

HEAL response to the articles in the German newspaper DIE WELT “Secret contracts and powerful shadow lobbying”, 7 June 2025

These articles include a series of allegations and insinuations which are not fact-based, and which have been extensively fact-checked elsewhere.

Regarding the insinuations made regarding HEAL we state the following:

1. HEAL is an alliance of over 70 organisations from the non-governmental, non-profit sector. We are [politically independent](#) as well as in our decisions and decision-making, and activities are planned and executed independently from the EU Commission or any other funders. According to our statutes the HEAL member General Assembly is the organisation’s highest decision-making. Our Annual General Assembly adopts HEAL’s work programme, which forms the basis for our application for an operating grant under the EU LIFE Programme. At no point in HEAL’s more than twenty years of existence has the EU Commission attempted to influence HEAL’s work programme or activities. In the LIFE work programme we list activities, these are not proscribed.
2. The financing which HEAL receives as part of the EU LIFE programme is based on the LIFE regulation and a transparent call to apply and then to be assessed by independent evaluators. The [EU Court of Auditors](#) recently confirmed that there has been no misuse in the procedure as well as in how the NGOs have used EU funding. The EU Budget Commissioner [recently confirmed](#) that the EU Commission did not instruct nor require NGOs to lobby MEPs on the Commission’s behalf.
3. HEAL’s work is grounded [in scientific evidence](#). In the case of pesticides and PFAS, a substantial body of independent research clearly demonstrates their health impacts and associated costs. Based on this evidence, HEAL formulates recommendations for measures and changes in EU laws, which we then bring forward in the EU policymaking process.

For months, HEAL and other civil society organisations have been faced with a campaign to damage our reputation and restrict our involvement in EU policymaking. This has been led by German EPP in the European Parliament, enabled by AfD and the far-right groups in the EP.

[Civil society is at the heart of the European project](#). In our daily work at EU level, there is no level playing field: unlike resource-rich actors such as foreign governments, multinational corporations, and business associations, HEAL and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) often lack adequate resources to be present in public dialogues at the European level, and ensure their national members’ expertise is included. In 2024, the 50 corporations with the largest lobbying budgets spent nearly €200 million lobbying

the EU alone, a 66% increase compared to 2015. That's two thirds more than in 2015, and ten times the total public budget allocated to support NGOs.

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 70 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

As per our statutes, mission and vision, HEAL works independently of any political party or funder. Our members are our highest decision-making body, including for HEAL's work programme and policy priorities.

For information on HEAL's funding see [here](#)

For information on HEAL in the EU Transparency Register see [here](#)

For information on HEAL's LIFE operating grant see [here](#) and [here](#)

For information on HEAL's latest activities, see our [Annual Report](#)