



VIRGINIJUS SINKEVIČIUS
Commissioner for Environment
Oceans and Fisheries

Brussels, 26 April 2022
Ref. Ares(2022)2549607

Ms Anne Stauffer
Deputy Director and Strategy Lead
Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)
Avenue des Arts 7/8
1210 Brussels
BELGIUM

Dear Ms Stauffer,

I would like to thank you and your co-signatories for your letter of 22 March 2022 addressed to Executive Vice-President Timmermans, Commissioner Kyriakides and me in which you call for a science-based revised EU air quality standards. I am replying to you on our joint behalf.

We share your concerns about the unacceptably high health and environmental burden from air pollution – and believe that this is largely preventable.

This is why, with the European Green Deal and under the Zero Pollution Action Plan, we have put in motion an initiative to revise the Ambient Air Quality Directives.¹ Accordingly, we will, amongst others, propose to revise air quality standards to align them more closely with the World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations. We have taken good note of the update to the WHO Global Air Quality Guidelines as published in September 2021, and of the fact that there is now a very strong body of evidence to show how air pollution affects different aspects of health at even lower concentrations than previously understood.

We also note that these WHO Global Air Quality Guidelines are based solely on scientific evidence and public health considerations, without factoring in other features such as legal aspects, cost-effectiveness criteria, technological feasibility, infrastructural measures, or sociopolitical considerations.

We are therefore currently conducting, in line with our Better Regulation agenda, a detailed impact assessment to understand better all aspects and consequences related to the revision of EU legislation. This will guide us in translating scientific advice into a policy proposal. As

¹ For details, please see, https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12677-Air-quality-revision-of-EU-rules_en

part of this impact assessment, we have extensively consulted with stakeholders, including citizens, public authorities, non-governmental organisations, industry and businesses, as well as researchers and academia. We are very pleased that you and many of your colleagues have contributed to our public consultation, and made your voices heard.

We are now finalising our impact assessment, and, informed by this, we will seek to put forward a proposal for a revision of the Ambient Air Quality Directives in the second half of 2022.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of stylized, flowing letters that appear to read 'V. Sinkevičius'.

Virginijus Sinkevičius