



A HEALTHY PLANET FOR HEALTHY PEOPLE

ANNUAL REPORT 2022/2023



HEAL
HEALTH AND
ENVIRONMENT
ALLIANCE

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20 YEARS OF HEAL

by Genon K. Jensen, founder and Executive Director



Twenty years ago, I realised that environmental pollution is linked to ill health and serious acute and chronic diseases, like cancer, asthma and respiratory diseases. This is when I launched into my environmental health journey and founded HEAL. It became clear to me that our ways of living and the environmental pollution resulting from that impacted our health. I wanted to know more about the impacts and the extent, how much of it was preventable, and what role and power policy-making

could have in it. Having just had a baby, I was shocked to discover that they were (and still are) exposed to pollution, even before they are born, with a myriad of risks and consequences for their health and healthy development. Newborns are subject to irreversible IQ loss due to mercury contamination, children are at a higher-risk of cancer because of exposure to some pesticides, and particulate matter pollution in the air can, through the mother's bloodstream, bypass the placenta and affect the baby's organs as they develop.

But it doesn't stop there: we are all exposed to pollution, a cocktail of pollutants, throughout our lifetime, and no lifestyle change or individual choice can protect us adequately. Knowing this, my determination grew to set up an NGO to make a difference through stronger policies for greater health protection. EU environmental policy offered a rich landscape to address this pollution, prevent disease for people living on the continent and beyond, and serve as good practice for policies and regulations much further beyond.

It was my strong belief then, and it is still today, that pointing out the connection between the environment and people's health is a powerful way to move the debate to a more holistic and sustainable approach, instead of continuing to think about the economy, the environment, and society in silos. Talking about how our health is affected by pollution can contribute immensely to the environmental and public health movements, create more support for EU environmental policies, and even explain why it makes economic sense for societies to protect the environment we live in.

As HEAL set up shop in Brussels, we spent our first years tending the HEAL environmental health garden: we prepared the soil and planted the seeds of health engagement, science to policy communication, and advocacy for EU policy change. Our alliance brought together passionate people working in the secretariat, within our membership and our partners, and grew – from six founding members and a secretariat with only a few team members in 2003 to over 80 member organisations in 2023 and over 20 staff, in Brussels and other European locations. There is a vibrant and dedicated health sector from North to South, East to West – in Europe and globally – active on environment and climate policies.

Health engagement has been at the core of our mission since the start: we have focused our efforts on informing health actors, building capacity, working together and bringing the health voice and expertise to environmental and climate policy making. In just over a decade, health engagement on climate grew from a handful of individuals to hundreds of organisations; over 70 health and public interest organisations are active for an EDC-Free Europe, and more than 100 organisations from all over Europe are calling for health protective clean air standards.

Bringing forward independent and emerging science on health, environment and climate has been HEAL's daily business since day one. Our overarching mission is to articulate how our health is affected by pollution, backed up

with evidence on how environmental contaminants in our air, food, water, products are linked to serious health conditions and diseases. Twenty years ago, we started our advocacy around the monogram on tackling environmental threats like chemicals, air pollution or pesticides to protect children's health published by WHO and the European Environment Agency (EEA). This was really a new frame at the time – especially how children are most at risk from developmental disorders and cancer to name a few. Today, the body of evidence is robust – overwhelming really. It highlights how pollution is responsible for dozens and dozens of health conditions and the latest research on impacts from pollutants' mixtures and combinations, as well as from low level pollution, is a wakeup call.

HEAL was also one of the first organisations to make the economic case for the co-benefits to people's health living in Europe by adopting more ambitious air, climate and chemicals policies, which in turn reduce healthcare costs. With a series of reports over the years, we calculated the [health benefits of stronger EU action on climate change](#) in 2010, the unpaid health bill from the [burning of coal](#) in 2013, as well as [health costs from our exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals \(EDCs\)](#) in 2014. In 2017 we shone the spotlight on the [hidden price tag of subsidising fossil fuels](#), and in 2022 we presented the first ever figures on the health cost of [fossil gas power generation](#). These assessments sparked public and policy debates at the EU, national and local level, and led to tangible health improvements, e.g. with the shelving of new coal projects, commitments to coal phase out dates, or the adoption of criteria to identify EDCs, as the first step to phase them out.

Our science to policy communication, health engagement and advocacy work not only showcases the real health impacts, but also puts forward the good news on how protective EU environmental, climate policies can significantly reduce this health harm and prevent disease, and HEAL has certainly made an impact in putting health consideration more firmly in some major environmental and climate policies over the past two decades. Some of the first advocacy seeds that we planted and nurtured were in the major EU environment and climate laws like the REACH regulation on chemicals in 2006, the ambient air quality directive in 2008 or the pesticide authorisation and reduction laws in 2009. Today they are now key pieces of legislation

and policies being revised as part of the EU Green Deal with an overarching objective of zero pollution, something that our community has pushed for and contributed to making a political possibility – we have come so far.

Everyone's health is affected by pollution. Some are more vulnerable than others, including children, older people, those already sick and those facing health inequalities. While we have made progress in getting the voices of those affected heard and succeeded in changing policies and politics, our work is far from done. A robust and growing body of evidence exists on how far-reaching the harm to health is from exposure to chemicals, pesticides, air pollution, and the accelerating triple crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss underscores why the continued engagement of the HEAL family and our network is essential.

We certainly know enough to act, and we need to act urgently, in order to achieve the much needed transformation in this decade. Health professionals are among the most trusted voices in society, and this health voice is needed more than ever in times of a growing backlash against the EU Green Deal, delays in regulatory action, eco-anxiety, economic hardship, and the war in Ukraine.

Our mission is still as relevant as ever. We strive to ensure that health evidence and voices are heard and acted on by politicians in Europe and beyond so that those most at risk by pollution can be protected. I am confident our alliance will continue to sow seeds of policy change and increase engagement to help shape laws on chemicals, pesticides, air quality, climate change and energy over the next years.

We invite you to join us in our journey to work towards a healthy planet for healthy people, one that promotes health and delivers a just transition for all.

“Today, the body of evidence is robust – overwhelming really. It highlights how pollution is responsible for dozens and dozens of health conditions”

2003

EPHA Environment Network (EEN)

4 founding members, from **3** countries

One staff member

Budget €515,000

2013

**Health and Environment
Alliance (HEAL) since 2006**

65 member organisations in **25** countries

11 staff members

Budget €686,000



2023: 20 years of HEAL

90 members in **28** countries

20 staff members and growing

Budget €1.98 M



“In the years I’ve worked for HEAL, I saw HEAL’s main message on healthy people on a healthy planet grow to a song echoed across the diverse health sector, and it’s now a popular tune with EU decision-makers. But our work is far from over! The engagement of HEAL’s members and our network for better health is a daily inspiration for me.”

Anne Stauffer, Deputy Director, HEAL



“Being part of HEAL is a professional, but also a personal commitment: as a representative of healthcare funds, I know how vital a stakeholder HEAL is in ensuring the protection of public health from environmental hazards; as a mother, I am convinced HEAL plays a key role in building a viable and sustainable future for future generations!”

Jessica Carreño, Executive Committee member

AN ALLIANCE OF ORGANISATIONS

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

As an alliance, we bring 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. We work closely with scientists, including through research projects, to translate independent science to policy and promote health protective regulations.

HEAL is made up of a **network of member organisations**, who meet once a year at an annual general meeting in Brussels. This is known as the **Annual General Assembly** during which HEAL members determine and endorse the broad policy guidelines of the organisation, and fulfil their governance duties such as approving the audited annual accounts and reviewing membership applications.

Every four years, the General Assembly also elects HEAL's board, the **Executive Committee**. This body is responsible for setting priorities, overseeing the implementation of HEAL's annual work programme, and enlisting the support of the members.

The **HEAL Secretariat** feeds policy information from the European scene to the membership, advising on interventions as political opportunities arise. It monitors policy developments, channels members' input into draft legislation, and advocates key messages to the EU institutions through thematic campaigns.

Over the course of the year, we held several events and activities that helped restore human connections across the HEAL secretariat and member organisations.

In October 2022, we held the first in-person Annual General Assembly since 2019, in the Secretariat's new office building. The two day event was filled with plenary sessions, workshops and events, offering wonderful opportunities to meet and reconnect with colleagues from across the Alliance in a face-to-face setting. This also gave the Secretariat a chance to hear what members were interested in receiving from the Alliance.

“We amplify
the voices of over
200 million people
across 28 countries
of the European
Region.”



“HEAL does an amazing job in translating scientific evidence into concrete advice and proposals for policy makers and the general public. HEAL will continue to be a crucial stakeholder to create awareness and protect our health in this ecological transition.”

Christian Horemans, Executive Committee member

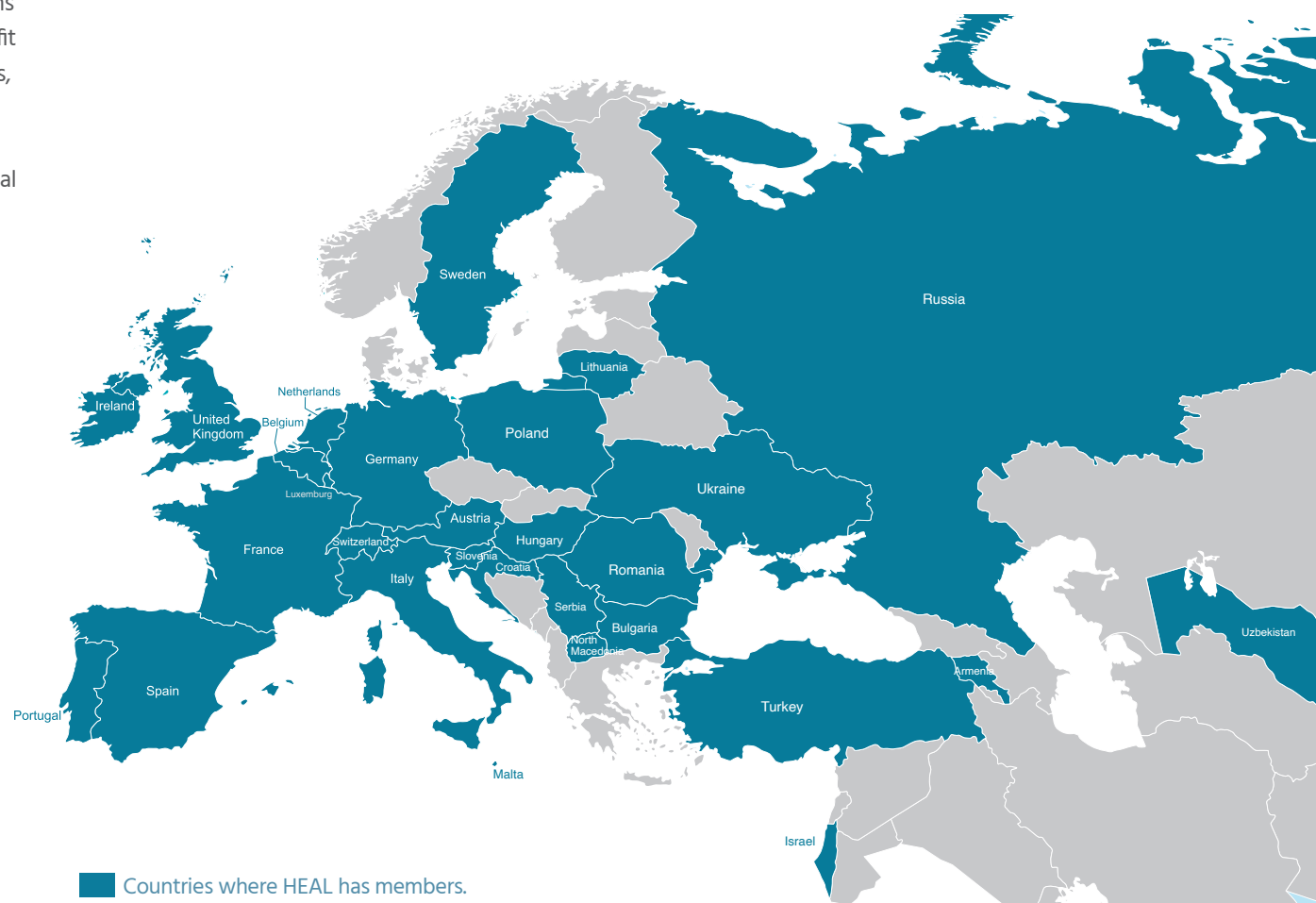
OUR MEMBERSHIP

Today, HEAL has over 90 member organisations representing health professionals, not-for-profit health insurers, doctors, nurses, patient groups, citizens, women's groups, youth groups, environmental NGOs, scientists and public health institutes. Members include international and Europe-wide organisations, as well as national and local groups, and together, we amplify the voices of over 200 million people across 28 countries of the European region.

We are proud that HEAL continues to grow as an alliance, and that we are able to share our key messages and materials within the European region and beyond. In 2022, we welcomed 2 new members.

Our members are deeply engaged on HEAL advocacy files, depending on their areas of interest and expertise. Having a committed membership base that is informed, engaged and well represented is at the core of HEAL's ability to succeed.

For a full list of current HEAL members and their activities, go to www.env-health.org



HEAL has two international members with observer status, based in Kenya and in the United States.

OUR VISION

A world in which today's and future generations can benefit from a clean environment to enjoy long and healthy lives.

A world that is free of health-harming chemicals, where the air we breathe and food we eat are health promoting; and a future in which we have transitioned in a just way to a toxic free, de-carbonised, climate resilient and sustainable economy and way of life.

OUR MISSION

We work to ensure that health evidence and health voices are heard by politicians and policy makers in Europe and beyond. The aim is to protect those most harmed, most at risk by pollution, such as the foetus, children, pregnant women and the elderly, and those with existing health problems or living in especially exposed environments, and facing health inequalities.

We have strong relationships with our European members and we partner with organisations around the world to raise awareness and share evidence, change laws, and defend and improve people's health and wellbeing.

We help shape laws on chemicals, pesticides, air quality, climate change and energy by sharing real life stories on the health harm of pollution, and making the economic case for environments that promote health and a just transition for all.

We focus particularly on building knowledge about the opportunities for reducing cancer, lung and heart disease, allergies and asthma, diabetes, obesity, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, autism and ADHD, genital birth defects, premature puberty and infertility.

OUR TEAM VALUES

We put health first

We promote the health and well-being of people across the European continent using the Planetary Health and One Health approaches. As an organisation, we always advocate for a clean and safe environment where people can lead healthy lives.

This takes courage and determination, especially as we aim to amplify the voices of those most exposed to harm from pollution, and draw attention of decision-makers and the wider public to the impacts environmental pollution has on health. We promote prevention and precaution to ensure that no harm is done to people's health.

We are driven by independent science

Our role is to translate independent science to policy and influence decision-makers so they enact health-protecting regulations. We can only do that if we are credible and base our policy recommendations on scientific evidence.

We are open and transparent

We communicate openly and honestly, explain our decision-making and back up what we say with evidence and facts. We welcome new thoughts and ideas, and encourage transparency from others by demonstrating reliability, empathy and integrity.

We are stronger together

We understand the power of community, of working collectively towards achieving our goals. We do this with respect for one another, acknowledging and celebrating our differences and everything that each of us brings to the table.

We treat everyone with respect, whatever their role and status. Mutual respect involves recognising the views, autonomy, status and contribution of others. We welcome diversity in all its shapes and forms, and ensure that everyone can share their views and have a voice. We understand the intersectional nature of privilege and power, and act to prevent marginalisation and discrimination.



OUR STRATEGIC GOALS LEADING UP TO 2030

As an alliance, we aim to:

1# PREVENT: Target priorities

We advocate for the integration of health prevention into environment, climate policies and sustainable development by informing people and policy makers about the benefits to health of reducing environmental pollution.

Globally, HEAL supports the 17 goals in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including for health, energy, chemicals and climate change.

Our action contributes to ensuring that Europe continues to lead by example. The target areas foster leadership for health promoting environments worldwide and aim to raise awareness and reduce the transboundary nature of pollution.

In Europe, HEAL's targets to protect and promote health include:

2030

- A toxics-free environment, free of hazardous chemicals
- An 80% reduction of synthetic pesticides in the EU
- Air quality in line with WHO recommendations
- A coal power generation phase out
- A reduction of GHG gases of at least 65%

2035

- The end of use of synthetic pesticides
- A fossil-free power sector

2040

- A climate neutral Europe

2# UNITE: Bridge global and local action

We focus on developing HEAL into a global collaborative network of partners with fully engaged members representing all aspects of public health. To do this, we will build strong grassroots capacity, create synergies and facilitate links with cutting edge scientific expertise.

HEAL's role as a watchdog on environmental issues affecting health and as a catalyst for all levels of environmental, climate health action in Europe and beyond is achieved by widely sharing scientific, medical, health and economic evidence through effective advocacy.

3# COMMUNICATE: Mobilise for healthy people and a healthy planet

We want to inspire action by raising awareness of the health and economic benefits of strong new health friendly and sustainable environmental policies.

By communicating the health and economic benefits of global, EU and national policy developments agreements on mercury, chemicals, air quality, energy and climate, our network has become an international hub for health and environmental information, science and policy development. Our messages reach global health experts and practitioners as well as individuals and communities. They stimulate thinking and mobilise action on pollution prevention for public and planetary health and a just transition.

OUR ACTIVITIES

The implementation of HEAL's work programme 2022/2023 took place amidst the ongoing triple crises of environmental pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss, and emerging challenges, which had far-reaching impacts on EU policy: after the COVID-19 pandemic, EU decision-makers continued to stay in crisis mode because of the war in Ukraine and its economic and social impacts.

HEAL advocated and raised awareness about the need to protect people's health from environmental and climate threats in no less than 20 policy files. Important legislative discussions where HEAL engaged membership and partners, shared the science, and advocated for more health protective laws included the revision of the EU's Ambient Air Quality Directive, the revision of the EU rules on the Classification, Labelling and Packaging of chemicals (CLP), the proposal for a European restriction on the forever chemicals PFAS, the REPowerEU proposal on ending fossil fuel imports from Russia and accelerating the share of renewables in the EU, the need for a revision of the landmark chemicals REACH legislation, and the ongoing reapproval of glyphosate, the most widely used pesticide in the world.

A key component to HEAL's work and success remains the engagement of health organisations for key policy junctures. HEAL's facilitation of health groups' expertise and positions for key EU policy deliberations was taken to a new level in 2022/2023. With a record number of health members and partners engaged in this crucial year, we drove forward key commitments under the EU Green Deal, such as the Zero Pollution Action Plan, the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability and the Farm to Fork Strategy. We also contributed important health expertise to the discussions on EU energy policies.

Working in coalitions with environmental, climate, and other civil society organisations has proven to be a factor for greater impact. HEAL has

brought forward health expertise in multiple coalitions, including the Green 10 – the network of the ten largest environmental organisations active at EU level, for which we held the Presidency in the second half of 2022. We are also a member of the EDC-Free Europe coalition, the Save Bees and Farmers campaign, the Fossil Free campaign, and a coalition of Brussels-based environmental groups for cleaner air.

True to our mission, our efforts focus on translating new science and policy demands into briefings, infographics, fact sheets, videos, blogs, opinion pieces, social media stories and other materials that are easily accessible.

Some highlights of this past year include but are in no way exhaustive:



Achieving clean air everywhere, for everyone

HEAL's vision is clean air for all across the European continent, and reaching the 2021 World Health Organization's (WHO) air quality guidelines by 2030. To achieve that vision, our key focus has been to advocate for an ambitious revision of the EU's Ambient Air Quality Directive (AAQD), an effort that is still ongoing as negotiations continue.

Our activities led to major successes on new and stronger engagement from the health sector, both on EU and national level. We initiated and facilitated joint letters and statements, often in cooperation with HEAL members and partners from the health and/or the environment field. Examples include:

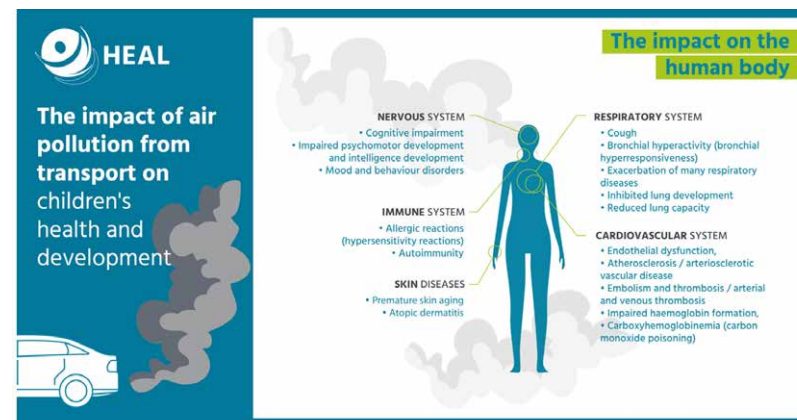
- A [call](#) by more than 100 organisations in 17 EU countries to health and environment ministers for legally binding, science-based EU air quality standards.
- A [letter](#) initiated by HEAL and signed by over 35 medical, health, environmental and civil society groups, to the EU Executive Vice-

President Timmermans, Commissioners Sinkevičius and Kyriakides, urging them to come forward with a proposal to introduce binding EU clean air standards to fully meet WHO air quality guidelines by 2030 at the latest.

- A [joint letter](#) by Brussels-based health groups to EU environment ministers: Health groups' recommendations to step up on clean air for health with science-based air quality standards.



Other impacts include high-level meetings with the EU Health Commissioner Kyriakides and the EU Environment Commissioner Sinkevičius, and the European Parliament's rapporteur for the AAQD. Health organisations including the European Respiratory Society (ERS), the European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients Associations (EFA), the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), the Belgian Independent Health Insurance Funds (Mutualités Libres /



Onafhankelijke Ziekenfondsen), the International Association of Mutual Benefit Societies (AIM), the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME), and environmental groups such as AirClim, ClientEarth and the European Environmental Bureau joined in these exchanges to bring forward their concerns.

These advocacy activities were amplified by evidence-based materials like an [infographic](#) explaining the health impacts from air pollution resulting from transport, a [toolkit](#) with tips on how to communicate scientific findings on air quality, explainer [blogs](#), as well as continued press work on [EU](#) and [national](#) level and social media work. [HEAL's Polish team](#) amplified clean air advocacy, engagement and communication, e.g. in gathering the endorsement of the Polish Supreme Medical Council and fifty individuals for a clean air call, as well as publishing infographics and materials on how transport pollution harms health.



“I cannot imagine sitting on my hands when the world is in the middle of a climate and environmental crisis. I chose to work at HEAL to contribute to a cleaner, safer and more sustainable world, for this and future generations.”

Weronika Michalak, HEAL Poland



“United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that ‘We are on a highway to climate hell with our foot on the accelerator.’ For me working for HEAL is sitting on the navigator’s seat telling the driver to break and reverse.”

Jacek Karaczun, HEAL Poland

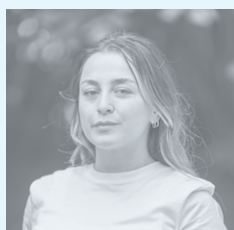


Phasing out fossil fuels

Our efforts to bring to light the considerable health impacts of burning fossil fuels such as coal and fossil gas for energy production and heating continued in 2022/2023, with high engagement within the Green 10 group on taxonomy, the Renewable Energy Directive, and RePowerEU towards European Commission, Parliament and Council.

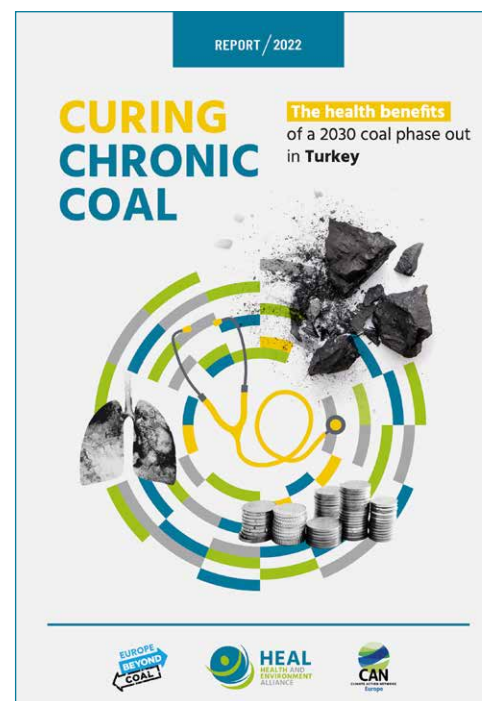


In another record-breaking summer, we [raised awareness](#) about the health threat of heatwaves and ahead of the UN climate negotiations at COP27, we helped gather signatures and [co-launch](#) an international health call for a [global fossil fuel phase-out treaty](#), which was signed by more than 192 organisations worldwide. We also published the first ever assessment on the [health cost from fossil gas power production](#), which we shared with decision-makers ahead of key policy deliberations



“Working for HEAL means to me that I can contribute to revealing the hidden costs of fossil fuels, in terms of air quality and health impacts. This will provide a holistic understanding of why transitioning from coal to clean energy is imperative.”

Funda Gacal, HEAL Turkey



on ending Russian fossil gas imports. We continuously warned of false solutions, including promoting wood burning as an alternative to fossil fuel use, with a dedicated [webinar](#) on the topic, and a [letter](#) shared with members of the European Parliament ahead of a key vote on the Renewable Energy Directive.

We continued our trademark activity of bringing together and highlighting new health evidence, through our strategic work at national and regional level in the

[Western Balkan region](#), [Turkey](#) and [Poland](#). HEAL kick-started a new ‘Curing Chronic Coal’ series, establishing how an early coal phase-out would bring huge health (cost) savings in Turkey, Poland and the Western Balkan region, including a campaign page bringing all the information together. We also facilitated a [call for zero pollution](#) by leading Western Balkan health experts. In Poland, HEAL appeared in the media over 180 times, responded to numerous requests for media interviews and podcasts and to speaker invitations for medical conferences.

As part of our ongoing EU funded project to build the capacity of the Turkish health and medical sector on climate, environment and health, we continued to organise webinars, e.g. on the EU Green Deal or pesticides and health, published briefings and held advocacy meetings with decision-makers, including for the preparation of a Turkish Climate Law.



A health-focused reform of REACH

The REACH regulation provides the framework for how the EU registers, evaluates, authorises and restricts chemicals entering and in use on the EU market, and was a landmark law for health protection when it was established in 2006. However, in reality REACH is neither efficiently or effectively being implemented, allowing health-harming chemicals to slip through the cracks. Under the 2020 Chemical Strategy for Sustainability (CSS), the European Commission committed to publish a proposal to reform REACH by the end of 2022 – a deadline which has been repeatedly extended.

HEAL has continuously pushed for the European Commission to stick to its promise, as it is critical to swiftly revise REACH to make meaningful progress in achieving a healthier, toxic-free and more sustainable environment.



To raise awareness about the urgent need to overhaul this juggernaut of EU chemicals legislation, HEAL released an animated [video](#) explaining our six demands to help get REACH back on track and better protect health and the environment. We also launched a new [campaign page](#) and a [briefing](#) outlining our demands.



In addition to our work to make awareness-raising and advocacy materials available for our members, our team also met with the EU Commission's DG Environment, Commissioner Sinkevičius and Executive Vice-President Timmermans throughout 2022/2023, as well as with the EU Industry Commissioner Breton together with other Green10 organisations, to push for the swift launch of REACH reform. Other activities included a [letter](#) to the European Commission's REACH committee, a [letter](#) led by HEAL with 14 national members and partners to national governments, deep dives into the need to regulate hazardous substances of concern – such as [PFHpA](#) and [melamine](#) – under the REACH legislation, and a [blog](#) on nine hazardous chemicals added to REACH's blacklist.

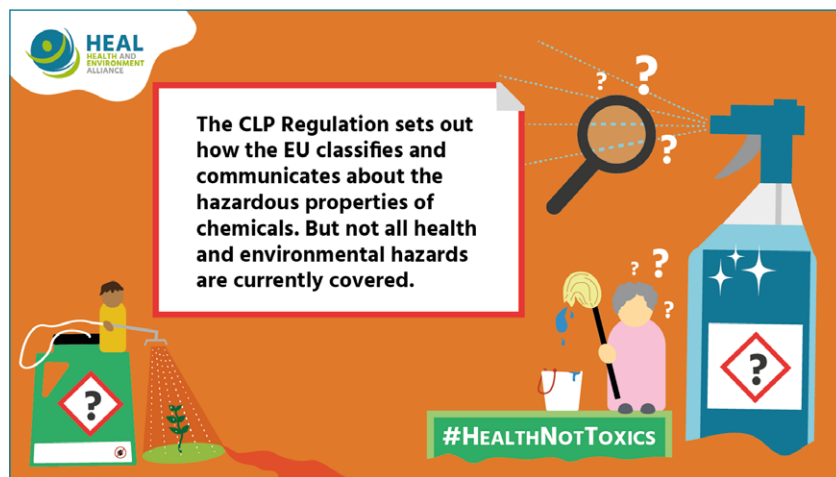


Reforming EU rules on the Classification, Labelling and Packaging of chemicals (CLP)

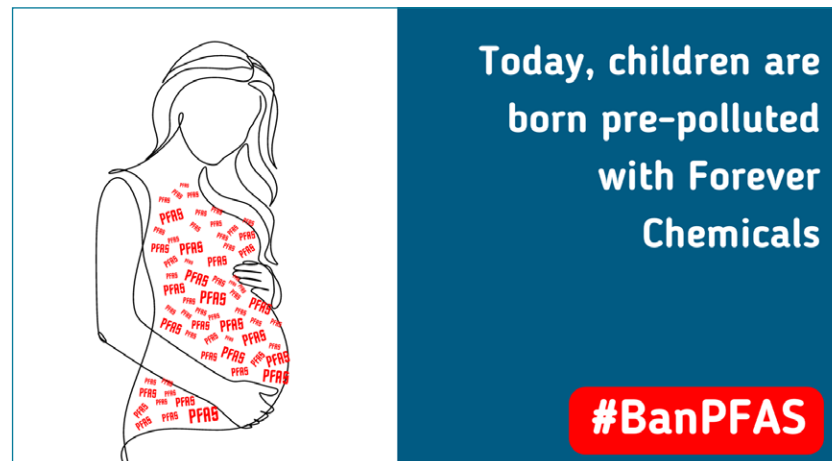
The CLP Regulation sets out how the EU classifies and communicates about the hazardous properties of chemical substances and mixtures, making it a cornerstone of EU chemicals legislation. We work to unleash the regulation's potential to become a more effective tool to protect health and the environment.

To summarise the regulation's current limitations and our vision for the CLP reform, HEAL published a series of easy-to-use infographics and videos on the central HEAL CLP [campaign page](#).

HEAL furthermore contributed to the ongoing reform of CLP by providing [comments](#) on the European Commission's proposal for new hazard classes under the regulation, and by [responding](#) to the public consultation on the CLP.



Tackling pollution from PFAS, the forever chemicals



Pollution from per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), also called the forever chemicals as they don't break down in the environment, is one of the biggest health and environment threats in Europe today.

In 2022/2023 we continued communication and advocacy pushes for a EU-wide ban of all PFAS across all uses. For example, HEAL co-authored the [Ban PFAS manifesto](#), signed by 119 organisations from over 25 countries, calling for a ban on consumer products by 2025, and complete ban by 2030, which was later handed over to the cabinets of EU Executive Vice President Timmermans and Environment Commissioner Sinkevičius. We also shared an unprecedented cross-country media investigation on PFAS, revealing that more than 17,000 sites are contaminated by 'forever chemicals' around Europe, with a [press release and social media campaign](#) and cosigned a [letter](#) by 116 scientists asking for revision of World Health Organization's draft PFAS guidelines.

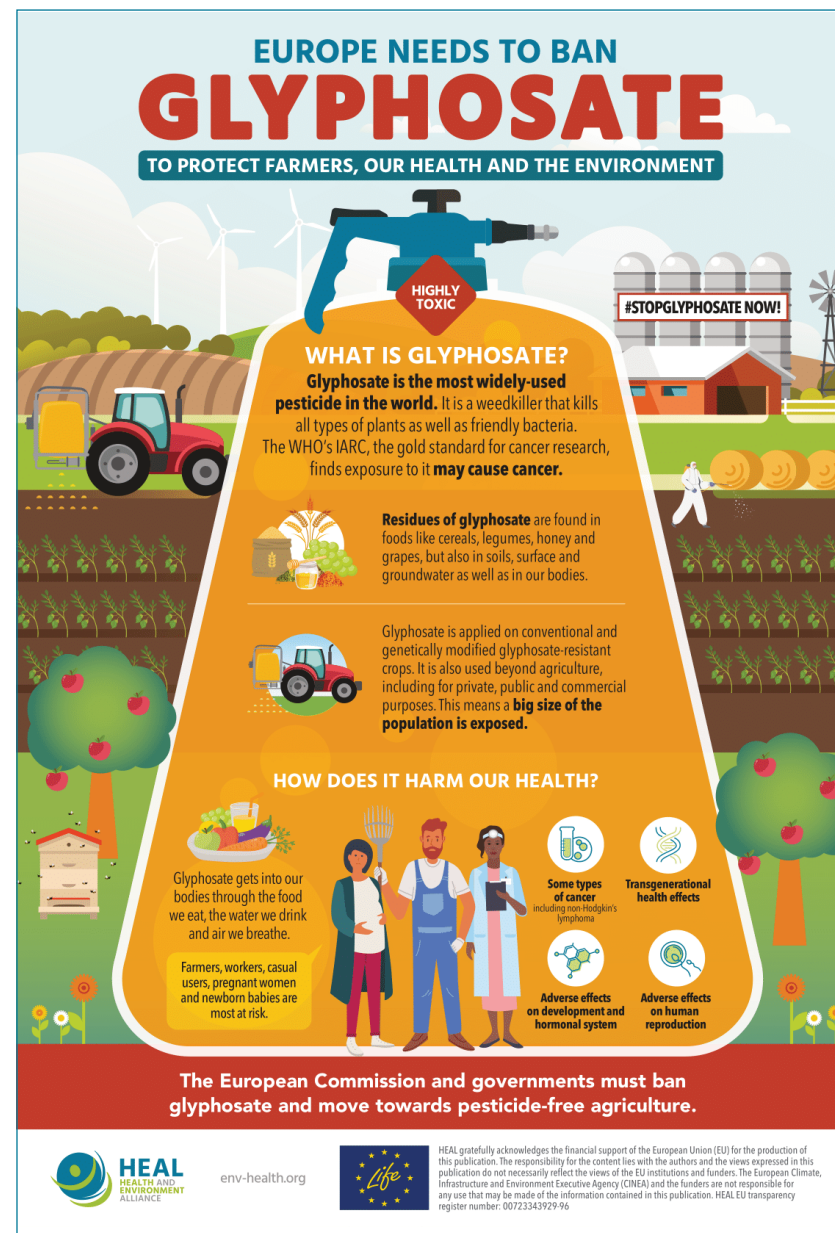


Strengthening health protection from hazardous pesticides

Reducing the use of pesticides in agriculture and urban environments to better protect people's health remains a key policy concern for the EU. Against a changing policy context, with the war in Ukraine and food security used as an excuse to delay and weaken the long-awaited overhaul, HEAL continued to highlight the impact harmful pesticides have on people's health, share the latest scientific findings around pesticide use, and the urgent need for the legislators to act on said science.

A key regulation for people's health is the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Regulation (SUR). As the European Commission continuously delayed the publication of its proposal for this much needed and overdue legislation, HEAL and other civil society groups repeatedly called on the Commission to stick to its EU Green Deal and Farm to Fork promises and deliver without delay. Our team collaborated with NGOs across Europe to call for urgent action to phase out synthetic pesticides, for example by [speaking](#) at EU Parliament conferences, helping health leaders [speak out](#) against pesticide pollution in Europe following their participation in the citizens' science project 'the Pesticide-CheckUp', by contributing to a [scientific study](#) into failing pesticide reduction measures in Italy, and, once the proposal on SUR was published, by [joining](#) 28 other civil society groups to call on the Parliament and Council to support the SUR against attacks.

Continued focus also had to be given to glyphosate, the most widely used pesticide in the world. Despite piling evidence that glyphosate may harm health, the European Commission and governments started the process to renew glyphosate's market license, which was originally expiring in December 2022 (a deadline that has since been moved to December 2023). As part of HEAL's advocacy and awareness-raising work, we published a new [infographic](#), and a scientific [report](#). We also kept [highlighting shortcomings and failures](#) in the legislative process, and continued to support [those suffering](#) the consequences from ongoing glyphosate use.



ACTIVITIES 2022/2023



14
webinars



42
letters



20 contributions to
consultations



100+
advocacy meetings



67
events participated
and organised



180+
visuals created



14
reports and briefings



10+
infographics



28+
translated materials



45
press releases



372
media hits



7500+
readers of HEAL and
EDC-Free newsletters



3,978
Facebook page likes



763
Instagram
followers



2,717
Linkedin followers



13,098
Twitter followers



132
website posts



99,000
website visits

Newsletters:

4 HEAL

3 HEAL
Poland

13 EDC-Free
Europe

2 Science for
healthy air
quality

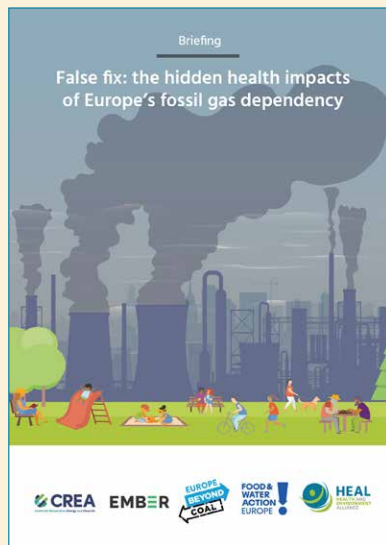
5 HEAL
Western
Balkan

HEAL also publishes other campaign-related newsletters or newsletters with updates from the EU-funded research projects we are active in. These include: the EDC-Free Europe newsletter, the Food for Thought newsletter (9 editions), the CUSP research cluster newsletter (2 editions) and the EHEN research cluster newsletter (2 editions).

OUR PUBLICATIONS

CLIMATE AND ENERGY

BRIEFING

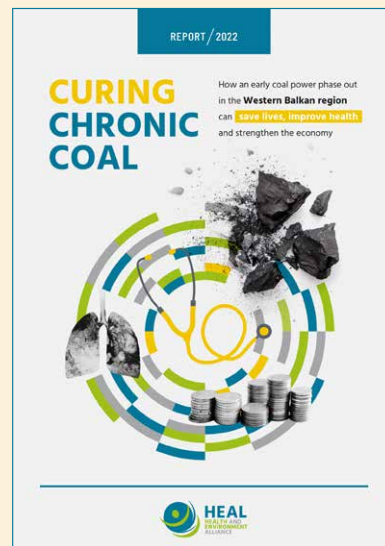


False Fix: The hidden health impacts of Europe's fossil gas dependency

Available in EN, DE, ES, IT



REPORT

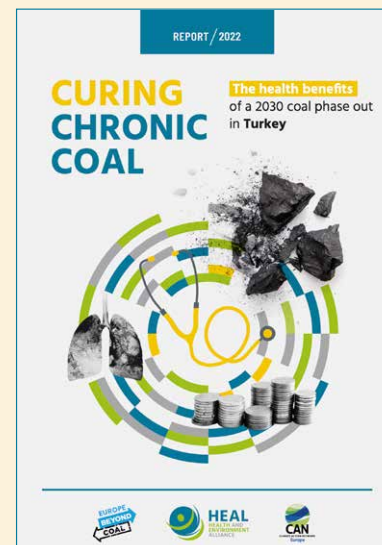


Curing Chronic Coal: The health benefits of an early coal phase out in the Western Balkan region can save lives, improve health and strengthen the economy

Available in EN, SB, ALB



REPORT

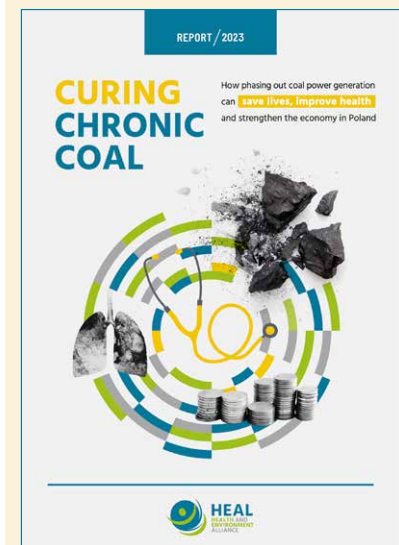


Curing Chronic Coal: The health benefits of a 2030 coal phase out in Turkey

Available in EN, TR



REPORT



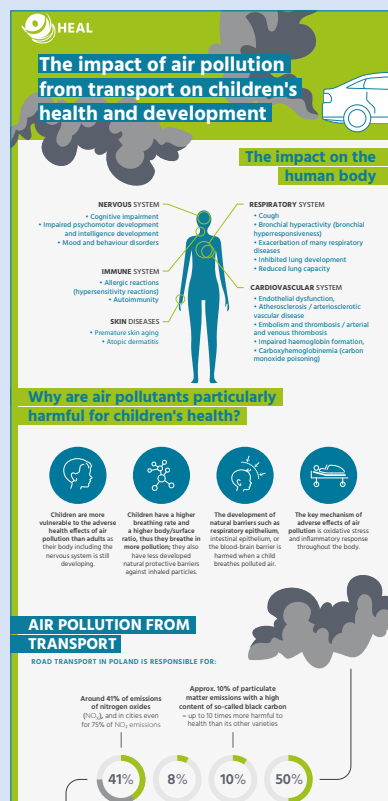
Curing Chronic Coal: How phasing out coal power generation can save lives, improve health and strengthen the economy in Poland

Available in EN, PL



AIR QUALITY

INFOGRAPHIC

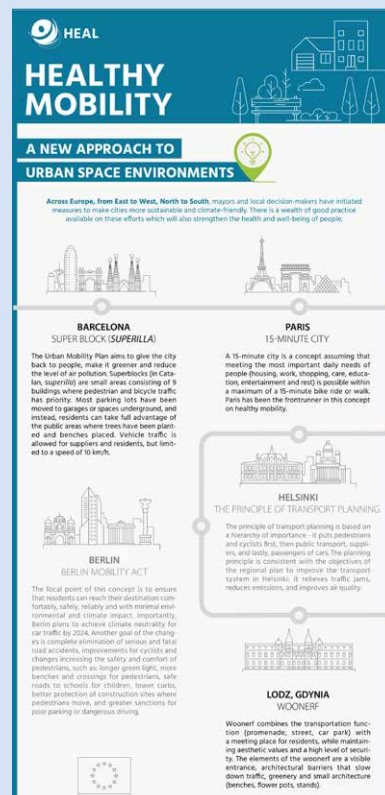


The impact of air pollution from transport on children's health and development

Available in EN, PL



INFOGRAPHIC

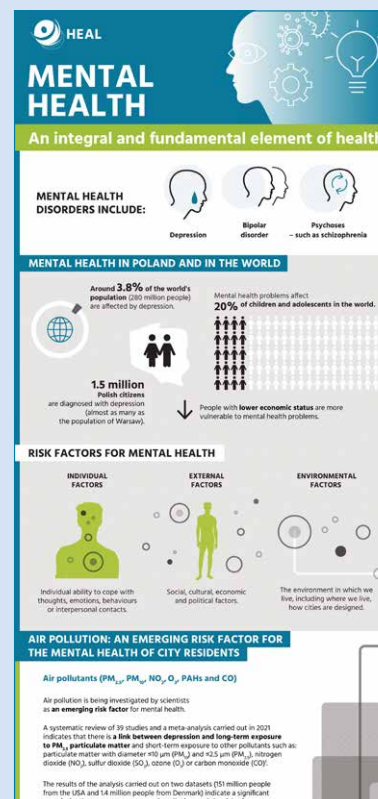


Healthy Mobility: A new approach to urban space environments

Available in EN, PL



INFOGRAPHIC

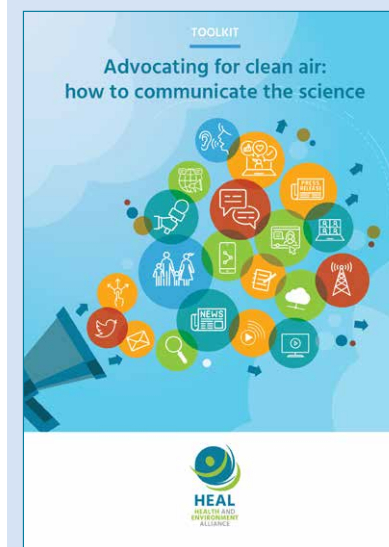


Mental Health and Cities: An integral and fundamental element of health

Available in EN, PL



TOOLKIT



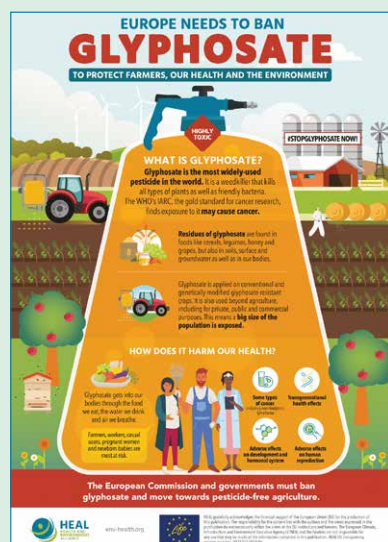
Advocating for clean air: How to communicate the science

Available in EN, IT, DE



PESTICIDES

INFOGRAPHIC

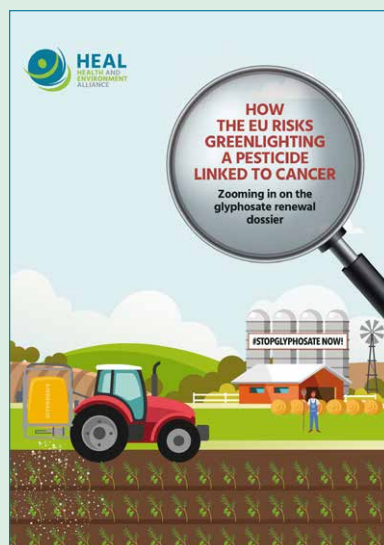


Europe needs to ban glyphosate to protect farmers, our health and the environment

Available in EN, DE, FR, ES, IT



REPORT

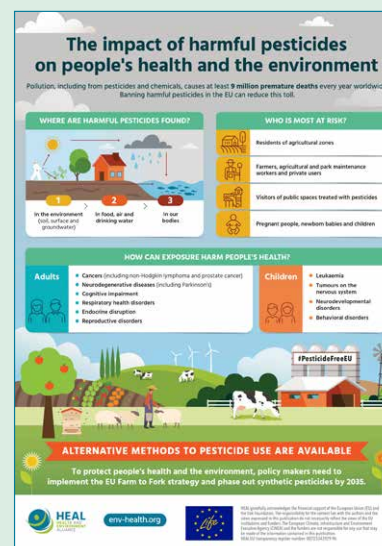


How the EU risks greenlighting a pesticide linked to cancer

Available in EN, DE, FR, ES, IT



INFOGRAPHIC

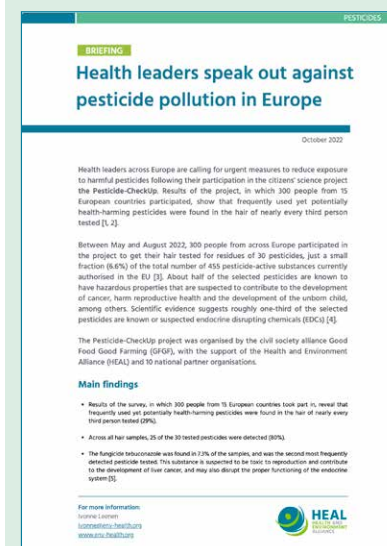


The impact of harmful pesticides on people's health and the environment

Available in EN, IT, ES, FR



BRIEFING



Health leaders speak out against pesticide pollution in Europe

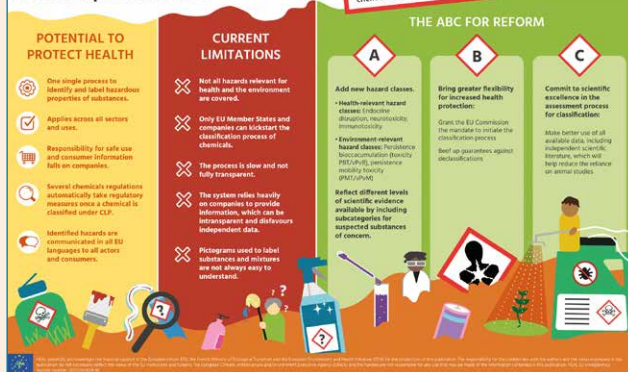
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CHEMICALS

INFOGRAPHIC

Reforming EU rules on Classification, Labelling and Packaging of chemicals to better protect health



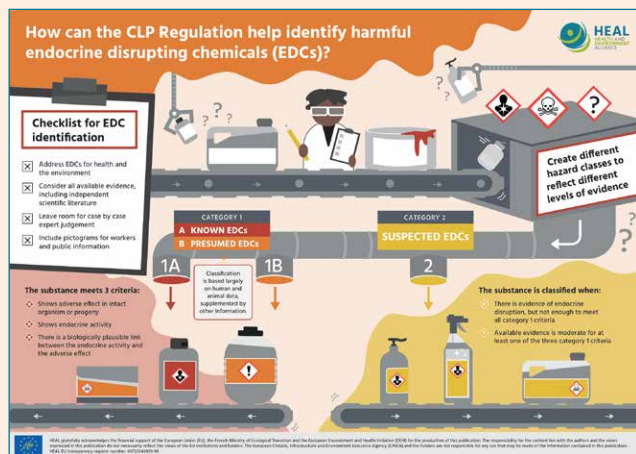
Reforming EU rules on the Classification, Labelling and Packaging of chemicals to better protect health



Available in EN

INFOGRAPHIC

How can the CLP Regulation help identify harmful endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs)?



How can a revised CLP Regulation help identify harmful endocrine disrupting chemicals?



Available in EN

BRIEFING

Q&A on animal testing and chemical safety assessments

February 2021

We are exposed to a wide mix of potentially harmful chemicals on a daily basis. To assess whether and how exposure to chemical substances can impact our health and the environment, European and national regulatory authorities rely on the results from several testing methods, including animal testing, when performing their safety assessment. Understandably, the use of animal experiments raises multiple moral questions. All stakeholders involved in chemical regulatory discussions share the long-term goal of moving away from animal testing. However, completely getting rid of animal tests for chemical safety assessments overnight would constitute a serious threat to our health as well as wildlife. As long as alternative methods validated and accepted for regulatory use are not available, and without the full implementation of a precautionary approach, animal tests are the only viable way to assess whether or not a chemical is hazardous to our health or the environment.

In this Q&A, the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) answers several key questions about the use of animal testing in the European Union. A glossary is also available at the end of this briefing.

1 Why is animal testing still being used for chemical safety testing today, while alternative methods already exist and more are being developed?

Today, European and national regulatory authorities assess the safety of chemicals on the basis of a variety of information, including scientific literature as well as tests performed in vivo (on living organisms such as rodents, fish, amphibians), in vitro (on isolated cells or tissues), and increasingly in silico (using computer models).

While all stakeholders engaged on chemicals share the goal to progressively eliminate tests performed on animals and core pieces of EU legislation on chemicals refer to this goal, it is unfortunately currently not possible to fully do without them for several reasons that are detailed further below. There are however important developments in the right directions and reasons for optimism.

- While Europe has the most advanced framework for chemical assessment and regulation in the world, the key 'no data, no market' principle of REACH is not implemented today and there are significant knowledge gaps about the hazard properties of the chemicals already in use.

The European Environment Agency estimates that comprehensive hazard information is only available for 50% of the 100,000 chemicals that are on the market today, describing the situation as an "information deficit". This means that if we are to abide by our legal principles and to ensure people's and wildlife's protection, either more chemicals safety data urgently needs to be generated, or a majority of substances should be withdrawn from access.

For more information:
Natalia Czigany
nata.czigany@heal.eu
+32 (0) 319 00 81 | www.heal-health.org



Q&A on animal testing and chemical safety assessments

Available in EN



HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT

REACH reform: HEAL's key demands for health-protective upgrades of registration and evaluation

This briefing presents HEAL's demands regarding the upgrades of the registration and evaluation chapters of the REACH regulation in the context of the current legislative reform.

Introduction

HEAL supports the speedy reform of REACH in line with promises made under the EU's [Chemical Strategy for Sustainability](#) (CSS). The reform should be driven by REACH's founding principles, namely no data, no market, burden of proof on industry, polluter pays, and transparency and accountability, and it should allow for the

The "Journal of Strategy for Sustainability" (www.jss-journal.com) aims to set out a new hierarchy in chemicals management, prioritising the use of safe chemicals and minimising exposure to harmful ones. Specific promises, that are relevant to the REACH registration and evaluation processes include ⁶:

- *Zero tolerance approach to non-compliance and enforcement of the "de minimis" principle through stronger compliance and enforcement of all registration duties and the ability for authorities to revoke registration numbers when industry does not fulfil obligations*
- *Updated information requirements in REACH to include information on all carcinogenic substances irrespective of hazard; in addition to information on endocrine disruption, respiratory sensitization, immunotoxicity, neurotoxicity, other STOT (Specific Target Organ Toxicity), persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic (PBT), very persistent very bioaccumulative (vPvB), persistent, mobile, toxic (PMT) and very persistent and very mobile (vPvM)*
- *Tenatol registration requirements to certain polymers of concern*
- *Account for combined exposures to multiple chemicals instead of single use, in order to assess real-life chemical hazards and risks*
- *Overall approach based on structural similarity for chemical assessment instead of one chemical at a time*

REACH's registration process is the gateway into the EU market for chemicals manufactured, imported, and used in industrial and consumer products. However, out of the approximately 100,000 chemicals currently on the EU market, only around 100 have enough data for authorities to comprehensively characterize their hazards and exposures. The European Environmental Agency has aptly dubbed this "the unknown territory of chemicals."

For more information:
Natacha Cingotti
natachadillon.health.org



REACH reform: HEAL's key demands for health-protective upgrades of registration and evaluation

Available in EN



REACH reform: HEAL's key demands for health-protective upgrades of authorisation and restriction

This briefing presents HEAL's demands regarding the upgrades of the authorisation and restriction chapters of the REACH regulation in the context of the current legislative reform.¹

introduction

HEAL supports the speedy reform of REACH in line with promises made under the EU's [Chemical Strategy for Sustainability \(CSS\)](#). The reform should be driven by REACH's founding principles, namely no SGEs, no market burden of proof on industry, polluter pays, and transparency and accountability, and it should allow for the uptake of the latest scientific evidence as well as the implementation of the precautionary principle³.

illustrate REACH's failure to deliver on the above principles, as well as the urgent need for its reform. Of the over 100,000 chemicals currently on the EU market, approximately 75% are considered hazardous to health and the environment¹. Building on the mounting evidence, a recent cross-border investigation found that more than 17,000 sites across Europe are contaminated by dioxin, and polychlorinated dibenzofuran (PCDFs) – also known

The [Chemical Strategy for Sustainability](#) sets out a new toxic-free hierarchy in chemicals management, prioritising the use of safe chemicals and minimising exposure to harmful ones. Specific promises that are relevant to the authorisation and restriction processes include:

- Develop safe and sustainable-by-design options for chemicals and implement safe substitution wherever alternatives exist for a substance of very high concern
- Clearly define criteria for 'essential use' of a chemical to be applied only if it is necessary for the health, safety, or functioning of society and there is no suitable alternative
- Promote non-toxic, circular chemical feedstocks by prioritising products that impact vulnerable populations or create negative addition to those with the most potential for impacts
- Apply a grouping approach for authorization and restriction of chemicals classes instead of regulating one by one
- Develop criteria for more transparent, scientifically justified derogations
- Extend the generic approach to risk management (SRAP) to categories in the identification of substances of very high concern that include carcinogens, gene mutagens, neurotoxins, endocrine disruptors, immunotoxicants, neuroendocrine, respiratory irritants, specific target organ toxicants (STOT), persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic (PBT), very persistent and very bioaccumulative (vPvB), persistent, mobile and toxic (PMT) and very persistent and very mobile (vPvM) substances. Before the SRAP is placed in compliance, prioritize these substances for

For more information:
Natacha Cingotti
natacha@amu-health.org
+33 1012 576 00 81 - amu-health.org



REACH reform: HEAL's key demands for health-protective upgrades of authorisation and restriction

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**EUROPE CAN PREVENT CANCER BY
TACKLING ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTANTS**

A public health opportunity

OVER 40%	3.2 MILLION	€199 BILLION	25%	53%
More than 40% of all cancer cases are preventable.	The annual number of expected diagnoses in 2018.	The economic burden of cancer in the EU and the UK in 2018.	Cancer causes 1 in 4 deaths in the European Union.	Over half of all work-related deaths are due to cancer.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS THAT INCREASE OUR CANCER RISK INCLUDE:



**EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS AND GOVERNMENTS
MUST TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT CANCER**



HEAL
HEALTHY
EATING
AND
ACTIVE
LIFESTYLE
INITIATIVE

ECL
EUROPEAN
COMMISSION
Executive Agency for
Consumer Policy

The infographic was originally published in 2010 and was updated in 2012. It is an excellent guide to the support of the European Union for the production of this publication. The responsibility for the content lies with the authors and the views expressed in this publication are not necessarily shared by the views of the EU institutions and funders. The European Commission, Information and Communication Agency (ECLA) and the authors are not responsible for the content of this publication.

Infographic illustrating how Europe can prevent cancer by tackling environmental pollutants

Available in EN



OUR UNIQUE SCIENCE TO POLICY APPROACH: EU RESEARCH PROJECTS

Evidence based facts and scientific publications are key to informing political decisions in depth. Through HEAL's involvement in a number of EU research projects, we apply our science to policy approach and are on point with the latest, cutting edge research on environmental health.

HEAL is a partner in six research projects funded by the EU. Our role is to provide valuable policy expertise and to lead, or contribute to, the research projects' work on communication, dissemination, stakeholder engagement and exploitation towards policy and legislation.

ATHLETE - January 2020 - June 2025



ATHLETE (Advancing Tools for Human Early Lifecourse Exposome Research and Translation) is a European-funded research project that aims to better understand and prevent health effects of numerous environmental hazards and their mixtures, starting from the earliest stages of life.

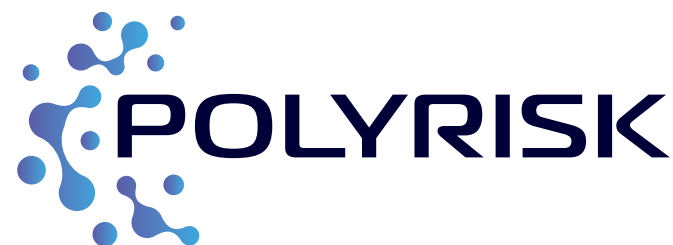
One of the outcomes from ATHLETE will be a human exposome toolbox that can be used to evaluate the effects of a large number of environmental exposures in individuals, as well as in communities, in order to design policies and interventions to prevent or reduce their health impact.

<https://athleteproject.eu/>

<https://twitter.com/ATHLETEexposome>

#ATHLETEproject

POLYRISK - April 2021 - March 2025



The EU-funded POLYRISK project aims to advance the science and our understanding of how micro- and nanoplastic particles (MNPs) in our environment might impact human health, particularly in relation to the immune system.

The outcomes of the projects are intended to feed into current and future EU policies, and support actions envisaged under the European Green Deal in relation to plastic pollution – helping to ensure that human health is protected, today and in the future.

<https://polyrisk.science/>

<https://twitter.com/PolyriskScience>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/polyrisk-research-project>

FREIA - January 2019 - December 2023

There is no doubt that endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) impact people's health. But more knowledge is needed to determine exactly how EDCs can harm female reproductive health.

FREIA (Female Reproductive Toxicity of EDCs Project: A human evidence-based screening and identification approach) is an EU-funded research project dedicated to advance test methods to identify EDCs that are harmful to women's health.

<http://freiaproject.eu/>

@freiaprojectEU

CATALYSE - September 2022 - August 2027

CATALYSE (Climate Action To Advance HealthY Societies in Europe) seeks to provide new knowledge, data and tools to close the knowledge-to-action gap to accelerate climate change action and protect public health in Europe.

CATALYSE will do this by developing an integrated indicator framework and repository, quantifying the health co-benefits and costs of mitigation measures, developing novel surveillance and forecasting tools and investigating how stakeholders engage with evidence regarding the health impacts of climate change. All of this to provide evidence and training on the most effective strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation for European health systems

<https://catalysehorizon.eu/>

#CatalyseHorizon

UBD Policy - January 2023 - December 2026



The EU-funded UBD Policy (Urban Burden of Disease Policy) project aims to estimate the health and socioeconomic costs and benefits of air quality, noise, lack of urban green spaces, heat and temperature, physical activity, inequity for nearly 1,000 European cities in EU and monitors three-year trends and impacts of urban planning, transport planning and environmental policies.

Some of the outcomes expected from the UBD research include an open database of 1000 cities including an estimation of health and well-being impacts and socio-economic costs and benefits of environmental stressors such as air pollution, green spaces and mobility, and a ranking of the cities in EU, as well as policy briefs, reports and scientific synthesis of the evidence.

<https://ubdpolicy.eu>

#UBDPolicy

ENBEL - November 2020 - December 2023



Enhancing Belmont Research Action to support EU policy making on climate change and health (ENBEL) is an international research project funded by the EU's Horizon2020 programme and aimed at connecting health and climate change research. Specifically, ENBEL brings together leaders in climate change and health research and coordinates a network of international health and climate research projects under the Belmont Forum's Collaborative Research Action (CRA) on Climate, Environment and Health (CEH) and EU-funded projects.

A key outcome from the ENBEL project is a [knowledge platform](#) of health impacts of climate change: policy briefs, training courses, learning materials, reports and scientific synthesis of the evidence.

<https://www.enbel-project.eu>

Twitter: @ENBEL_H2020

Instagram: enbel_h2020

A FINANCIALLY STRONG, INDEPENDENT ORGANISATION

HEAL has the resources to carry out its work programme, meet its strategic objectives and continue to grow.

With an annual budget of around EUR 1.9 million in 2022, **HEAL's funding has more than tripled over the past 20 years**. This was achieved through a highly successful fundraising strategy, which enabled the organisation to significantly diversify its funding sources. While in 2004, the European Commission's operating grant represented 80 percent of our funding, our EU LIFE operating grant now makes up 37 percent of our budget, a value that is projected to further reduce in 2023. Today, HEAL receives funding through 17 grants, from 11 different donors.

The Alliance is independent of any political party or commercial interest. We receive funding from the European Union, governments and private foundations as well as through membership contributions. We do not accept funding from sources with commercial interests.

Income	EUR
EU Operating Grant	700,000
EU Action Grant	318,818
Other grants (private foundations, governments)	865,071
Membership fees	8,700
Other income	4,065
Total	1,896,654
Expenditure	EUR
Personnel costs	1,143,485
Activity costs (incl. subcontracting costs)	461,853
Travel and subsistence costs	77,049
Administration, IT and office costs	205,567
Contribution to operating reserves	8,700
Total	1,896,654

Funders

HEAL would like to thank the following funders for their support in our 2022-2023 financial year:

- Adessium Foundation
- Belgian Federal Ministry for the Environment
- Climate Works Foundation
- European Climate Foundation
- European Commission DG Environment / DG Climate Action
- European Commission DG for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
- European Commission DG Research and Innovation
- Global Greengrants Fund
- Oak Foundation / Swiss Philanthropy Foundation
- Tides Foundation
- Wellcome Trust Foundation

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

HEAL's Executive Committee was elected by the General Assembly at the 2020 general meeting for a four-year mandate.

In 2022, the Executive Committee bid farewell to long-standing members, David Stone (Natural England) and Isabel Proaño Gómez (European Federation of Allergy & Airways Diseases Patients' Association (EFA)). The Committee appointed Panagiotis Chaslaridis as member of the Executive Committee representing EFA. Elections for new Executive Committee members will take place in 2024.

The current members of the Executive Committee are:



Peter van den Hazel

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



Denitsa Ivanova

Air for Health, Bulgaria



Marie-Christine Dewolf

HEAL Vice-President – Régie Hainaut Analyses,
Belgium



Jessica Carreño Louro

International Association of Mutual Benefit Societies
(AIM), Belgium



Christian Horemans

National Federation of Independent Health Insurance
Funds, Belgium



Panagiotis Chaslaridis

European Federation of Allergy & Airways Diseases
Patients' Association (EFA), Belgium

THE HEAL SECRETARIAT

2022 was a major year for the Secretariat. We carried out four successful recruitment processes to fill new positions and replace one outgoing team member. We invested in learning and development to promote team engagement and strengthen our skills and knowledge, and organised several training events, including a two day team retreat focusing on well-being and team cohesion.

At an organisational level, the Secretariat developed and adopted a set of values that guide the team's work, strengthened core human resources and finance management policies, and started simplifying and digitising key processes. We also launched a major review of HEAL's statutes, which will be adopted at the 2023 General Meeting.



Genon K. Jensen, Executive Director
Anne Stauffer, Deputy Director, Strategic Lead
Stefan Grand-Meyer, Director of Operations
Julianna Angelova, EU Research Project Coordinator
Sara Azcona Zabala, Head of Finance
Marianne Chagnon, Country Engagement Coordinator
Natacha Cingotti, Health and Chemicals Programme Lead
Fund Gacal, Senior Consultant, Turkey
Vijoleta Gordeljevic, Health and Climate Change Coordinator
Sandra Jen, EDC-Free Europe Coordinator
Jacek Karaczun, Communications Consultant, Poland
Inas Laaziri, Executive and Finance Assistant
Iiris Lamminmaki, Advocacy and Campaigns Officer (Health and Chemicals)
Ivonne Leenen, Senior Communications Officer
Dalila Lopes, Communications Assistant
Vlatka Matkovic, Senior Science Policy Officer
Weronika Michalak, HEAL Poland Director
Nea Pakarinen, Senior Media and Communications Officer
Sophie Perroud, EU Policy Coordinator
Elke Zander, Head of Communications

We also gratefully thank the following team members who helped us implement our work in 2022-2023, but have since left us: Hannah Donart, Berkay Hacimustafa, Srdjan Kukolj, Angeliki Lyssimachou.



Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)

Avenue des Arts 7/8

1210 Brussels, Belgium

Phone: +32 (0)2 329 00 80

E-mail: info@env-health.org



@HealthandEnv



@healthandenvironmentalliance



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 90 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 gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the European Union (EU) for the production of this publication. The responsibility for the content lies with the authors and the views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the EU institutions and funders. The European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA) and the funders are not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained in this publication.

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