 March 2015; together with an [article with updates on chemicals policy developments](#) in the German specialised magazine on “Environment and Health” of the German Society on Allergies, in April and October 2015.

## Educating on chemicals exposure in Malta

For several years, HEAL has had strong ties on chemicals and health work with our partner Action for Breast Cancer Foundation Malta and provides support for them. One activity in 2015 to mark World Cancer Prevention Day was a translation of HEAL’s comic strip on hazardous chemicals into Maltese. As a result, the school authorities of Malta included “health and environment” into the school curriculum, with HEAL’s comic strip as learning material. HEAL [addressed 30 teachers on the opportunity to raise awareness with students on reducing chemicals exposure](#), and an interview also took place on Maltese television.

## Pesticides Action Week (PAW)

HEAL uses Pesticide Action Week, an annual event, as an opportunity to educate and inform the public on the health threats of exposure to toxic pesticides, and benefits from removing them. HEAL was an official partner to the 2015 (and 2016) events and widely shared the information on it in our [newsflash](#) and social media channels. For the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of PAW in 2015, HEAL produced a resource pack, offering practical advice to pregnant women and parents-to-be on how to reduce exposure to pesticides in their daily lives. During the week, HEAL organised an [action outside of the European Commission](#) and HEAL helped to share the new website by member Pesticide Action Network Europe on [victims of pesticides](#).



## Results

Against strong industrial lobbying and delay tactics HEAL was pleased to see some positive developments in the REACH fora; or at least our participation and health expert input prevent things from worsening. First, while DEHP was not yet included on the REACH candidate list as defined in our 2015 objective, HEAL's and other non-governmental stakeholders engagement meant that there was no easy "waving through" of industry's application to continue the use in PVC plastic. Given the resolution of the EU-Parliament, the decision on DEHP is still pending and we will continue to highlight the need for phasing out DEHP in the ECHA fora, like we did in March 2016.

Second, the decision to classify BPA as a chemical presumably toxic to reproduction was a positive step forward and has set an important health precedent in the whole EU institutional debate on BPA. In addition, HEAL's communication activities led to a greater number of member states representatives better understanding of the links between chemicals and diseases and particularly the possible costs related to this exposure.

*In the medium term*, these expertise and technical input activities will contribute to reaching a toxics-free future, as REACH is the key instrument at EU level to reduce exposure to hazardous chemicals (through restrictions and phase outs).



## Chemicals: Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs)

### Activities

#### Advocating for comprehensive criteria on endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs)

Following months of delay from the EU Commission's side, the EDC criteria file was finally moving again in spring 2015 and HEAL made significant contributions to the policy opportunities that presented itself throughout the year.

From March-June, the EU Commission's DG SANTE organised three roundtables to inform MEPs, EU country officials and stakeholders on

the impact assessment process. On 25 March, HEAL participated in the first meeting and shared the outcome widely among our networks including through an article in [HEAL's April newsflash](#). On 1 June, HEAL's Executive Director participated in a Commission conference on EDCs on a panel discussing the potential health and environmental impacts, and highlighted EDC regulation as an [important opportunity for better health](#). Among nearly 300 participants, representatives from EDC-Free campaign partners and HEAL members took part. HEAL member Phyto Victims gave a powerful [statement](#) on health effects of pesticides for farmers. EDCs were also one of the key issues in a meeting with the EU's Health Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis on 17 June, to which HEAL led the Green10 delegation.

In the summer, HEAL engaged in another policy deliberation which will have consequences for the EDC criteria debate. This is the question of negligible exposure under the EU's 2009 regulation on pesticides. This regulation foresees the banning of pesticides which are EDCs, but leaves certain exemptions when ED pesticides can continue to be used. One exemption is when exposure would be negligible, and DG SANTE organised a meeting and held a consultation to gather stakeholder views on the interpretation of the exemption in the law. HEAL participated in exchanges and submitted comments regarding their consultation process, in collaboration with HEAL member PAN Europe.

### **EU Court of Justice (ECJ) rules Commission acted unlawfully**

Just before the end of 2015 the ECJ ruled that the Commission had acted illegally by initiating an impact assessment, instead of bringing forward criteria for EDCs. The outcome of this ruling had been one of HEAL's priorities that we followed directly in Luxembourg and shared [our assesement](#) with media. A special report [Are our lives poisoned](#) featuring HEAL was screened in April 2016 to over four million viewers. HEAL was dismayed that after the ruling a Commission spokesperson said the Commission had no intention to comply with the law.

On 8 January, [a letter was sent to](#) the EU Commission (President, VP, Health and Environment) expressing concerns about the Commission's reaction to the verdict and demanding immediate action. [HEAL was pleased](#) to see that at the beginning of

February the EU Health Commissioner announced to the EP that the criteria would be brought out before the summer of 2016. For the exchange with the Commissioner, HEAL briefed MEPs and led social media activities. As a result, MEPs mentioned health aspects of EDCs and the court rulings in their interventions. In a [blog for Euractiv](#), published on 2 March, HEAL's Executive Director and CHEM Trust Executive Director urged the Commission to bring forward the right criteria (based on option 3 of the EU roadmap using the WHO definition of EDCs).

### **Advocacy with the EU Presidency and Member States**

Ahead of a meeting of EU Environment Ministers in the beginning of March, the EDC-Free coalition (HEAL acts as the Secretariat) sent a [letter to all EU environment ministers](#) stating their position on the criteria. HEAL's position was shared at a Green10 reception of EU environment ministers. Working with national governments on the criteria is a focus of HEAL's advocacy work on EDCs in 2016, given that EU member states will have to approve the draft criteria.

The Dutch Presidency of the EU at the start of 2016 was a key opportunity for HEAL to influence its position. On 8 February, the Dutch consumer programme Radar [screened a feature on EDCs](#) featuring HEAL and Dutch members. HEAL also welcomed a new [report by the Dutch Institute on Environment and Health](#) on 3 March which called for a reduction of exposure to Bisphenol A, a suspected EDC. HEAL shared the information with journalists.



## Sharing new science from the national and international level

HEAL shared key new evidence by members and partners, including:

- Results of 'EXPERT studies by French member Generations Futures;
- Information from Spanish EDC-Free partner Ecologistas on a web series on EDCs, and;
- Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF) France report on baby cosmetics and ingredients.
- HEAL contributed to showcasing the health costs of exposure to EDCs through its promotion of Dr Leo Trasande's third paper in the EDC costs series (EHP, March 2015) - HEAL disseminated and provided a [HEAL response entitled - Women's reproductive problems from hormone disrupting chemicals costs Europe 1.4 billion Euros per year](#).
- HEAL disseminated [the Endocrine Society's Second scientific statement on EDCs](#) to the health community, policy-makers and to journalists with a quote (28 September) The results were presented at a conference in Rome and at an Institute Fresenius conference.

The highlight of sharing new evidence was HEAL's work together with our member WECF to promote the statement of the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) to European audiences, in autumn 2015. The statement recommends to reduce exposure to toxic chemicals, and is another key statement from an important and leading medical group. HEAL and WECF issued a [press release](#), translated by HEAL into [French](#) and German. Media coverage included articles in Reuters, Chemical Watch and national coverage in France, Spain and Malta. HEAL prepared an info pack for HEAL members and EDC free partners to promote the opinion with journalists. Infographics were also developed and disseminated together with social media activities. Social media pick up was vibrant with at least one Facebook post reaching over 1,200 people. The evidence was also presented to policy-makers at the SAICM international chemicals meeting in Geneva.

## Preventing the re-authorisation of Glyphosate to prevent cancer

This chemical is a widely used herbicide in Europe and globally, both in agriculture as well as in public parks and private gardens. In spring 2015, the WHO's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classified glyphosate as probably carcinogenic to humans. This classification sparked intensive NGO advocacy work, fierce lobbying by Monsanto, and various assessments on glyphosate's hazardousness.

HEAL considers glyphosate a key policy file to engage in because of its widespread exposure of the European population and because glyphosate is also suspected to be an EDC. HEAL considers that achieving a ban in the EU would set an important precedent for the whole policy discussion on EDCs. In addition, high media attention on the issue allowed HEAL to bring the problem with ED pesticides to a wide audience at European and national level.

HEAL's involvement started on 7 April, when HEAL, Friends of the Earth Europe, Greenpeace, PAN Europe and the Alliance for Cancer Prevention sent a [letter to EU Health Commissioner Andriukaitis](#) asking him to mandate EFSA to include the IARC decision in its ongoing peer review of the safety assessment of glyphosate; and urging him to suspend, as a precautionary measure, the EU approval of glyphosate for uses from which the potential for public and worker exposure is particularly high. As a response to IARC, HEAL member [ISDE](#) and the French cancer leagues called for a ban of glyphosate.

Following up on initial exchanges, HEAL and other NGOs expressed concern on the scope of the Commission's request to EFSA's mandate on considering the IARC findings in a [letter](#) to Acting Director-General Ladislav Miko. These demands were later presented in a Green10 meeting with the Commissioner. In October, a HEAL Executive Committee member urged the EU Health Commissioner not to re-authorise glyphosate, as part of a [panel discussion](#) at the European Health Forum Gastein. Further letters were sent to the Health Commission urging for a partial ban of glyphosate and sharing concerns on the scientific assessment.

On 7 March 2016, several environmental, health and other NGOs [delivered to the EU Health Commissioner and Member state representatives 174,000 signatures](#) during a meeting at their office from European citizens calling for a ban of glyphosate, together with photos and a press release. The petition was handed over ahead of a meeting of a committee of member states deciding on the re-authorisation of the herbicide. This decision was then postponed because no majority in support of it could be found, a decision to which HEAL's advocacy work certainly contributed to. Using social media for engagement and advocacy was a key component of HEAL's work on glyphosate. Sample messages and visuals were shared together with quote cards in reaction to developments in the re-authorisation process, one of which can be found [here](#).

### **Engaging cancer groups as new stakeholders on EDC criteria and glyphosate**

A key advocacy focus was HEAL's input for World Cancer Day on 4 February. HEAL's President sent a [letter to leading national cancer groups](#) inviting them to send a letter in support of a ban of glyphosate, stressing that such a ban represented a significant opportunity to prevent cancer. The Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL) shared [HEAL's PR](#), and it featured as a leading article on the MEPs against cancer website home page. Foundation for Breast Cancer and Action for Breast Cancer Foundation in Malta spoke against glyphosate on TV and national press (Times of Malta).

### **Advocacy on food contact materials**

The non-regulation of EDCs in food contact materials, and regulatory gaps on these materials overall became more and more apparent in 2015. As the EP was preparing a resolution on the issue, HEAL highlighted it work in a discussion in October. In December HEAL and CHEM Trust sent a letter to DG Sante Sabine Juelicher on the issue. At the beginning of the year, deliberations in the EP were progressing regarding food contact materials. HEAL spoke at a hearing and underlined that current EU legislation was not fit for purpose to protect health. A HEAL [PR](#) and [briefing](#) were published.



## **Bisphenol A (BPA)**

In January, HEAL submitted its [position on the DG SANTE Roadmap](#) on new measures on BPA in food contact materials. The submission underlined that action on BPA was urgently needed and overdue and put forward several comments on the consultation process and the roadmap. One of HEAL's demands supported the ban of all bisphenols with suspected EDC properties for food contact materials. HEAL distributed its position with leading MEPs and member state representatives. This followed a meeting with the cabinet of Commissioner Bienkowska on the issue back in May. When the EU Commission and member states agreed to classify BPA, HEAL welcomed the decision but [underlined that BPA should be phase out in food contact materials urgently](#).

## **Strengthening collaborative NGO capacity on EDCs across Europe**

HEAL acts as the Secretariat of EDC-Free Europe, bringing together 65+ health, environmental and consumer groups across 22 countries, and 9 pan-European and international organisations in 17 languages, in their call to reduce exposure from EDCs. There are also 11,000+ individual supporters across 78 countries, whom we communicate with in 7 languages. On behalf of campaign partners HEAL convenes regular NGO strategy and campaign meetings. EDC free Europe partners meet in Brussels for intelligence sharing and advocacy in November and held meetings with influential MEPs.

Prior to the meetings, HEAL prepared a set of sample tweets for campaign partners to send to the MEPs in question. The main objective of this planned Twitter activity was to raise awareness of the meetings between campaign partners and MEPs to discuss the necessary

action for an EDC-Free future. Attention was received by MEPs and organisations including MEP Michele Rivasi MEP. A collage of photos was created and continues to be used in HEAL's communications efforts on EDCs.

## **Communicating for change: EDC- Free Europe**

A core activity for HEAL as the Secretariat for the EDC-Free Europe campaign is to share information and news from campaign partners, particularly on new science and policy developments on EDCs.

The coalition has a dedicated [website](#) which was updated in 2015 with a new online subscribe to news service in seven languages (EN, FR, DE, NL, SV, DK and ES) and icons to be used by campaign partners to encourage individuals to sign up to news in their own language. The mailing lists inform 11.000+ individual campaign supporters on key EU EDC policy developments. In 2015 the mailing lists were used to share information on the ECJ ruling; exchanges with the EU Health Commissioner in the European Parliament, during the Dutch EU presidency and for sharing information on policy developments at national level.

Social media plays a key role in the activities of EDC-Free Europe. By using Twitter and Facebook, EDC-Free reaches on average up to 5000 individuals per single message. This includes policy-makers (Commissioners, MEPs), journalists, medical associations, etc. Social media is used on a daily basis and on critical moments, to influence policy decisions. One success is the collaboration of efforts from campaign partners during the 1 June EDCs conference organised by the EU Health Commissioner.

## Results

**EDC criteria: HEAL's concerns and policy demands were heard at the highest level with the EU Commission, the EU Presidency and member states.** This is due to all possible advocacy opportunities being explored - June EDCs conference, meeting with the EU Health Commissioner, a reception organised with the Dutch EU Presidency, ahead of a Council meeting in March 2016. **HEAL's behind the scenes advocacy** on the ECJ considering the Commission's delay in on the criteria also paid off with the Court ruling that the Commission had acted illegally. HEAL successfully urged the EP and member states to join the lawsuit brought forward by Sweden. **During the past year, HEAL was able to create important synergies between the national and EU level,** e.g. by sharing information on new science from the national level, or through monthly campaign coordination calls organised by HEAL.

**Regarding glyphosate,** because of HEAL's and other health actor, cancer charities engagement, this has become a high profile issue in the media, and a simple re-authorisation of the pesticide by the EU Commission is no longer possible. Although the ultimate decision on its re-approval is still

outstanding, without HEAL's involvement and engagement of many health groups and environmentalists, glyphosate would have silently received another authorisation for many years, leading to further health impacts for the European population. The glyphosate policy discussion also saw the involvement of new health actors previously not engaged on EU chemicals policy, which was facilitated by HEAL. This includes HEAL member International Society for Doctors for the Environment, the French Cancer Leagues and the European Cancer Leagues, which used HEAL's prompt to send a letter to EU Health Commissioner Andriukaitis.

**HEAL's excellent reputation in the EP:** Good access to MEPs means demands on the regulation of food contact materials were well heard for an upcoming EP resolution on the issue.

**Media coverage and social media:** Continuous high media coverage meant that HEAL's position was well reported in EU and national media, and that the strategy of sharing new science paid off. Targeted social media activities (sample tweets or collages) helped members and EDC-Free partners in their advocacy with the EU institutions, and ensured journalists were aware of NGO positions.



# Green economy and trade



## Activities

HEAL adapted its work on this topic to the current context and particularly the increased priority of the EU Commission on Better Regulation, and its scrutiny of how environmental legislation could hamper health. This push on 'deregulation' meant that environmental or even green economic concerns did not play any role in the EU Commission's thinking. With the TTIP negotiations continuing, a double threat to health and environment emerged during the year, that is the converging of the Better Regulation and Regulatory cooperation, threatening not only health and environmental protection but also democratic principles of EU decision-making. HEAL considered these developments and engaged on threats from Better Regulation in its policy fields (dieselgate – air quality; EDC criteria – chemicals).

### **Input on the EU Commission's environmental and better regulation approach**

As a member of the Green10, HEAL monitored and assessed developments on Better Regulation throughout the year and through high-level meetings with EU Vice-Presidents and Commissioners. In November the Green10 published an assessment of the first year of the Juncker Commission, deploring the ["lost year" for environmental protection](#). Groups criticised the lax approach to environmental protection exemplified by the dieselgate scandal which resulted in high cost to health, the economy and the environment, and provided some

further examples where the Commission's stance has been disappointing including climate & energy; REFIT of the EU nature protection laws; air pollution; GM food and feed; circular economy, toxic chemicals and others. In meetings of the Green10 with Catherine Day, with First Vice President Timmermans, with EU Vice President Katainen, Commissioners Andriukaitis and Vella, HEAL conveyed its approach and proposals, including why a stronger stance on the implementation of existing EU legislation would mean true Better Regulation.

### **Better Regulation Watchdog**

HEAL became a member of the [Better Regulation Watchdog](#), an alliance of more than 50 civil society organisations to protect citizens', workers' and consumers' rights in May 2015. In the [founding statement](#), the endorsing organisations expressed concern that the Better Regulation agenda aims to weaken or undermine essential regulations and subordinate the public good to corporate interests. A HEAL Executive Committee member (EPHA) sits on the Watchdog's Steering Committee and keeps HEAL abreast of initiatives and deliberations. One issue that the network considered was the proposal for a quantitative target to cut regulatory burdens to businesses. In a [letter sent on 10 December](#), the Network gave several reasons on why such a target is the wrong approach.

## Special policy workshop for HEAL members and HEAL participation at events

Given the threat from the two concepts of Better Regulation and Regulatory Cooperation, HEAL hosted a special policy workshop at its 2015 AGA. Members agreed to work on bringing together examples of where there is a lack of EU implementation, as well as building up a positive narrative of Better Regulation. HEAL's Deputy Director was a panelist in a EP discussion, organised by HEAL member AIM.

## Highlighting health threats from the future EU-US Trade Agreement (TTIP)

TTIP continued to be a hotly debated topic, particularly with the new threat of Regulatory Cooperation. In March, HEAL and others launched a statement on [EU trade secrets directive](#) threat to free speech, health, environment and worker mobility. This was followed up with a [letter](#) by HEAL, FoEE and others to EU Commissioners Andriukaitis, Hogan and Malstrom on the threats posed by TTIP for the integrity of the EU's food and farming system and the welfare of workers, the general public.

Meanwhile, the EP was deliberating its position on the future TTIP, led by the EP's Trade Committee. HEAL advocacy work with the ENVI committee for its position in April 2015, resulted in a clear call of ENVI members to exclude chemicals from the future TTIP agreement. Ahead of a vote scheduled for July, HEAL and other NGOs sent [a letter](#) to rapporteur Bernd Lange to oppose a chemicals chapter in the TTIP agreement as it could undermine future EU action on EDCs. HEAL was instrumental in leveraging support from EDC-Free partners and other chemical and health campaign groups. While the EP resolution does

not follow this demand, it nevertheless expressed the position that negotiators need to be clear about which standards can be harmonised and for which only an exchange of information is possible. They also explicitly mentioned EDCs, stating that a common approach must not affect definitions affecting the level of protection.

## Health and Chemicals in the Circular Economy

While the Green Economy was not one of the Commission's priorities, there were some developments on the circular economy, following the withdrawal of the proposal of the prior Commission. In July 2015, HEAL, EEB, Friends of the Earth and other CSOs issued "[4 guiding principles for a Circular Economy](#)" – including the reduction of toxic substances, to which HEAL had provided significant policy and technical expertise. The letter was shared with key EU policy-makers. In August, HEAL submitted its comments on the public consultation on the circular economy, highlighting the need to address particularly hazardous chemicals in recycling and waste management.



### **Additional activity: ensuring greater lobbying transparency and preventing conflict of interest**

As part of its work with the Green10, HEAL monitors developments on lobbying transparency and conflicts of interest in the EU. On 11 May, HEAL and over 100 NGOs [called](#) on the EU Commission to take strong and urgent action to create a high-quality and legally binding lobby transparency register, highlighting that the current lobby register still has major weaknesses. On 15 July, HEAL co-organised a screening of “Merchants of doubt” which reveals strategies to create scientific doubt and uncertainty, based on lobbying practices by the tobacco industry. Last but not least, in an [open letter of 2 March](#), HEAL and other environment groups urged members of the EP’s budget control committee to postpone the discharge of EFSA’s budget as long as EFSA does not enact a serious independence policy and postpone the discharge as long as the EU Commission does not credibly commit to provide substantial additional budget for EFSA.

## **Results**

The Better Regulation and Regulatory Scrutiny approaches have emerged as the most challenging for HEAL’s work: in terms of policy, as they are a threat to key environmental health areas that HEAL is working on, e.g. chemicals, but also organisational in terms of capacity and funding.

With this limited capacity, the one important outcome of our activities in this area in 2015 is that we raised the awareness of our members about Better Regulation and Regulatory Cooperation, and relayed our concerns with key decision-makers of the EU Commission and the European Parliament. This relates particularly to HEAL’s demands on chemicals and TTIP, which were taken up by the EP’s ENVI committee and also echoed in the EP resolution.





# Addressing global challenges

## Activities

Threats to health from climate change, air pollution or chemicals exposure are transboundary in nature and know no border. 2015 was a particularly significant year for the advancement of international commitments to tackle these issues with the Paris COP21, the WHO's resolution on air quality and the SAICM meeting on chemicals. For all of these processes HEAL contributed advocacy and expertise. These developments not only helped to increase the protection of people's health at international level, they will also have important repercussions for the EU, including to ensure that the EU will continue with its leadership on health and environment protection.

### **Policy input with the WHO on environment and health / air quality**

HEAL is an official stakeholder of the WHO Europe Environment and Health Task Force and has been contributing to the process for many years.

From 28-30 April, HEAL Executive Committee members, and HEAL members WECF and EFH participated in the [WHO high level meeting in Haifa, Israel](#). The meeting brought together representatives of environment and health ministries of the 53 countries of WHO Europe, to assess the implementation of the 2010 Parma Declaration, and discuss the way forward. HEAL's Vice President assessed what had been achieved since 2010, and presented progress made on tackling hazardous chemicals, particularly EDCs. EFH spoke about air pollution and health. For the midterm meeting, HEAL, WECF and Eco-Form prepared a [statement](#), endorsed by many NGOs including HEAL members, which included recommendations for the future of the process. An opening WHO video featured HEAL's Executive Director highlighting the successes of the Environment and Health

process. The next ministerial meeting of the process takes place in 2016, and preparations for the agenda and content are underway. On 10 March 2016, HEAL's Deputy Director participated in the meeting of the ad-hoc working group of the EH task force to provide comments from HEAL/EcoForum/ETUC on the agenda. Possible issues to be discussed include the need to take stock of the implementation of the Parma commitments and the necessity to increase funding for EH actions at national level.

### **WHO's first ever air quality resolution**

End of May 2015 saw the adoption of a landmark resolution entitled Health and the Environment: addressing the health impact of air pollution, by delegates of the World Health Assembly, the WHO's highest decision-making body. Ahead of the Assembly deliberations, HEAL urged members to send letters to their national health ministers in support of the resolution, as some highly polluting countries were attempting to water it down. Following this request, HEAL's member ABCF in Malta sent a letter to their health minister, and HEAL in Poland sent a [letter](#) to the Health Minister Arlukowicz in support of the resolution on 19 May and issued a [press release](#) in Polish on 27 May.



HEAL's Executive Director attended the WHA and the High Level Assembly of [the Climate and Health Coalition \(CCAC\)](#), which took place in parallel, to highlight the health evidence and support from the health community. She was invited to be part of the World Medical Association's delegation. HEAL spoke during a technical briefing on climate and health on 20 May to share with over 300 delegates the results of a new HEAL report on the health costs of coal power generation in Turkey.

Prior to the resolution, HEAL widely shared new WHO evidence on the economic costs of air pollution on 29 April. HEAL participated in a meeting of the WHO/LRTAP working group on the health effects of air pollution and gave particular input on how to communicate on air pollution to the public.

The resolution paves the way for WHO to significantly strengthen its capacity and also has positive implications for EU decision-makers as all WHO member states, so also the EU ones, are urged to redouble their efforts to identify, address and prevent the health impacts of air pollution and strengthen cooperation (in paragraph 1 of the resolution). Member states are also urged to take into account the WHO air quality guidelines.

### **Chemicals – strategic approach to international chemicals management (SAICM)**

SAICM is a policy framework to foster the sound management of chemicals, with a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral approach, and the input from the non-governmental and inter-governmental health side is particularly important (to provide the expertise on how chemicals affect health and then to put forward health-related policy demands). In

September a HEAL participated in ICCM4, the International Conference on Chemicals Management in Geneva, Switzerland. The Conference covered many topics important to HEAL including highly hazardous pesticides, EDCs, poly- and perfluorinated chemicals, lead in paint, chemicals in products, chemicals in electronics, and more.

HEAL's Executive Director participated in a [high level segment panel](#) on collaboration among policy sectors such as environment, health, agriculture, and labour which could result in more efficient chemicals management and better use of resources. Examples of HEAL's work were giving including bringing cutting edge environmental health science to the public and policy makers; facilitating the health sector's input into chemicals policy decision making; and how play a watchdog role. HEAL's presentation stressed that some chemicals must be phased out; that health sector entities need resources to work jointly with environmental ministries on chemicals dossiers and participate in decision making; that we must pay more attention to recommendations from health professionals when they tell us to minimize exposure to prevent ill health; and that financial resources should come from a global cost recovery scheme that collects a fee on the annual turnover of worldwide chemical production. These funds should pay for policy changes to phase out the worst hazardous chemicals; chemicals management infrastructure and enforcement; compensation for health problems; remediation of hotspots; and real alternatives assessment.

A notable outcome of ICCM 4 was a resolution on EDCs, for which HEAL carried out advocacy activities. It was important to achieve a good outcome for this resolution to give international support for efforts to identify and then phase out endocrine disrupting chemicals at EU level. The resolution welcomed the 2012 UNEP/WHO State of the Science report, and recognised that EDCs can harm human and wildlife and that continued actions on these chemicals by all stakeholders will be needed in order to attain SAICM goals.

Prior to ICCM-4, HEAL's Deputy Director participated in a meeting organised by the WHO's Europe's center on Health and Environment to prepare the health sector strategic input, and gave a presentation on communications tools to raise awareness on chemicals & disease. HEAL also urged members to participate in a corresponding WHO consultation and gave input in July 2015.

### Other international chemicals policy developments

**Highly hazardous pesticides** were addressed in a resolution at the October meeting. Prior to ICCM-4, HEAL supported the [appeal for a ban of highly hazardous pesticides](#), which was put forward by more than 400 organisations from 100 countries. The call urges governments and corporations to take concrete steps towards a progressive ban on highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs) and their substitution with alternatives. The call was launched by Pesticide Action Network International in August 2015.

Regarding the implementation of the international **Minamata Convention on Mercury**, HEAL urged EU Commissioner Vella and EU member states to [rapidly ratify the convention](#) in December 2015. HEAL also

signed on to a [joint letter](#) calling for the phase out of dental amalgam in the EU, which was launched on 15 October, as well as a [letter](#) to on the same subject to US State Secretary John Kerry.

HEAL's Executive Director became a member of the advisory board of the **Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint**, a voluntary partnership established to help achieve international goals to prevent children's exposure to lead paint and minimise occupational exposures. As a member, HEAL helps to disseminate information on new evidence on lead and global developments.

HEAL signed an [open letter](#) on banning the **recycling of materials containing toxic flame retardants**, sent by the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), WECF, and IPEN. The letter highlights the need to stop DecaBDE reappearing in recycled products.

In November, HEAL participated in the UNEA Regional assessment on how to deliver the **UN sustainable development goals** in Europe. HEAL's Executive Director [was a panellist at the discussion on Healthy environment – healthy people](#) at the UNEP Regional Consultation meeting for Europe.



### **Exchanges with international scientific networks: HEAL collaboration with the Collaborative on Health and the Environment (CHE)**

Hosted by CHE, HEAL, Commonwealth and TEDx, organised a series of [half-hour teleconference presentations](#) in which leading scientists

present the latest research on EDCs and the immune system, the metabolic system, the brain, behavior and more, called EDC Science briefs. These conferences are attended by up to 100 participants, and provide a lasting resource that HEAL shares with EU policy-makers and the interested public in its newflash. 10 calls were organised in 2015.

## **Results**

Of particular importance is the WHO resolution on air quality, which allows for the greater involvement of health ministries of EU countries in policy processes such as the National Emissions Ceilings (NEC) Directive. In addition, the SAICM resolution on EDCs gave backing to the WHO/UNEP definition of EDCs, which will be important for the forthcoming EU proposal on the EDC criteria. Through regular exchanges with the scientists in CHE and at international scientific conferences, HEAL could relay up-to-date information on new science, e.g. on prenatal exposure to pollutants to policy-makers at EU level, reaching over 5000 CHE partners in North America and globally.

# Organisational structure and staffing



HEAL is made up of its Secretariat Team based in Brussels, Belgium (with offices in Germany, Poland and Turkey), the Executive Committee, and its members.

## HEAL Secretariat

Our committed and inspiring team are all working to create a better, healthier environment (March 2015 – March 2016).



**Génon K. Jensen**  
Executive Director



**Anne Stauffer**  
Deputy Director



**Lisette van Vliet**  
Senior Policy Officer, Chemicals and Health



**Julia Huscher**  
Senior Policy Officer, Energy and Health



**Weronika Piestrzyńska**  
Health and Energy Programme Manager, Poland



**Vlatka Matkovic Puljic**  
Health and Energy Officer, Balkans region



**Diana G. Smith**  
Communications and Media Adviser



**Lucy Mathieson**  
Communications Manager



**Marlena Kropidłowska**  
Social Media Officer, Poland



**Sara Azcona Zabala**  
Finance and Administrative Officer

#### **HEAL welcomed:**

Ivonne Leenen, Digital Media Officer (as of 7 November)

#### **We were sorry to say good-bye to:**

Łukasz Adamkiewicz, Coal and Health Adviser, Poland

Deniz Gümüşel, Air Quality and Energy Consultant, Turkey

Katharina Rettig, Climate and Health Outreach Coordinator

The most important development in the reporting period was that HEAL was able to increase its team meaning capacity for advocacy and communications, with two new well trained and experienced staff members joining the team in Brussels, and one new consultant reinforcing HEAL's media and communications activities in Poland. We received administrative support particularly for improving our database and network contacts throughout the year from a student assistant. The outcome is a record in media coverage and membership uptake of our communications activities. Regarding the team's capacity, a 1 day strategy day of HEAL's staff together with the HEAL Executive Committee greatly helped to increase their strategic thinking for policy and organisational development, and used to further develop our ongoing business plans and fundraising proposals.

## Executive Committee

The organisation has two governing bodies – the Executive Committee and the General Assembly. The General Assembly is comprised of all member organisations and generally meets once a year in Brussels. HEAL's Executive Committee is made up of elected representatives of the membership, who meet more frequently. It is elected for a two-year mandate. The current members were elected in 2014.

HEAL warmly thanks our Executive Committee members for their technical expertise, strategic input and commitment and contribution to our network and our vision during the course of this year. We also extend our thanks to all our member organisations and partners. Many individuals and non-member organisations have also supported us.



**Peter van den Hazel**

HEAL President  
International Network for Children's Health,  
Environment and Safety (Netherlands)

**Marie-Christine Dewolf**

HEAL Vice-President  
Hygiène Publique en Hainaut (Belgium)

**Roberta Savli**

HEAL Treasurer  
European Federation of Allergy & Airways  
Diseases Patients' Association (Belgium)

**Lynn Ladbroke**

Breast Cancer UK (United Kingdom)

**Indre Butiene**

Klaipeda University (Lithuania)

**Ruth Echeverría**

Fundación Alborada (Spain)

**Nina Renshaw**

European Public Health Alliance EPHA (Belgium)



# Network capacity building and Network enlargement/new members

## Activities

### HEAL Annual General Assembly

On 28 and 29 October, 20+ HEAL members came together for the [2015 Annual General Assembly](#). The two day meeting was packed with capacity building on policy developments, including the upcoming Paris COP21 climate conference and the EU's climate and energy policy and the health community's input to it; and a special session on Regulatory Cooperation and Better Regulation. The EU Health Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis could not participate in person but contributed with a [special video](#) on climate change. The AGA adopted HEAL's work programme for 2016 and approved two new HEAL members, WEMOS from the Netherlands and France Nature Environnement.

### Building members' engagement and capacity on EU policy processes, and strengthening collaboration with health partners

2015 saw a continued high engagement of HEAL members on advocacy on EU policy files and science to policy communication. HEAL members are important multipliers on policy work and messages in their respective networks. At the same time, they are crucial watchdogs on gaps of the implementation of EU law at national level, or how a national minister deals with new EU policy proposals. The Secretariat therefore works with members

in a two-way fashion. HEAL is an organisation that prides itself in the high numbers of members involved in the implementation of its work programme, and 2015 confirmed this priority, while at the same time taking the collaboration with health and medical partners who are not HEAL members on EU environmental, climate, energy policy to a new level.

Highlights of member and partner collaboration include:

- **Air quality:** The coalition of HEAL members and health partners (EU COPD alliance, European Heart Network etc.) was a leading voice for the NGO input to the NEC Deliberations in the EP and Council. Members active on this file include ERS, EFA, EPHA, Alborada Foundation, Cancer Prevention and Education Society, IDEA, INCHEs.
- **Climate and energy:** HEAL's COP21 delegation included members INCHEs, Generation Cobayes and health partners from Poland, Turkey, Germany, Serbia. For the COP events we build up a partnership with the French Medical Association, the World Medical Association and received support from the International Medical Association, the International Federation of Medical Students, and the Global Climate and Health Alliance. In Germany, we established a new collaboration with the German Society on Environmental Medicine, and Hygiene through publishing regular articles in their bi-monthly specialised journal.

- **Chemicals Safety and REACH:** HEAL teamed up especially with cancer group to work on EU policies that will reduce exposure to hazardous chemicals and pesticides. Members involved include Maltese member Action for Breast Cancer Foundation for World Cancer Day, UK cancer charities, and member Generation Futures for the Pesticide Action Week.
- **Chemicals: EDCs:** 25 HEAL members are part of the EDC-Free Europe coalition and regularly participate in advocacy and communications work with the EU institutions and national ministers on EDC policy; in addition we engaged member ISDE and partner European Cancer Leagues, as well as the French Cancer League in a call for a banning of glyphosate
- **Green Economy and Trade:** HEAL member EPHA is particularly active on Better Regulation as the horizontal issue in area 5; with the capacity building workshop at the 2015 AGA, HEAL engaged over 20 members on this policy issue and build the foundation for work in 2016 and beyond
- **Addressing global challenges:** HEAL's Maltese member Action for Breast Cancer Foundation was active on the WHO Resolution on air quality; and members WECF and ISDE on the international chemicals management processes (SAICM)

Other activities included:

- Expanded HEAL membership with two new members and invited other organisations to become HEAL members in target countries, e.g. EU presidencies or countries that are

progressive on health and environmental protection (Sweden, Denmark)

- 5 webinars organised for European, Polish, Serbian audiences (3 webinars on the Road to Paris; 1 webinar on coal, mercury and health in Serbia; 1 webinar on air pollution and health in Poland)
- Regularly updated HEAL members through virtual working groups and listserves, and highlighted advocacy opportunities, e.g. on the National Emissions Ceilings Directive or glyphosate

## Results

HEAL members continued to receive up-to-date, strategic and timely information on how they could engage in EU policy processes on air quality, climate, chemicals, Better Regulation and links to international developments. This led to a high number of HEAL members being active on EU policy files. In addition, HEAL membership increased by 2 new members from the Netherlands and France, both of which are key strategic countries for endocrine disruptors and air quality policy. The reporting period was particularly impactful regarding new and/or strengthened collaboration with partners. Examples include the teaming up with the French Medical Association for COP21, the working with the European Cancer Leagues on glyphosate for World Cancer Day, the advocacy collaboration with the COPD Coalition on air quality. All of the activities reported on above and under the specific policy areas with members and partners greatly helped to strengthen HEAL's ability to weigh in at critical junctures in EU and global policy and implementation.

# COMMUNICATIONS



## Activities

2015 continued to be another impactful year for HEAL's communications activities, where we strengthened in particular our outreach and impact on social media, with the support of a social media assistant, Ivonne Leenen.

Almost all aspects of HEAL's work are ultimately aimed at achieving strong visibility for effective communication. For good quality written materials, the communication team works closely with all policy officers to ensure evidence-based, well-written and attractively illustrated reports, fact sheets, articles, press releases and policy statements.

### Highlights of HEAL's communications work in 2015 include

- The use of a Thunderclap (a tweet that gains support from individuals which is then released at a key moment on one day) and targeted social media engagement with members and health partners for the deliberations on the EU National Emissions Ceilings (NEC) Directive;
- Media and communication prior and during the UNFCCC COP21 Climate conference;
- Engaging MEPs, national campaigners and citizens on twitter, particularly with the use of visuals and sharing the latest science on health effects of chemicals with our large journalist network.



## Ramping up the social media outreach

For advocacy work, HEAL relies particularly on Twitter to engage with high level EU and national policy-makers, and to flag up key policy junctures for advocacy with our members and partners. Since this social media tool has been very impactful we now take a strategic decision whether or not to send a press release or share a quote/message on Twitter instead. This has helped the HEAL communications team become more efficient and targeted. A visual or quote card is being increasingly used by HEAL to add value to a tweet and make a message more attractive to followers.

HEAL's overall objective for using Twitter is to influence, to inform and be informed, to mobilise and be mobilised. It works to raise HEAL's profile and spread our messages in multiple languages via several Twitter accounts (e.g. HEAL, HEAL Poland and EDC-Free Europe), as well as providing followers with perspectives to reach influential and wider audiences.

For the third year in a row this area of communication has been particularly successful, and is used on a daily basis by HEAL for outreach to EU and national policy-makers, member organisations, journalists, partner organisations, the public, trendsetters and bloggers, and health professionals. HEAL aims to tweet on average two times a day with a combination of retweets on its wall and with additional efforts on Twitter around key dates throughout the year. HEAL is strategic with its Twitter activity and has identified what times of the day and at weeks are the most effective time to tweet to reach our followers. Keeping tweets to an average of two per day means we do not overload the Twitter feed which allows followers time to read and engage with our messaging. In 2015, HEAL carried out research

to identify in particular journalists with a large number of followers, and then we sent them targeted messages. A second focus was to engage policy-makers in conversations, instead of simply sharing information with them.

HEAL has a unique Twitter account as it is so diverse in the policy areas that it covers and in the types of tweets that it creates – including highlighting key facts and figures, announcing new publications and reports, press releases, letters, position papers and news articles, sharing info-graphics and photos from events and conferences, starting conversations, interacting with users and followers on twitters and thanking organisations and policy makers for their work. This unique character of HEAL's Twitter account is also represented in the diversity of individuals and organisations following it:

- Soledad O'Brien (CEO of Starfish Media Group, 466K followers)
- ONE in Africa (organisation of 7 million members, followed by 131K people)
- Avaaz (global civic movement connecting over 43 million citizens worldwide, followed by 805K people)

Although HEAL has a large number of followers in Europe, our work is travelling much further and we influence globally. Additionally, HEAL is followed and regularly interacts with a wide variety of journalists. Some key examples include Arthur Neslen, Brussels environment correspondent of the Guardian (followed by 2,013 people), James Crisp of EurActiv (followed by 2,691 people), and Carmen Paun of Politico Europe (followed by 1,389 people).



Regarding interactions with representatives of EU institutions, in 2015, HEAL held conversations on twitter with EU Vice-President Sefcovic, EU Environment Commissioner Vella and EU Health Commissioner Andriukaitis. Information shared on Twitter by HEAL is followed by key MEPs including Michele Rivasi, Pavel Poc, Sirpa Pietainen, Nicola Caputo, Biljana Borzan, and Bart Staes.

In 2015, we placed a priority on designing and sharing visuals, as a current trend that guarantees impact on Twitter. This means sharing quote cards, infographics, photos, or additional text to go with a tweet. In order to still make sure visitors go to HEAL's main website, the communications team strategically links to articles, press releases, publications, letters, position papers and other resources in its tweets. As a result, the top referrals to HEAL's website often come via Twitter.

With 1,301 tweets on HEAL's main account, the communications team has kept the number of tweets steady compared to last year (1346 tweets), while trying to engage more in conversations. With this strategy and by researching key people to influence HEAL managed to almost double the number of new followers compared to the year before (1653 new followers compared to 924 in 2014). The total number of followers on HEAL's main account is now 5,000.

The strategy to attract new followers worked particularly well for the EDC-Free Europe Twitter account, which HEAL runs as the Secretariat for the EDC-Free coalition. There

we gained 1,052 new subscribers, compared to 454 in 2014, and we posted a tweet a day on average (391 tweets in total). Examples of influential followers of the EDC-Free account include Brian Brushwood (Host of various National Geographic programs, followed by 1.28M people), NonProfitOrgs (a portal for nonprofits, followed by 829K people), and EnviroNews (an American news outlet, followed by 176K people). As there is interest on the topic of EDCs in the USA, the EDC-Free account is often followed by individuals and group based there, such as the Collaborative on Health and Environment (CHE).

A successful aspect of HEAL's social media work are the well planned and targeted '**social media packs**' and **sample tweets** provided particularly to HEAL members for advocacy work or the launch of a major new report, news story, new science with a clear and targeted approach. In 2015, this included for example tweets on the NEC Directive; the ECJ hearing and decision on the EDC criteria; Pesticide Action Week; UNFCCC COP21. On average, HEAL sends sample tweets once a week. For the deliberations on NEC HEAL successfully used the tool of a Thunderclap, which resulted in our call for clean air to be spread to almost 400,000 people, including all MEPs.

Not only are sample tweets and 'social media packs' put together for major launches and new stories but also for key dates of importance to HEAL, such as **Pesticide Action Week, Global Frackdown Month, World Asthma Day, World Cancer Day and the European Week against Cancer**. In 2015 we participated for the first time in social media on the Ending fossil fuels day in November.



The **increased social media impact in Poland** is another highlight of HEAL's activities in 2015-16. A total of 746 tweets were posted in the reporting period, compared to 526 tweets the year before. This meant an average of two tweets a day (and then additional re-tweeting of information from others). Yet, tweets increase for dedicated policy junctures or when new reports are launched. As a result of the increased emphasis on twitter, HEAL was able to gather 269 new followers, increasing the total number of followers to 415. Autumn was a particularly impactful time with tweet impressions rising up to 17450. November was the month with the highest number of tweets (119) and mentions from other twitter users (88 times), and in October HEAL sent 60+ tweets to Polish MEPs ahead of a key vote on air quality (National Emissions Ceilings Directive).

Key followers of HEAL in Poland included the Polish Ministry of the Environment, a spokesman of General Inspectorate of environmental protection, Grzegorz Lipiec - Member of the Board of Małopolska Region, Municipal Police of Wrocław city, Polish wind energy association, Military medical Institute, Regional Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management in Katowice, as well as journalists covering the subject of air pollution.

Conversations on Twitter took place with MEP Andrzej Grzyb (influential MEP in the Polish delegation, member of ENVI); Marcin Korolec, the State Secretary for the Environment responsible for Climate Policy; Beata Jacewska, the former deputy minister of environment, and undersecretary of state in the Ministry of Environment.

HEAL not only uses Twitter as a communications and outreach tool but also HEAL's main **Facebook page** saw an increase in likes compared to the last reporting period (+506 compared to the year before, with total likes of 1512). Facebook is used in a different way to Twitter, and aims to outreach on a personal level to its followers. Through research, HEAL's finds the most effective way to reach policy makers is on Twitter, whereas Facebook is used on a more personal and campaign wide basis. The HEAL Facebook page has received personal questions from individuals interested in our work, such as how to avoid certain chemicals in their daily lives.

HEAL in Poland also concentrated on engaging with citizens on Facebook, with an average of 1 post a day. Posts include specific information about HEAL activities, conferences that the team takes part in, data from latest researches and articles on the issue, interviews, own articles and infographics. In the reporting period, HEAL uploaded 300 posts, generating outreach of around 50.000 viewers, gaining 283 new followers by mid-March 2016. Highlights of HEAL's Facebook activities include sharing a graphic by the leading politician on a new anti-smog bill (6 Oct); a HEAL image on health impacts of air pollution with an outreach of 807, as well as a post on a radio interview by HEAL (outreach 470).





## Continued reliance on HEAL newsflash for policy communication

HEAL's monthly newsflash is a key information resource for decision-makers and the environment and health community regarding policy developments on air quality, climate and energy, chemicals etc. and the latest science. The newsflash featured a total of 81 articles in across HEAL's six different areas of work in the reporting period. HEAL uses the newsflash to widely disseminate information on how our members are active on EU policies, including highlighting gaps in implementation, so highlighting activities form their watchdog function. A total of **80 articles on members were included in the newsflash**, with many member organisations proactively sending information. Timely petitions and take actions are also highlighted as well as new HEAL publications, media coverage, Twitter activities and a listing of upcoming environmental health events.

HEAL has almost **7,000 subscribers to its monthly news** (11 editions in 2015. This summary does not touch on the multiple more times the newsflash is re-distributed via members, partners, organisations such as CHE, the EU Commission Health newsletter, and EU research networks, as well as inclusion in members newsletters and websites. HEAL circulates relevant articles to its extensive listserves and uses its social media accounts to target specific content to followers. HEAL uses more visuals to share news on Twitter as well as tagging individuals in a tweet to amplify a message and gain a bigger outreach in a single tweet. HEAL receives positive feedback on a regular basis from high level national civil servants and EU institutional staff as well as HEAL members and partners on the content of the newsflash.

## HEAL websites

The website which is updated on a weekly basis, acts as a hub for policy makers, individuals, members and interested organisations in HEAL's work. Sections are focused on policy news, press work, publications, letters, position papers, projects and a key 'in focus' area on the homepage highlights key articles. A Twitter feed is found on the homepage to allow visitors to keep up with the latest news. During the reporting period, the **main HEAL website** had 63,441 visits, with a 2.9 percent increase of visitors compared to 2014. 69.5 percent of these visits were from new visitors. The top five countries were visitors came from are: US, Belgium, UK, France and Germany.

**The EDC Free Website** has attracted as many as 21,990 visits to the site after being launched in April 2013 with a re-launch of a newly revised website in July 2013. 2015 saw over 12,346 visits to the site with the most coming from US, Belgium, followed by Spain and the UK. In 2015, HEAL revamped the website with specific subscribe to news in the seven languages of the campaign. Icons and subscribe to news visuals were created for use by EDC-Free campaign partners to continue to build up the number of individual supporters to the campaign. The EDC-Free campaign has social media tools - Facebook page and Twitter account to increase its outreach.

The **HEAL Poland website** was launched in November 2014. Until 14 March 2016, the website attracted 1165 unique visitors and 1363 page visits had been recorded. The website is regularly updated, and in 2015-16 there was 1 article uploaded per week on average.

## **HEAL Media Strategy and press work, including media monitoring**

While social media is gaining in importance, sending out press releases (in different languages) continues to be a key component of HEAL's media strategy, with the aim to send two or three press or information releases each month. The press releases covered all six of HEAL's areas and were used to comment on policy developments, launch publications, positions, activities and events. Mailings are sent to extensive lists of Brussels and Europe-based policy, national and specialist journalists in newspapers, online news services, radio and television as well as to communicators and others in our members' and partners' organisations, and promoted via twitter. HEAL's database of key journalists is updated on a regular basis, especially with key national media targets in countries where HEAL is increasing its media presence, for example Poland, Germany, Turkey, Western Balkans.

When HEAL is launching a new report, the full force of the communications team's organisation is brought to bear to achieve maximum and targeted visibility. This includes defining the target audiences to be reached and gathering appropriate recent science and policy developments to help create the background context for the press release to make it as attractive as possible to the media. It also involves working with the policy team to ensure that key facts or illustrative material required for press work feature in the publication text. One successful example of this approach for 2015 was the launch of the report "the Unpaid Health Bill – how coal power plants in the Western Balkans make us sick". HEAL's strategy included working with a dedicated media consultant, who helped to receive at least 45 features in regional and national press.

The media and communication strategy is developed with the target audiences in mind. The intention is to achieve media coverage in those newspapers, policy news websites or television that are most likely to be reached by the policy makers targeted. To reach further target audiences, such as networks specialising in air quality, mailings include lists of editors of newsletters, communicators in EU and UN institutions, and to key listserves, including our own. Press releases are included on the HEAL website and on social media channels. Tweets are tagged with journalists who HEAL strategically identifies. Where possible, journalists are contacted prior to the launch of the main press release via email and telephone call in which an initial announcement is made and a suggested angle is given to meet the needs of the journalists' target audience.

HEAL also frequently **involves members and partner organisations (e.g. the EDC-Free Europe coalition) in the promotion and dissemination of press releases**. This has the virtue of more personal outreach to journalists in different EU countries. It sometimes prompts the partner to translate the press release, which further extends its visibility in one or more countries. Other members often help reach specialist networks, such as on climate or international chemicals networks.

After the press release is launched, **media monitoring** begins. All those citing HEAL are collated and a summary of achievements in relation to target audience is prepared. In 2015, HEAL prepared six special reports on media coverage, including social media achievements (COP21, Western Balkans, Turkey toolkit, Pesticide Action Week, the NEC Directive, FIGO). In between press launches, the monitoring of new science and policy developments continues, especially with a

view to identifying future opportunities for media work. Other activities include responding to spontaneous requests from journalists and communicators for interviews

and quotes, for example from The Parliament Magazine, Euractiv and POLITICO, and updating the media database (1,000 journalists).

## Results

**Media coverage:** Overall, this year's 41 press releases produced 457 published or broadcast news media articles. Throughout 2015, HEAL's work on air quality, climate change, chemicals and other key policies continued to receive positive coverage in good quality national newspapers in Europe, including the UK's Guardian, which has an online global audience of 7.35 million readers, or the front page (on several occasions) of one of Poland's leading newspapers, Gazeta Wyborcza. In addition, HEAL has made progress on reaching citizens and policy-makers via leading TV channels, with appearances on Polish breakfast TV, the main Serbian national TV station, and features in Dutch, French, Turkish TV stations, and Voice of America Balkans TV.

**On social media,** the fact that HEAL gained almost 2000 new followers in 2015 means that HEAL's policy demands and evidence has reached more key stakeholders. HEAL also created political pressure around key policy junctures, including the NEC deliberations in the EP; the ECJ ruling on the EDC criteria; meetings on the re-approval of glyphosate. During COP21, HEAL's live tweeting helped to involve health and medical stakeholders who could not participate in the meeting.

**In the reporting period** HEAL was also able to increase its contributions to specialised journals, with articles on human biomonitoring, health demands for COP21, healthy energy initiative and the special collaboration with the magazine of the German Society for Hygiene, Environmental and Occupational Medicine (GHUP) for bi-monthly articles.

### **The results were achieved through the following activities:**

- 44 press releases
- 15 blogs and contributions to medical or scientific journals
- 11 issues of the HEAL newsletter
- 2,9 % increase in number of visitors to HEAL website
- Newsletter circulation increased to 6985 subscribers
- Social media: 2438 Tweets for all of HEAL's accounts; increased total number of followers to 5,000 for HEAL main account; increased likes by 506 for HEAL main Facebook page.



# Financial Management, Evaluation, Reporting

HEAL is funded through our membership fees and grants from the EU Commission, governments and international organisations, such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), and by private foundations.

HEAL is independent of any political party or commercial interest. We do not accept funding from sources with commercial interests.

HEAL's financial year runs from 15 March 2015 to 14 March 2016. The audit was carried out by an independent auditor's company.

## Income

E.C. grant	€ 356,158.00
Other grants (governments, private foundations)	€456,021.60
Membership fees	€ 10,870.00

## Total Income

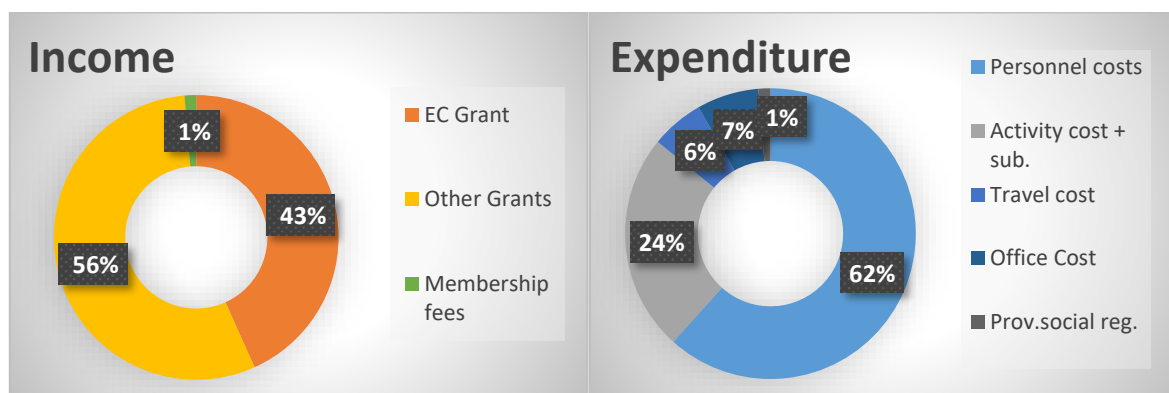
€ 823,049.60

## Expenditure

Personnel costs	€ 507,343.99
Activity costs including subcontractors	€ 199,528.85
Travel and subsistence costs	€ 48,431.26
Administration, IT and office costs	€ 56,875.50
Provisions for social regulations	€ 10,870.00

## Total Expenditure

€ 823,049.60



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The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) is a leading European not-for-profit organization addressing how the environment affects health in the European Union. With the support of its over 70 member organizations, which represent health professionals, not-for-profit health insurers, patients, citizens, women, youth, and environmental experts, HEAL brings independent expertise and evidence from the health community to different decision-making processes. Members include international and Europe-wide organisations as well as national and local groups.



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*Promoting environmental policy that contributes to good health*

## References

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<https://tradinghealthforprofit.wordpress.com/>