

WOOD BURNING

A false solution fuelling the climate crisis and harming health

Burning wood in households and in power and thermal plants emits air pollutants, and contributes to an accelerated climate crisis, which affects people's health.

IN EUROPE, WOOD BURNING IS GROWING BECAUSE:



In the EU, it is classified as a renewable energy source and subsidised



Energy poverty is on the rise, leading to more people burning wood



In Western Europe, burning wood is considered comfortable and cosy



There is a widespread belief that burning wood is climate-friendly (when it's the contrary)

WOOD BURNING RELEASES HEALTH-HARMING POLLUTANTS LINKED TO:



- CO₂
- PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}
- Methane
- Black Carbon
- Carbon Monoxide
- Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs)
- Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)
- Carcinogenic compounds



- Ischemic heart disease
- Premature mortality
- Lung cancer
- Childhood asthma
- Respiratory and pulmonary diseases
- Poor cardiovascular health
- Stroke
- Low birth weight



2018: Total health-related social costs of outdoor air pollution due to residential heating and cooking (gas, coal, wood) in the EU27+UK

Source: CE Delft study for the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)

WHO IS AT RISK?

Air pollution is the top environmental threat to health in Europe and everyone is vulnerable to its impacts. The groups most at risk include **the elderly, patients, people already ill, pregnant women, children and those facing health inequalities.**

HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS

For policy makers:

- End the classification of biomass as a renewable energy form, and its subsidisation.
- Incentivise renewable energy and heating and energy savings, with a priority for the people living in energy poverty.

For health professionals:

- Highlight the evidence and materials provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) - Guidelines on Ambient Air Quality and Guidelines on Indoor Air Quality.
- Assess the risks associated with poor (households) air quality, raise awareness and engage in shaping public opinion on the polluting aspect of burning wood.