



BRUSSELS, 18 JUNE 2020

To: Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany

CC: Isabella Lövin, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Environment and Climate of Sweden; Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission for a Europe fit for the Digital Age (Competition); Christine Lagarde, President of the European Central Bank; Stella Kyriakides, EU Health Commissioner

RE: Call for zero pollution and EU Green Deal conditionality to drive EU's Healthy Recovery during the German EU Presidency

Dear Chancellor Merkel,

On the eve of both the EU Summit on 19 June and the start of the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union on 1 July 2020, you are in a key position to enable the success of the EU's recovery from the ongoing health and economic crisis stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. A central question to the recovery and bailouts debate is about conditionality and governance - the Council's work on this historic set of EU legislation will be driven by the country holding the EU Presidency before the new MFF enters into force.

Establishing a Green Deal conditionality is essential to ensure the shift from a polluting to a green economy with guaranteed health benefits for people including longer lives, less asthma attacks, stroke and cancer.

Zero pollution as outlined under the EU Green Deal needs to be at the core all recovery actions, including conditions for bail-outs, if we want to fulfil our obligations to the next generation and leave no one behind.

The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) is a leading European not-for-profit organisation working for better health through a healthier environment. With our 80 member organisations across the European region, we are ready to work with you during the German EU Presidency on setting Europe on the path for a healthy, sustainable and just recovery, by ensuring that the EU Green Deal is the blueprint for the EU's and national recovery actions.

COVID-19 has exposed the vulnerability of our health, our healthcare systems and our societies, and the need to ensure greater resilience. Urgent action to reduce environmental pollution is needed more than ever, and needs to be central to Europe's and national governments' recovery plans and investments. Measures following this pandemic should not contribute to worsening any preexisting causes of vulnerability, such as air or chemical pollution or chronic diseases.

The EU and Member states' capacity to pay back the funds raised depends on the credibility of their policy action assessed against science: ending any investment into pollution is the best way to ensure a healthy future for people and thus economies in Europe.

Health is a powerful motivator and frontline health workers are also [calling for a #HealthyRecovery](#). HEAL supported the initiative bringing together over 350 organisations representing over 40 million health professionals and over 4,500 individual health professionals from 90 different countries, that in May called on you and the other G20 leaders to use stimulus plans as a prescription for a healthy recovery.

As the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) manifesto](#) reminds us: *“Decisions made in the coming months can either ‘lock in’ economic development patterns that will do permanent and escalating damage to the ecological systems that sustain all human health and livelihoods, or, if wisely taken, can promote a healthier, fairer, and greener world.”*

Putting the zero pollution ambition at the center of a healthy, just and green recovery including making it a prerequisite for any bailouts will contribute immensely to HEAL’s vision of a healthy planet for healthy people. Creating a non-toxic, low carbon circular economy that promotes and protects health, resilience and our environment is within our reach. HEAL and its members are ready to work with you in this transformational time.

Yours sincerely,



Ms. Genon K. Jensen (She)
Executive Director
Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)

The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) is the leading not-for-profit organisation addressing how the environment affects human health in the European Union (EU) and beyond. HEAL works to shape laws and policies that promote planetary and human health and protect those most affected by pollution, and raise awareness on the benefits of environmental action for health.

HEAL’s over 80 member organisations include international, European, national and local groups of health professionals, not-for-profit health insurers, patients, citizens, women, youth, and environmental experts representing over 200 million people across the 53 countries of the WHO European Region.

As an alliance, HEAL brings independent and expert evidence from the health community to EU and global decision-making processes to inspire disease prevention and to promote a toxic-free, low-carbon, fair and healthy future.

HEAL’s EU Transparency Register Number: 00723343929-96