



OUR IMPACT

2025-2026

HEAL's annual report





Génon K. Jensen
HEAL Executive
Director

Standing up for people's health in unprecedented times

What do Kamila Kadzidłowska, Laura Facciolo, Alain Hugo, and Antoine Lambert, all have in common? They are leaders who work tirelessly to prevent pollution and protect public health, courageously sharing their stories along the way.

Last October, HEAL brought these inspiring individuals together to discuss how pesticides, polluted air, and contaminated water have affected their health and their children's health. This was a reminder that when people come together — equipped with hope — they can shift policy, empower others, and protect health.

VOICES OF HOPE IN A TOUGH YEAR

There is no question that this year was tough. The health impacts of climate change and pollution are increasingly more visible. At the same time, along with other organisations advocating for vital changes to protect people from these impacts, we are facing disinformation and defunding campaigns. Despite that, what stood out to me was the incredible resilience of our community.

Across Europe, awareness of pollution's toll on health is growing, as is the determination of communities and individuals to drive change.

For over twenty years, HEAL has highlighted independent science and given a voice to those whose health is most at risk from pollution and climate change. Together with our members, we point out gaps in EU environmental and climate laws and share recommendations on how to improve public health. This year was no different.

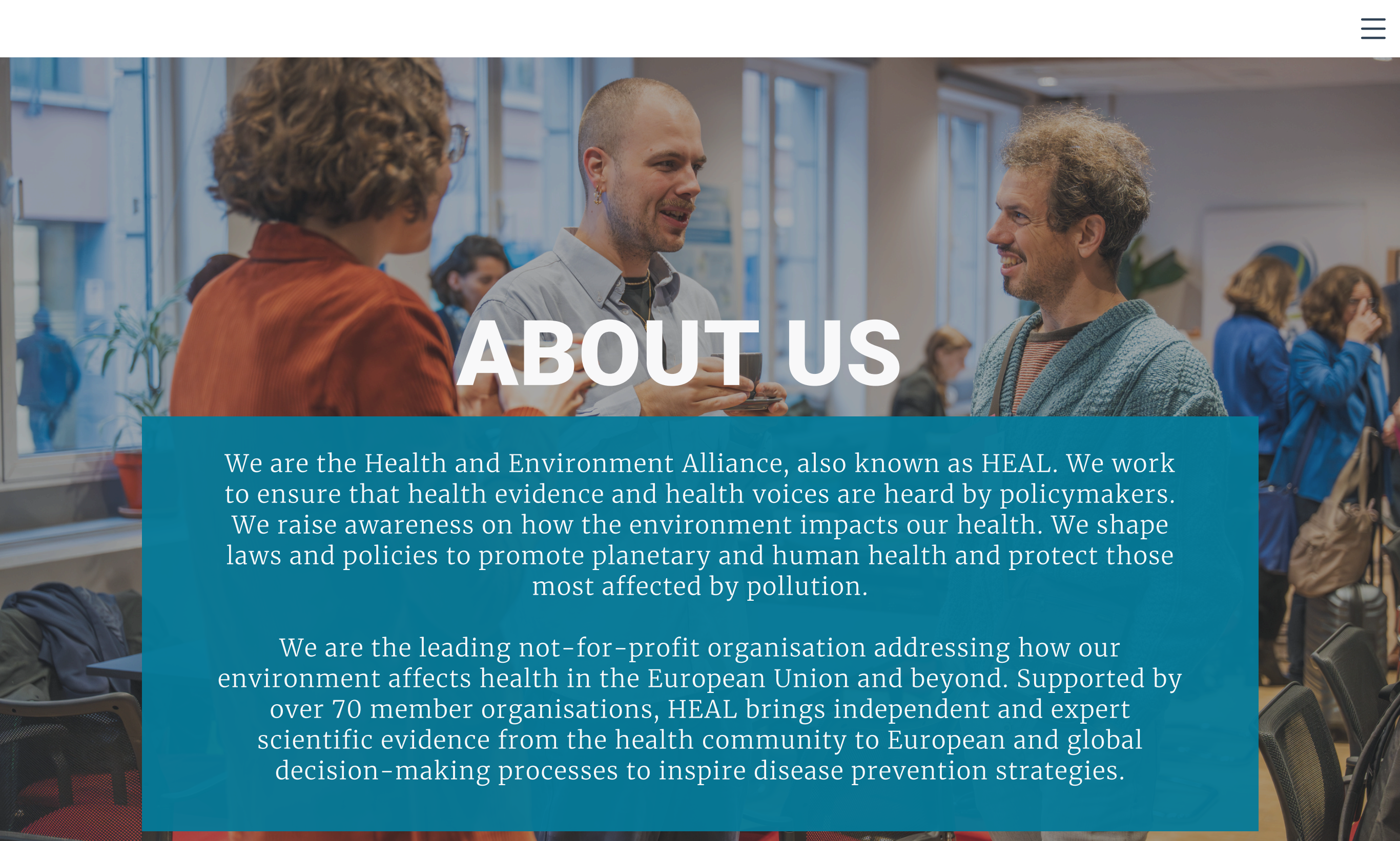
Collaborating with scientists and researchers, we published our landmark report on men's health and chemical pollution, taking an angle on the impacts of chemical pollution often overlooked.

We also let our voices be heard as the EU's new policy cycle shifted priorities towards competitiveness and simplification to cut administrative burden.

Independently of any political party or funder, we advocate for positive change that protects the health of people across Europe. With your continued support, HEAL will keep bringing independent science and people's voices to the heart of European decision making.



In the next year, we will define HEAL's priorities for EU environmental and climate policy action beyond 2030, ensuring our strategic direction responds to the most pressing health threats ahead. We will also explain why urgent action is needed to address risks to health, by highlighting evidence of pollution and climate change disproportionately impacting vulnerable people. Help us make a difference — [donate today](#).



ABOUT US

We are the Health and Environment Alliance, also known as HEAL. We work to ensure that health evidence and health voices are heard by policymakers. We raise awareness on how the environment impacts our health. We shape laws and policies to promote planetary and human health and protect those most affected by pollution.

We are the leading not-for-profit organisation addressing how our environment affects health in the European Union and beyond. Supported by over 70 member organisations, HEAL brings independent and expert scientific evidence from the health community to European and global decision-making processes to inspire disease prevention strategies.



OUR VISION

A healthy planet where current and future generations can benefit from a clean environment to enjoy long and healthy lives.



OUR MISSION

We integrate health protection into environmental policy, by informing decision makers about the health benefits of reducing environmental pollution and recommending a course of action.

OUR LONG-TERM STRATEGIC GOALS

2030

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

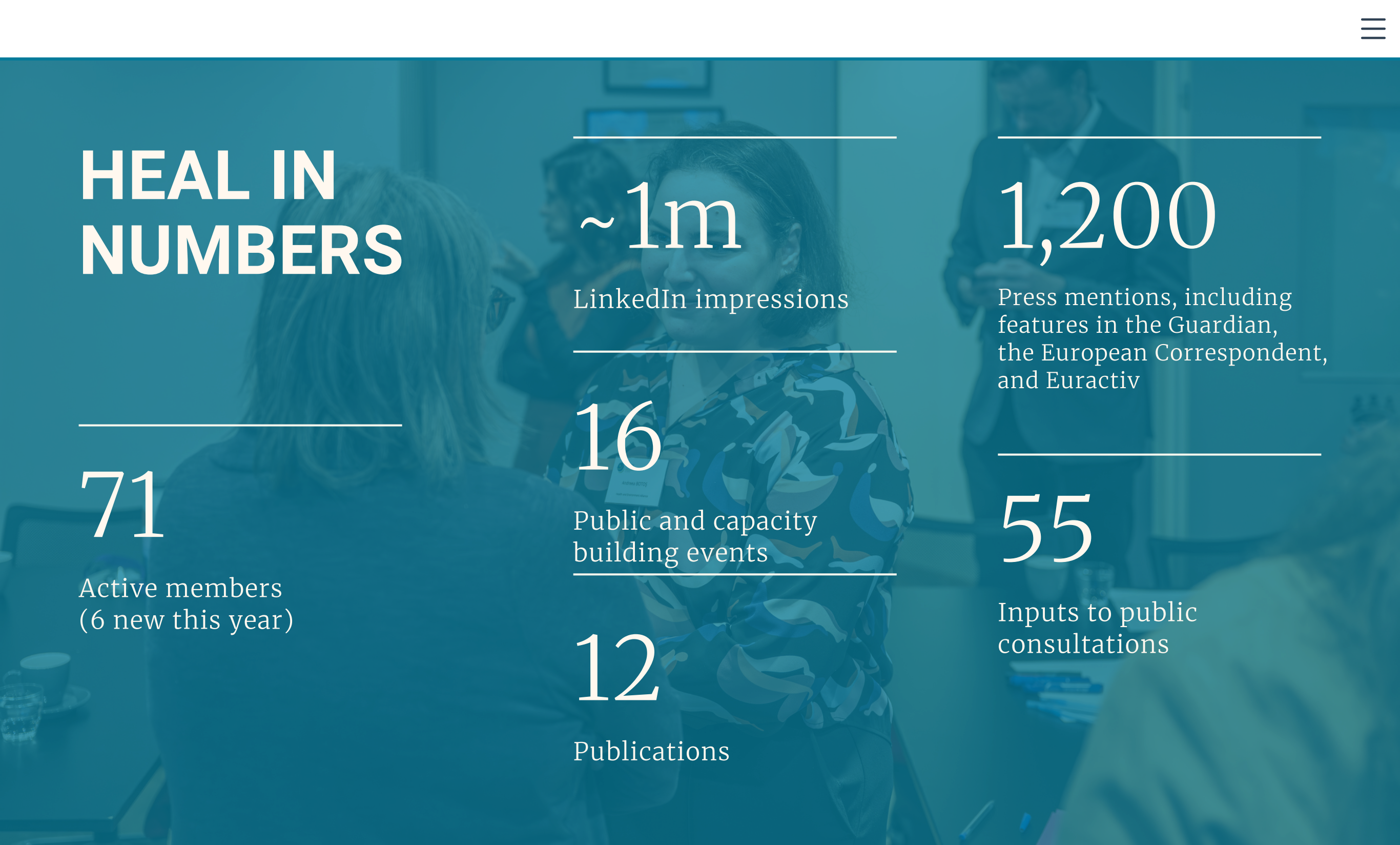
2035

- Ending the use of synthetic pesticides
- A fossil-free power sector

2040

A climate neutral Europe





HEAL IN NUMBERS

~1m

LinkedIn impressions

1,200

Press mentions, including features in the Guardian, the European Correspondent, and Euractiv

71

Active members
(6 new this year)

16

Public and capacity building events

55

Inputs to public consultations

12

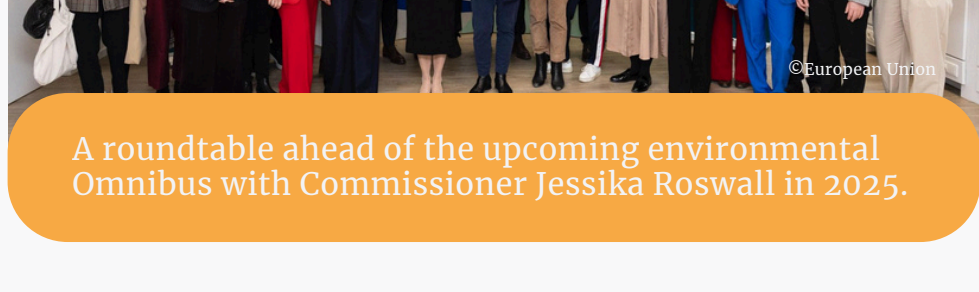
Publications



HEAL'S IMPACT

COUNTERING DEREGULATION FOR HEALTH

In 2025, the European Commission launched a total of ten omnibus processes to cut regulatory burden for industry and strengthen competitiveness. HEAL was active on three of these proposals highlighting that what was proposed went far beyond technical regulatory changes. We argued that this new approach is highly concerning because the Commission is waiving impact assessments and not considering independent science. The ability for civil society experts to give input was also severely limited.



A roundtable ahead of the upcoming environmental Omnibus with Commissioner Jessika Roswall in 2025.

How we made a difference

We put out statements on the [chemicals omnibus](#), the [environmental omnibus](#), and the [food and feed safety omnibus](#). We made clear that instead of trying to weaken the existing health protective framework, the EU Commission should step up implementation and enforcement of existing legislation for better health. HEAL was particularly active on the chemicals omnibus, and we were pleased to see that [our concerns were recognised by member states and in the European Parliament](#).

"This outcome on the chemicals omnibus avoids the worst but falls well short of what the EU chemicals strategy for sustainability identified as necessary for disease prevention. EU decision makers should ensure EU legislation keeps up with latest scientific advice to protect people against harmful chemicals, rather than diluting existing rules."

• **Sandra Jen, Programme Lead for Health and Chemicals**

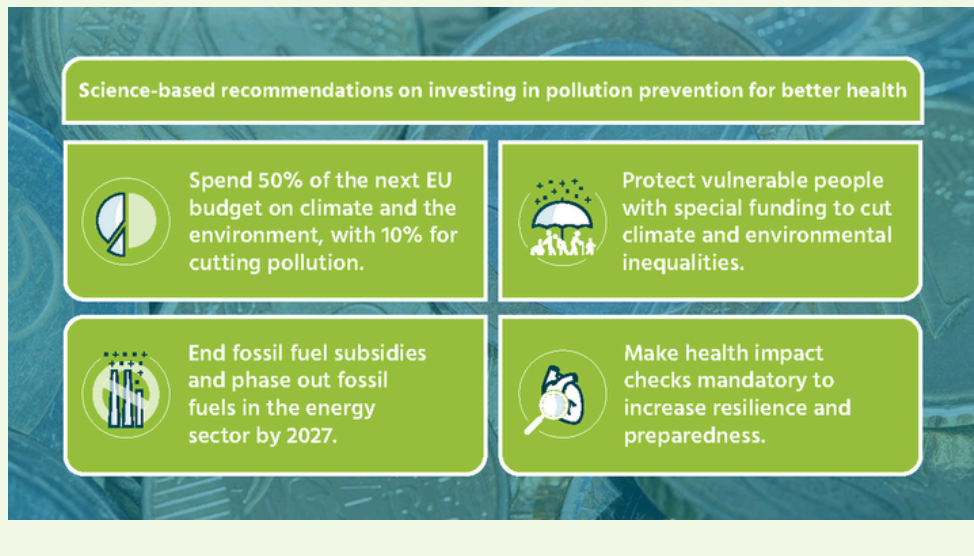
HEAL'S IMPACT

ENSURING THE EU INVESTS IN BETTER HEALTH

The next EU budget or Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) will shape EU public spending across all policy areas in 2028–2034. Throughout these seven years, policymakers will need to implement crucial legislation and measures to protect health against climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. This will need to be adequately financed. HEAL called for the EU's spending and investment opportunities to prioritise preventing disease and strengthening resilience.

"It is alarming that pollution – which leads to hundreds of billions in health costs annually – is not front and center in this budget. The silence on an overdue roadmap on the phasing out of all fossil fuel subsidies underlines the EU Commission's lukewarm approach to pollution reduction."

• **Claudio Lanza, Senior Officer, European Parliament relations**



How we made a difference

We made a science-based case for investing the next EU budget in prevention, not pollution, exemplified by our [position paper](#) and [infographic](#). As billions in public funding are negotiated, we made clear recommendations on how policymakers should invest to promote an equitable, healthy and zero pollution future. Today, billions are still being awarded for fossil fuels, despite contrary agreements. The next EU budget must be free of fossil fuel subsidies.



HEAL'S IMPACT

HIGHLIGHTING PFAS POLLUTION ACROSS EUROPE

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are persistent chemicals that can accumulate in our bodies, affecting the health of current and future generations. They have been linked to cancers, thyroid disease, immune dysfunction, and hormone disruption.

Around 23,000 sites across Europe are contaminated by these forever chemicals, and 12.5 million Europeans live in communities with drinking water polluted by PFAS. HEAL called for EU and national policymakers to take an ambitious approach, including both industrial and consumer sources to respond to this pollution.

"The findings reinforce why a comprehensive and robust EU restriction under REACH is needed to curb PFAS contamination and ensure equal health protection for all Europeans."

• **Sandra Jen, Programme Lead for Health and Chemicals**



Available in English, preface and executive summary also available in Italian, Polish, French, Dutch

How we made a difference

HEAL commissioned a [report analysing the PFAS policy landscape across Europe](#) and PFAS levels in drinking water, consumer and food products. Results showed that while Austria, Denmark, and France have national PFAS plans, and Belgium has regional ones, most EU member states rely on EU regulations that are not sufficient to control PFAS contamination. Our report was cited in the [EU Zero-Pollution Action mid-term review](#) and mentioned by Commissioner Roswall.

HEAL'S IMPACT

SPOTLIGHTING CHEMICAL POLLUTION DRIVING MEN'S HEALTH CRISIS

Chemical pollution is fuelling a growing men's health crisis in Europe. Rates of prostate and testicular cancer, as well as male infertility, continue to rise – with evidence linking these trends to exposure to harmful chemicals such as phthalates, PFAS, pesticides, and microplastics. Building on relationships with key scientists, this year HEAL chose to put a spotlight on this health crisis and why urgent action is needed.

"This report shows that the male reproductive system is particularly vulnerable to chemical exposures. With the upcoming REACH revision, EU policymakers have a unique opportunity to prevent disease, boost reproductive health, and ensure the wellbeing of future generations."

• **Génon K. Jensen, Executive Director**



Available in English, German, Polish, French, Spanish, Italian, Dutch, Slovenian



How we made a difference

HEAL's report [Chemical pollution and men's health: A hidden crisis in Europe](#) is the culmination of this work highlighting concerning trends in male reproductive health and cancer. Evidence shows that environmental and occupational exposures increasingly play a role. We advocate for the EU to align chemicals policy with scientific evidence. Earlier in the year, we also hosted renowned epidemiologist Dr Shanna Swan to hold a science briefing on her research into pollution and its impact on reproductive health and presented the report at Europe's largest cancer conference.

HEAL'S IMPACT

ADVOCATING A SIMPLER, FASTER, AND BOLDER REACH REVISION

The REACH regulation, introduced in 2006, remains the world's leading chemicals safety framework. It sets out how chemicals entering and in use on the EU market are registered, evaluated, authorised, and restricted. In 2025, the European Commission was expected to present its long-awaited proposal for a revision of REACH. HEAL took this opportunity to highlight how policymakers could strengthen REACH's effectiveness for protecting people's health and the environment.



How we made a difference

HEAL co-hosted a [high-level conference in September 2025](#) bringing together policymakers, civil society organisations, industry representatives, and experts to discuss REACH. The event covered the challenges and opportunities of modernising and simplifying the EU's chemical safety rules and better protecting people's health and the environment. Although the Commission's REACH revision didn't happen as expected, it was great to see prominent policymakers and experts exchanging on how to keep people and nature safe from the most harmful chemicals.

HEAL'S IMPACT

CHEMICAL EXPOSURE AND ITS HEALTH IMPACTS IN POLAND

About 25% of the global burden of disease is linked to environmental threats including chemical pollution, according to the WHO. They also highlight that addressing the ten most hazardous chemicals could prevent two million deaths annually. HEAL Poland has had a strong focus on climate and air quality for over ten years. This year, our office in Poland also turned their attention to chemical pollution.

"Widespread PFAS are linked to the development of cancer, thyroid diseases, and immune and endocrine disorders. This is extremely alarming, especially since these substances can persist in our bodies and in the environment for decades or even thousands of years. To ensure adequate protection for all Poles, urgent and ambitious action is needed at both the EU and national levels."

• **Weronika Michalak, HEAL Poland's Director**



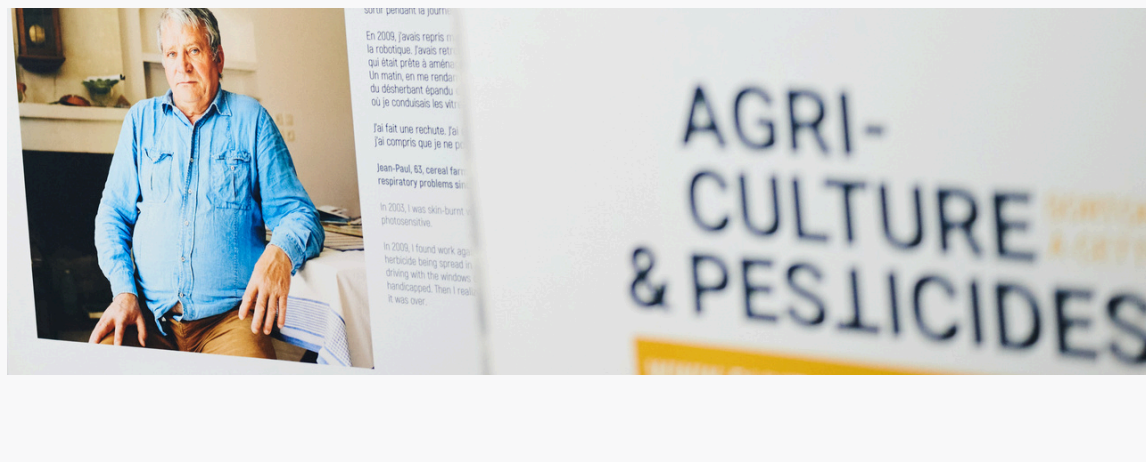
How we made a difference

In June, we held Poland's first ever international conference dedicated to the impact of chemicals on health. It highlighted the urgent need for regulation, education, and cross-sectoral action to protect citizens' health. During the conference, we also published a declaration calling for stricter regulation of harmful chemicals – the first unified call from the health sector on an issue for which awareness is still too low. This also marked the first step towards more work to address chemical pollution in Poland.

HEAL'S IMPACT

EXHIBITING THE HEALTH IMPACTS OF PESTICIDES

Independent science shows exposure to pesticides can harm people's health. Impacts include cancer, neurodevelopmental disorders, behavioural disorders, and hormone disruption. Farmers and agricultural workers are among those most at risk, as are children. Health costs from exposure to pesticides and other chemical substances may exceed 10% of the global GDP per year. HEAL called for the EU to increase efforts to reduce pesticides, and not water down existing protections.



How we made a difference

"Pesticide reduction is a public health and a disease prevention policy."

• **Genon K. Jensen, Executive Director**

How we made a difference

We partnered with our member Phyto-Victims to host a [roundtable at the European Parliament](#) on Pesticides and occupational health diseases in the EU. The event followed the inauguration of Phyto-Victims' exhibition featuring individuals and families whose lives have been impacted by pesticide exposure. Attended by policymakers and co-hosted by two MEPs, the event brought to life personal stories of living with the health impacts of pesticides. As part of the exhibition, we displayed and translated a [video on ending the toxic relationship with pesticides](#).

HEAL'S IMPACT

ADVANCING ON CLEAN AIR FOR HEALTH ACROSS EUROPE

Poor air quality, the greatest environmental risk to health in the EU, leads to hundreds of thousands of premature deaths and hundreds of billions of euros of costs annually. There is no safe level of air pollution and everyone is vulnerable, but some are more at risk than others. With the right policy measures, the impacts and costs of air pollution are largely preventable. HEAL is highlighting why the swift implementation of revised EU clean air standards is vital for keeping people healthy.

"Climate change is a public health emergency. The longer decisive EU climate action is postponed, the greater the health cost will be. We urge EU decision makers to take an approach that protects health and stop wiggling their way out of necessary action."

• **Anne Stauffer, Deputy Director**

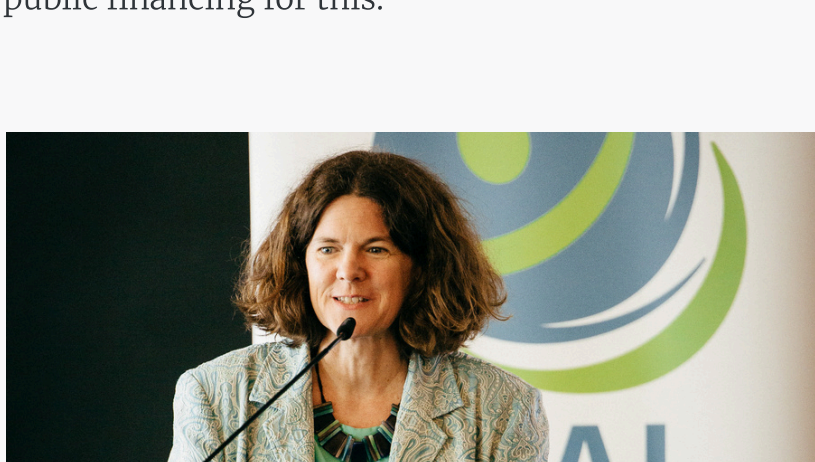
HEAL'S IMPACT

HOLDING THE EU TO ACCOUNT ON CLIMATE ACTION

Burning fossil fuels drives climate change, air pollution, early deaths, and chronic disease. As Europe warms at more than twice the global average, heat and air pollution from wildfires are a particular risk for vulnerable groups. HEAL worked hard to remind decision makers of their commitments under the Paris Agreement. Limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels is crucial as the health cost of inaction keeps growing.

How we made a difference

HEAL engaged health organisations and called on the EU to reach climate neutrality by 2040. We highlighted the risks to health for discussions on a 2040 EU climate target to reduce domestic emissions by 90%, which would have allowed for novel offsetting and flexibilities. We also highlighted the need to [place health at the centre of EU climate resilience efforts](#), and provide adequate public financing for this.





COALITIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

HEAL has strong partnerships with other non-governmental organisations to ensure we can have a stronger voice on key public health issues across the European Union. We coordinate two Europe-wide coalitions. Below are some highlights from this year where we made a difference together:

United for science-based policies to prevent air pollution



EU Healthy Air Coalition

Learn more: healthyaircoalition.eu



Yearly highlight

In March 2025, EUHAC hosted a pre-conference event ahead of the WHO Second Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health, contributing to the global push for coordinated health action in tackling the air pollution crisis.

The side event showcased how EUHAC engagement contributed to the adoption of the EU's revised clean air standards in 2024. It also explored good practices in health advocacy for clean air, shared lessons learned from EUHAC's experience. EUHAC's infographic on reducing air emissions provides further science-to-policy recommendations.



Yearly highlight

Coalition partner organisations from across Europe gathered in Brussels for the 2026 EDC-Free Europe Annual Campaign & Strategy Meeting in April 2026.

Central to our discussions was how to implement our 7 Priorities to Protect People and the Environment from Harm Caused by Endocrine-Disrupting Chemicals in the current European policy landscape. The EDC-Free Europe statement is available in five languages: French, German, Italian, and Spanish.

Eliminating endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) from everyday life



EDC FREE EUROPE

LET'S STOP HORMONE DISRUPTORS

Learn more: edc-free-europe.org

Coalition of ten of the largest environmental organisations and networks active on the European level

Green 10

Learn more: green10.org



Yearly highlight

Directors of the Green10 met with European Commission President von der Leyen and shared civil society's recommendations for policy action. The Green 10 represents over 50 million Europeans across all EU member states and candidate countries.

For the first half of 2026, HEAL acted as chair of the Green10, coordinating key activities to put environmental protection at the heart of EU policy.

OUR UNIQUE SCIENCE-TO-POLICY APPROACH

Our involvement in EU-funded research projects allows us to stay at the cutting edge of research on health impacts of pollution and climate change and bring evidence-based recommendations to policymakers.

HEAL is a partner in four active research projects, providing policy and science communications expertise.

Below are some highlights of our collaboration with researchers from the past year.



Merlon

Researching the health impacts of endocrine disrupting chemicals



HEAL'S IMPACT SPOTLIGHT

Working closely with MERLON researchers, we designed an [infographic on endocrine disruptors and female reproductive health](#). Based on a [MERLON publication](#), the visual presents key statistics and explains how EDCs play a role in female reproductive health, including which reproductive disorders are linked to EDCs. The infographic is currently available in [DE](#), [FR](#), [DA](#), [NO](#), [IT](#), [PL](#), [ES](#), and [CAT](#).

Learn more: merlon.dtu.dk



IHEN

Researching the health impacts of endocrine disrupting chemicals



HEAL'S IMPACT SPOTLIGHT

We led the promotion of [this year's Global Exposome Summit](#), organised by the International Human Exposome Network alongside the Global Exposome Forum (GEF). The conference brought together over 400 people to discuss advancing human health through exposome research and practice.

Génon K Jensen, HEAL's Executive Director, spoke on one of the panels addressing chemical exposures and its health risks.

Learn more: humanexposome.net



The urban burden of disease estimation for policymaking



HEAL'S IMPACT SPOTLIGHT

We wrote several policy briefs showcasing the latest science on the health impacts of living in cities. Looking at cities through a health lens, the briefs advise policymakers on how increasing [green spaces](#), [reducing noise pollution](#), and taking [climate action](#) will improve the public health. All briefs are available in six languages.

Learn more: ubdpolicy.eu



CATALYSE

Climate action to advance healthy societies in Europe



HEAL'S IMPACT SPOTLIGHT

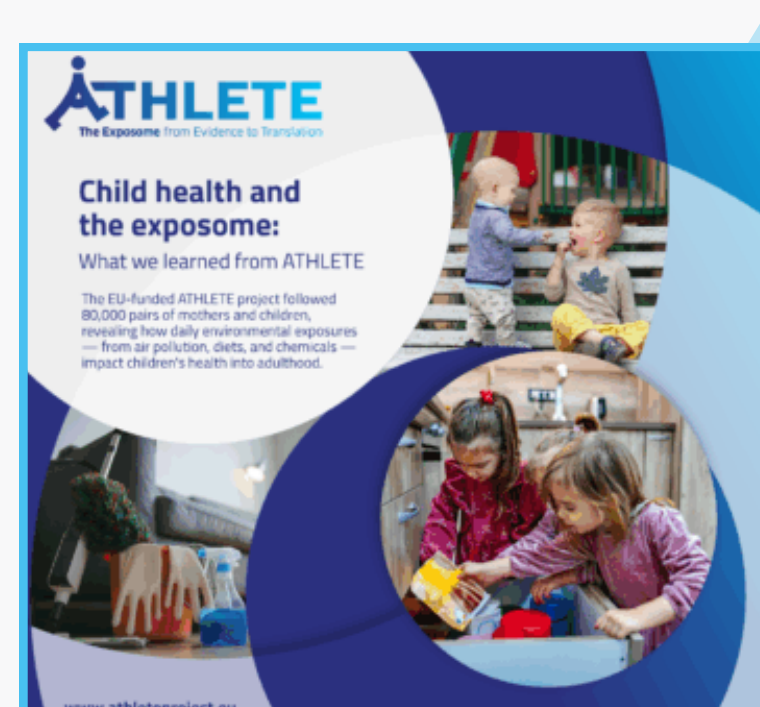
We co-organised a [webinar on strengthening climate resilience in Poland: the role of the health sector](#). The webinar discussed the latest evidence on health risks and impacts of climate change in Poland from the 2026 Lancet Countdown Europe.

Taking a policy angle, we explored how health has shaped the policy response to climate change in Poland and what measures are needed to improve climate resilience.

Learn more: catalysehorizon.eu



Preventing health impacts of our environment from the earliest stages of life



HEAL'S IMPACT SPOTLIGHT

We wrapped up our work as part of the [ATHLETE project with a final resource](#) highlighting the project's key findings on environmental exposures and child health.

The resource also features new scientific methods and tools created throughout the project, and recommendations for policymakers and the public to mitigate these exposures and protect child health.

Learn more: athleteproject.eu



POLYRISK

Researching the health risks of microplastic and nanoplastic particles on the immune system



HEAL'S IMPACT SPOTLIGHT

To close the POLYRISK project, we created a [final resource explaining the project's key findings on plastic particles and immune health](#).

The resource also features the latest on toxicity testing and methodologies and the risk assessment and regulation of plastic particles.

Learn more: polyrisk.science

OUR PEOPLE

With the unique expertise of the members of HEAL’s international team, we help advance science-based environmental policies to protect and promote human and planetary health.



From left to right: Claudio Lanza, Elke Zander, Nea Pakarinen, Iiris Lamminmaki, Martina Razzaboni, Natasha Hodgkins, Marianne Chagnon, Esther Smollich, Sophie Perroud, Adriano Rodari, Sandra Jen, Helena Uhl, Weronika Michalak, Anne Stauffer, Génon K. Jensen, Andreea Botoș, Olga Wdowiczak, Julianna Angelova, Stefan Grand-Meyer, Michal Zablocki.

Not pictured: Sara Azcona Zabala

OUR BOARD

Together with our members, the Executive Committee oversees the implementation of the annual work programme and the priorities of HEAL’s activities. The current committee was elected in 2024.



- Vanessa López – HEAL President, Salud Por Derecho (Spain)
- Christian Horemans – HEAL Vice President, National Federation of Independent Health Insurance Funds (Belgium)
- Filip Raciborski, Polish Society of Allergology (Poland)
- Marie-Christine Dewolf, Régie Hainaut Analyses (Belgium)
- Panagiotis Chaslaridis, European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients’ Associations (Belgium)
- Romain Dries – HEAL Treasurer, France Nature Environnement (France)
- Tomaž Gorenc, Institute of Health and Environment (Slovenia)

OUR MEMBERS

NOT-FOR-PROFIT
HEALTH
INSURERS

HEALTH
PROFESSIONALS

ENVIRONMENTAL
NGOS

PATIENT
GROUPS

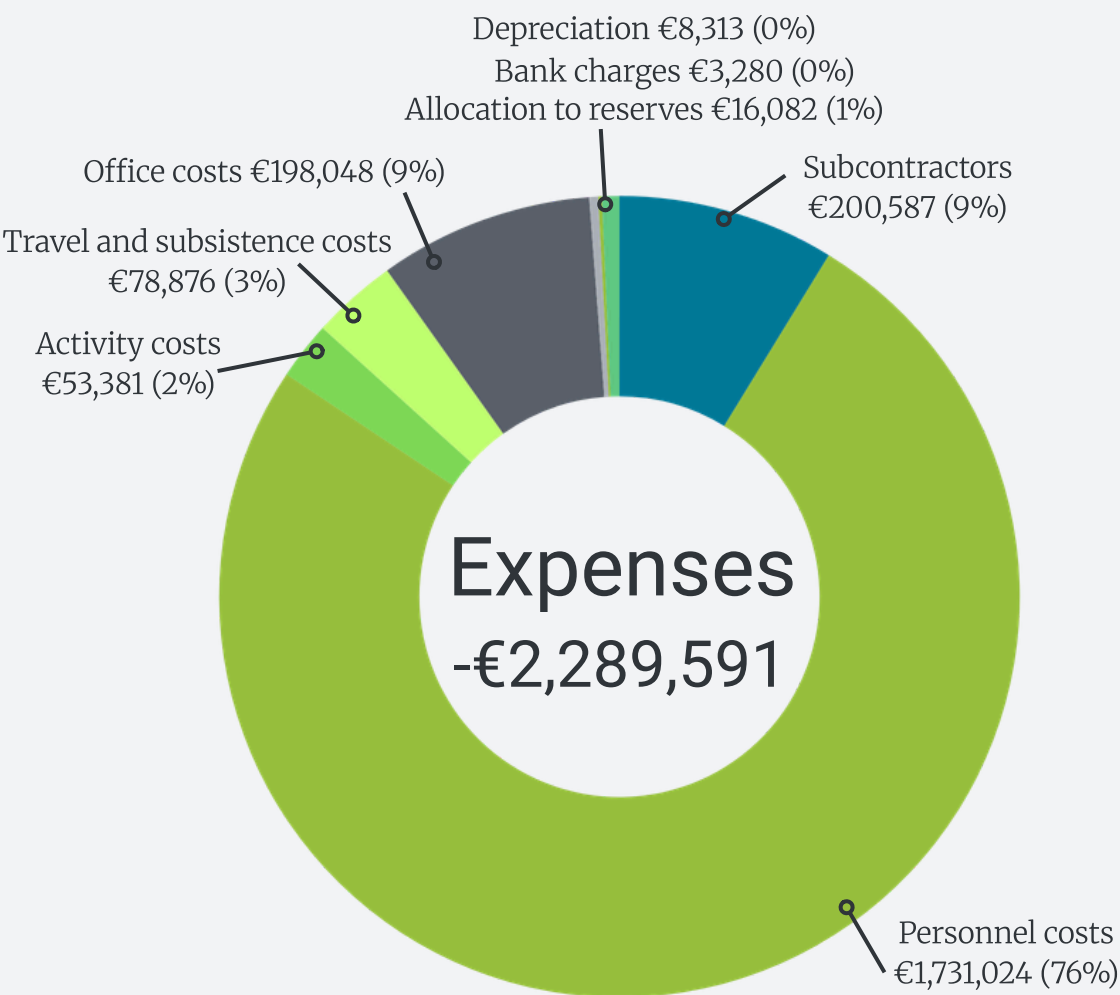
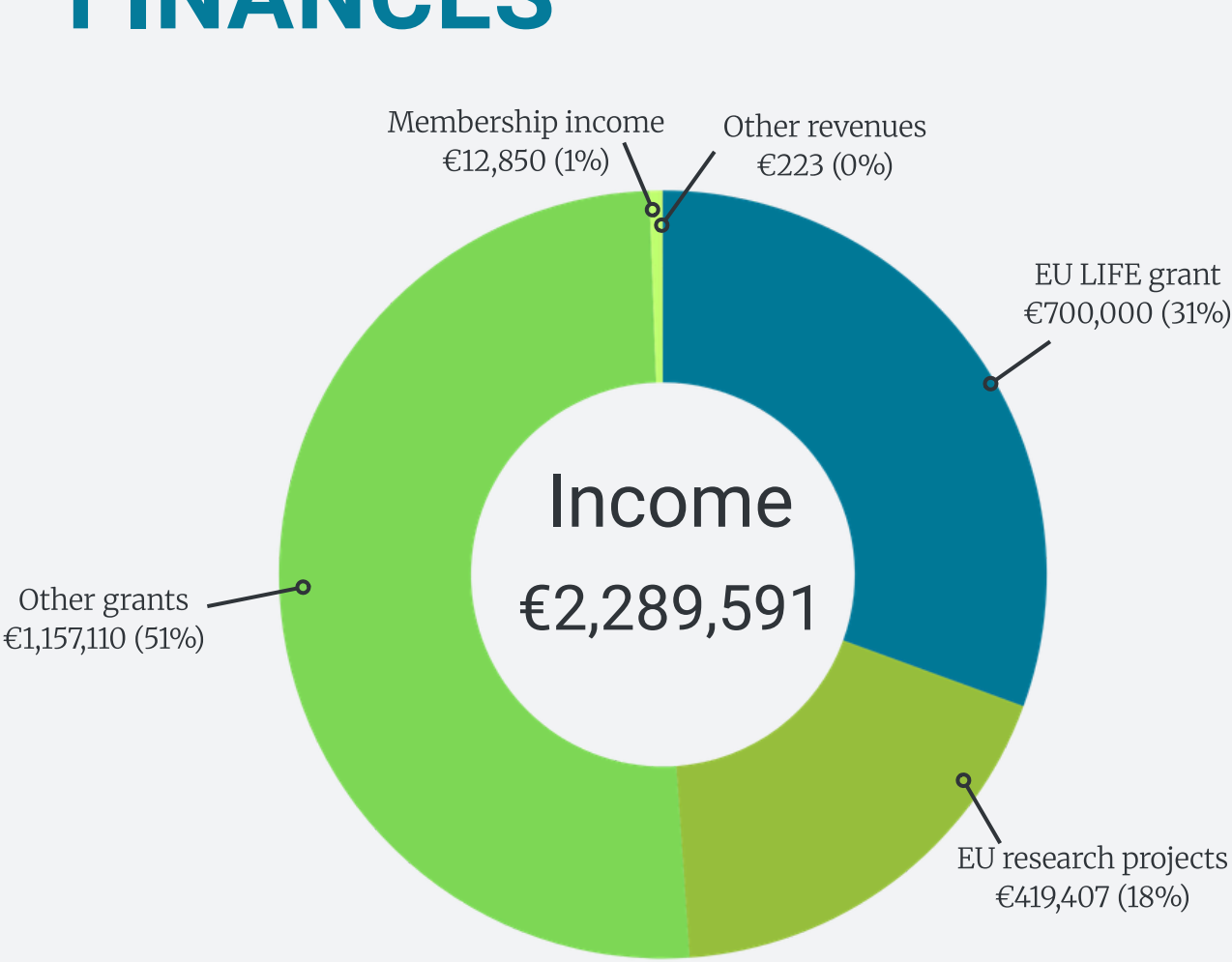
HEALTH
GROUPS

WOMEN'S
GROUPS

CITIZEN
AND
YOUTH
GROUPS

MEET OUR
MEMBERS

OUR FINANCES



OUR FINANCES

- HEAL would like to thank the following funders for making our work possible:
- European Commission DG Environment / DG Climate Action
 - European Commission DG Research and Innovation
 - Adessium Foundation
 - Broad Reach Foundation
 - Clean Air Fund (CAF)
 - European Climate Foundation (ECF)
 - Global Greengrants Fund
 - Swiss Philanthropy Foundation
 - Sigrid Rausing Trust (SRT)





HELP US MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- Raise awareness on how the environment impacts our health
- Shape laws and policies to promote planetary and human health
- Protect those most affected by pollution

[Individual](#)

[Philanthropic funder](#)

EU Institution

HOW CAN YOU HELP US?

- Support policy research
- Fund environmental health advocacy – including reaching out to policymakers, posting on social media
- Give us the means to carry out targeted policy development, including developing position papers, providing input into public consultation processes, meeting with policymakers

AS AN INDIVIDUAL

This year's impact

Donate today

HOW CAN YOU HELP US?

Help us drive comprehensive environmental health policy change. This includes:

- Large-scale policy campaigns
- Developing infographics and reports
- Organise events to put policymakers, scientists, and other key players in the same room

AS A PHILANTHROPIC FUNDER

This year's impact

Get in touch today

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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