

# Climate and energy



Success in highlighting the external costs to health from air pollution caused by coal power generation in Germany, Poland, UK and Romania; health summit at the UN climate talks showed HEAL's rapid and consistent progress in building a voice on coal and health at the national level.

This year, support for HEAL's position on the co-benefits for health of climate action has greatly increased through national activities to promote the findings of the ground-breaking report: "The Unpaid Health Bill: How coal power plants make up sick".

Thanks to the translation of HEAL's report into German, Polish and Romanian, and the promotion of figures on costs in the United Kingdom, these countries now have at their disposal the economic analysis on health costs related to coal power. This is being used at the national level for energy decisions and for further deliberations on the EU 2030 climate and energy package.

## Coal and health: creating a debate across Europe

### GERMANY

**24 April 2013:** Coal's health bill in Germany: up to 6 million EUR annually, **Berlin**

**13 June 2013:** Meeting of local communities in coal mining region, **Buir, Nordrhein-Westfalen**

**12 September 2013:** Health impacts of coal highlighted at doctor's training session, **Pulheim, Nordrhein-Westfalen**

**27 September 2013:** Polish-German conference on impact of coal pollution on health, **Guben/Gubin**

**8 November 2013:** Hearing at the state Parliament of Nordrhein-Westfalen, **Düsseldorf**

**12 December 2013:** Hearing on expansion of lignite mine, **Cottbus, Nordrhein-Westfalen**

**18 February 2014:** Meeting on how health insurers could profit from phasing out coal, **Aachen**

**24 February 2014:** The return of coal: German TV documentary, screened on prime time **German TV, Hamburg**

### POLAND

**24 May 2013:** Conference on children's environmental health, **Legnica**

**3 June 2013:** First-ever assessment of health costs from coal burning launched in **Poland, Warsaw**

**26 – 30 August 2013:** HEAL reaches out to health and medical experts on air pollution, **Warsaw**

**15 November 2013:** European Greens' conference Citizens Energy, **Warsaw**

**16 November 2013:** Climate and Health Summit, **Warsaw**

**29 November 2013:** Air quality conference: Coal combustion's impact on health, **Lubin (Western Poland)**

**7 February 2014:** Expert workshop on health impacts of domestic coal combustion, **Warsaw**

**10 March 2014:** Conference on 'New legislation in the fight for clean air', **Krakow**

### UNITED KINGDOM

**5 December 2013:** HEAL briefing: 'What does coal cost health in the UK?' **London**

**1-2 March 2014:** Healthy Planet UK Conference, **London**

### BELGIUM

**Continuous:** HEAL works to educate decision-makers on the health costs of coal pollution in Europe, and policy changes needed, for example on the Transitional National Plans, **Brussels**

**27 November 2013:** One of three lectures on the impacts of fossil fuels by HEAL member Inter-Environnement Wallonie, **Liège**

### FRANCE

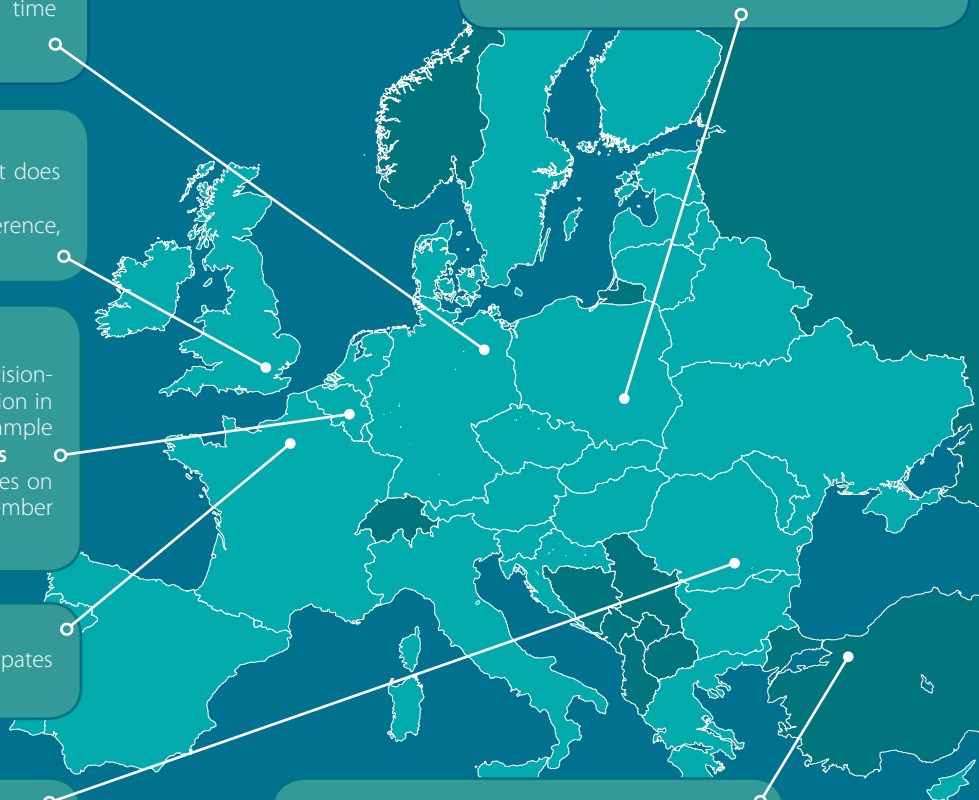
**March 2013:** HEAL Member C2DS participates in national energy date, **France**

### ROMANIA

**9 December 2013:** Press conference on coal's health bill in Romania: up to 6 million EUR annually, **Bucharest**

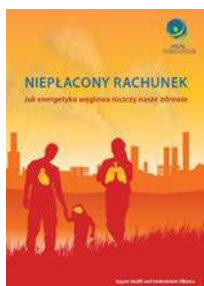
### TURKEY

**26 June 2013:** Fighting coal power and winning, 'Global Power Shift' conference, **Istanbul**



## Initiating national public debates

By making known national figures on the health costs of coal power generation in Germany and Poland, HEAL succeeded in launching a public debate and strong media coverage in these two countries. This prompted medical and scientific representatives to become more vocal in policy discussions as agents of change.



Polish version

In Poland, thanks to a letter to the city mayor and media coverage, HEAL contributed to Kraków becoming the first city in Europe to issue a complete ban on the domestic burning of coal and wood.

The **German Medical Journal** made crystal clear what HEAL's work was achieving at the national level in the following headline:

**"Health effects from coal power plants: New study has fuelled debate."**

In an interview with a Krakow daily newspaper, circulation over 400,000, HEAL's Lukasz Adamkiewicz was asked why he thought health arguments on coal were not yet being taken into account. He answered:

*"It seems strange because very good research carried out by Professor Wieslaw Jędrychowski of the Medical College in Krakow has found that the contamination (by pollutants from coal in the air) affects infants. They have a smaller head circumference than in less polluted areas and this in turn can affect their intellectual potential."*

Source: *The study that opens our eyes, Gazeta Wyborcza, Krakow, 23 October 2013*

## Engaging health experts in Poland

Poland is Europe's biggest user of coal and one of HEAL's priority countries. In February 2014, HEAL hosted an expert workshop with medical professionals and health experts on the domestic use of coal in Poland. The productive meeting resulted in five participant organisations: Military Institute of Medicine; Polish Federation of Associations of Asthma, Allergy and COPD; Warsaw University of Technology, Faculty of Environmental Engineering; Institute of Environmental Protection - National Research Institute; National Institute of Public Health - National Institute of Hygiene; European Medical Students' Association expressing interest in producing joint materials on health implications of domestic coal burning aimed at building capacity among health and medical experts.



## Putting Germany on the spot

Germany is the second target country for HEAL's activities as it plans to build several new coal power plants. Germany's coal power plants are associated with health costs of more than €6 billion per year.



On 24 April 2013, HEAL launched the German version of report *The Unpaid Health Bill* with a press conference in Berlin. Media coverage featured in *Die Welt*, a leading national daily newspaper, and in *Spiegel* online, the leading weekly. The report was featured in over 50 articles in national and regional media.

In February 2014, HEAL's senior coal and health officer Julia Huscher appeared in a documentary filmed on the health impacts of coal power plants, which was shown on prime time television across German on the TV channel ARD.



HEAL took its work beyond the capital in Germany with advocacy work and outreach to health professionals in the key German states of Nordrhein-Westfalen and Brandenburg. Presentations and training were given to medical professionals and health insurance providers and at selected conferences.

## HEAL recognised in Turkey

In September 2013, HEAL's Senior Coal and Health Officer Julia Huscher (second from right in below photo) was personally selected out of thousands to participate in global conference in Istanbul, Turkey on coal power. This showed a clear recognition for HEAL's strategy in promoting health harm from coal.



## UK briefing reached the top

In December 2013, ahead of an important debate on the future of coal in the UK House of Commons, HEAL published a briefing with the health costs in the UK associated with air pollution from coal power plants. The findings appeared in coverage in most of the UK daily newspapers.

### Guardian headline, December 2013

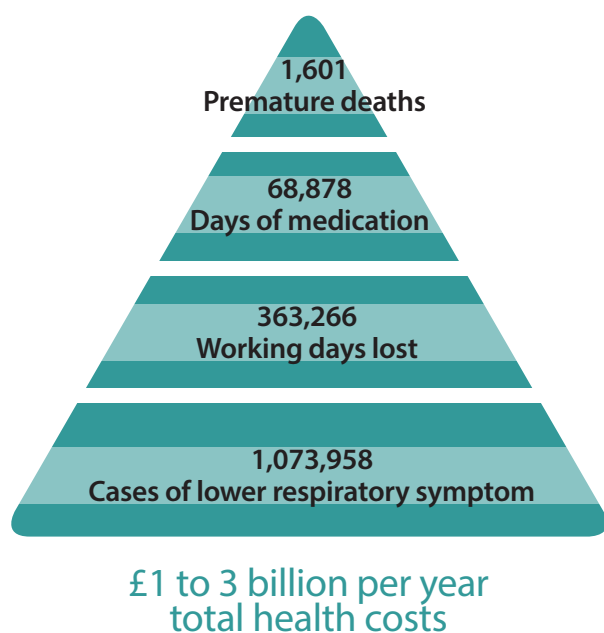
*Charity says coal-burning kills 1,600 a year as MPs vote on tighter controls*



HEAL's Executive Director Génon K. Jensen presents HEAL's Unpaid Health Bill to the Prince of Wales at an event (well timed with the launch of the UK briefing) on health and climate in London in December 2013, supported by HEAL member Torben Sigsgaard, from the European Respiratory Society.

## THE HEALTH HARM FROM COAL TRIANGLE

Annual health impacts caused in UK by coal power plants:



Source: HEAL briefing: *What does coal cost health in the United Kingdom?* December, 2013

## Romania launch feeds national strategy

A press briefing in Bucharest on 9 December 2013 launched the Romanian version of the report. Activities were stimulated by a request from several national organisations. The discussions have fed into discussions on the Romanian national energy strategy.



Thirteen articles were published in Romania following the press conference. Media outlets included Agerpress and several energy and economic news agencies for Romanian audiences.

## International advocacy

### UN climate talks

The UN Climate Conference (UNFCCC COP19) in Warsaw, Poland in November 2013 provided HEAL with an opportunity to promote the important benefits for health of strong action to mitigate climate change.

Prior to the meeting, HEAL wrote to WHO Director General Margaret Chan with partners urging the WHO to bring the positive health message to both health ministries and climate negotiators across the globe: the “co-benefits” to health of tackling both chronic diseases and climate change are increasingly well known, and benefit both people and planet.

Génon K. Jensen was invited to speak on the panel for an official COP19 side event organised by WHO Europe which took place the day after the Health and Climate Summit (see below). Génon spoke alongside representatives of the health ministries of Poland, the UK, the EU Commission, German Development cooperation and others. She gave special emphasis to the benefits for health of reducing air pollution by phasing out coal in energy production and welcomed the support of the WHO in helping health ministries from the African region to participate in the climate negotiations.

### The Summit for health

HEAL was a local convening partner of the **Climate and Health Summit** on 16 November 2013. Organised by the Global Climate and Health Alliance (GCHA) with the World Medical Association and supported by the WHO, it attracted 250 participants and emphasised the urgent need to prioritise the protection and promotion of health within global and national policy responses to climate change.



Executive Director Génon K. Jensen outlined her thoughts on a political roadmap for the international health community towards COP21 in Paris in 2015.



HEAL's senior coal and health officer Julia Huscher addressed the Summit on the links between air pollution, energy and health, focusing on the co-benefits to health and highlighting



HEAL's activities on coal and health. She opened the session with an inspirational video from HEAL partner, Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA), Australia, on the human cost of coal. (snapshot from film left).

HEAL ensured that the health impacts of coal were evident in Poland at the COP19 climate talks by stimulating articles in the Outreach – the COP19 magazine and Climate News Network, which provides journalists with climate science news. HEAL was quoted from the event in the Guardian Green blog.



The HEAL team in Poland took part in **“Cough for coal” activities**. With a huge number of other civil society groups, HEAL supported the Cough4coal campaign, to which Julia Huscher provided health expertise. One of the stunts was to bring a giant pair of inflatable pink lungs to the building where a World Coal Summit was taking place in parallel to COP19. The action appeared in leading European media including The Guardian, the Irish Times, National Geographic, Sueddeutsche, and on Chinese Central television.



Above from left to right: Lukasz Adamkiewicz, Julia Huscher, Génon K. Jensen and Lucy Mathieson (HEAL)

Right and below: Isobel Braithwaite, Healthy Planet UK takes part in the action



## European health and coal campaign on Facebook

A month before COP19 on the occasion of the Global Day of Action against Coal in October 2013, HEAL launched a coal and health Facebook page to encourage individuals to share their personal stories on how coal is affecting their health. During COP19, this page was updated regularly.



## Strength through partnership

HEAL aims to put health at the centre of the EU 2030 climate and energy policy because harm from climate will fall heavily on human health - and mitigation action will promote health.

HEAL works closely with partners in Europe on climate advocacy for example, in this action (below) where leading NGOs including HEAL called on the EU to put climate ambition back on track with what its citizens – and science – are calling for. This partnership event included a joint letter to German Chancellor Angela Merkel and energy minister Siegmur Gabriel on the package in February 2014.

More formally, HEAL is part of WHO's newly-formed Health in Climate (HIC) network and has continued to work closely with Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe, the Green10, Global Climate and Health Network as well as our members and partners to bring health to the centre of discussions.

