



To: MEPs of the ENVI Committee

Subject: ENVI debate: Strengthening financing for zero pollution, climate resilience and disease prevention

Dear Member of the ENVI committee,

This Thursday, ENVI will consider the draft opinion to the BUDG INI report on *A revamped long-term budget for the Union in a changing world*, the EU's next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), an [alliance of 80+ member organisations](#) working for better health through a healthier environment, considers it crucial that the next EU MFF paves the way for reducing the substantial economic cost of pollution, as well as for increasing investments to protect people's health against the triple crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

While we welcome the continued commitment to mainstream climate and biodiversity spending targets in the next MFF, we express great concern that **funding to reduce and prevent pollution seems deprioritised**. The EU needs consistency in tackling the triple crisis to better protect health.

The health of people in the EU is threatened like never before from the [triple crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution](#). Urgent action is needed to prevent further suffering, to strengthen health resilience, protect vulnerable groups and help to reduce socio-economic inequalities. Just this week, the latest EU Zero Pollution Monitoring and Outlook [Report](#) underlined that stronger action is needed to reach the EU's zero pollution targets for 2030.

Your position as an ENVI member is key to set the EU on the path for swifter health-protective action. The post-2027 MFF needs to have health protection from climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution at its core.

For the post-2027 MFF, HEAL urges you to support

1. Investments in better health, not pollution, while promoting equity

This needs to include earmarking at least 10% for zero pollution objectives, with robust tracking. Specific funding should also be allocated to strengthen preparedness for vulnerable groups and help to reduce socio-economic inequalities. In addition, dedicated funding is also needed for advancing science and research on the health and economic burden of pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss.

2. Setting strong conditions for healthy and zero pollution investments

This needs to include increased funding for regulatory agencies to strengthen public health and climate resilience, as well as support for member states to develop comprehensive health action plans for climate adaptation and mitigation. Health impact assessment should be included in environmental impact assessments, to strengthen resilience and preparedness.

3. Swift phase out of EU subsidies for fossil fuels

This should include a phase out of direct and indirect EU funding for fossil fuels in the energy sector by 2027, with redirection towards pollution reduction and climate resilience, as well as the allocation of dedicated funding to remediate PFAS-contaminated sites.



Placing health protection against the triple crisis at the centre of the MFF reflects Europeans' concerns, as more than three-quarters of Europeans (78%) find that environmental issues have a direct effect on their daily lives and health. And more than four in five (84%) agree that EU legislation is necessary to protect the environment in their country.

HEAL stands ready to support and collaborate with you in creating a healthier future for all Europeans.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Stauffer
Deputy Director
Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)

Background

Vulnerable groups including children, pregnant women, the elderly, those already sick, and those facing socio-economic inequalities are particularly at risk from pollution. The body of evidence on health impacts and cost of pollution in the EU is significant and keeps growing:

- Air pollution causes over hundreds of thousands of premature deaths and hundreds of billions of euros of costs annually
- Exposure to hazardous chemicals and pesticides are a key risk factor for chronic diseases, including breast cancer and prostate cancer, obesity and diabetes as well as infertility and learning disorders. For example, exposure to PFAS, the forever chemicals, is estimated to cost up to 84 billion EUR annually (which is likely an underestimate).
- The burning of fossil fuels is the major driver of climate change, yet there is currently no timeline to phase out subsidies for fossil fuels. As 2024 [data from the EEA](#) shows, the EU is likely not on track to reduce the volume of structural fossil fuel subsidies in line with the 8th EAP commitment to phase them out without delay. At present, most EU countries lack concrete phase-out plans and fossil fuel subsidies increased sharply in 2022; this situation persisted to a large extent in 2023.

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