

Brussels, December 8th, 2025

Dear Monique Barbut, Minister of Ecological Transition, France
Dear Patrick Schnieder, Federal Minister for Transport, Germany
Dear Matteo Salvini, Minister of Infrastructure and Transport, Italy
Dear Dariusz Klimczak, Minister of Infrastructure, Poland

We are writing on behalf of a group of health and medical professionals to voice our deep concern about potential rollbacks of the 2035 phase-out of new petrol and diesel cars and vans. The full phase-out of Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicles, established under Regulation (EU) 2023/851, is a **vital public health measure** to reduce air pollution and related respiratory, cardiovascular, and cardiometabolic diseases and lung cancer, and improve resilience. Recent concerns raised by Europe's automotive industry, as well as by several Member States including Germany, Czech Republic, and Slovakia, put this **phase-out at risk of being delayed or weakened**.

Air pollution, including from ICE vehicles, has profound effects on public health. In Europe, every year, air pollution is responsible for over 300,000 premature deaths. It contributes to heart disease, stroke, lung cancer, asthma, COPD, diabetes, dementia, pregnancy complications, and impaired development in children. Furthermore, these effects are unfairly distributed: children and older people, those with chronic conditions, pregnant women, and marginalised groups are most affected, with higher exposure among lower socio-economic populations and stark differences between countries and regions.

As healthcare and public health professionals, we observe the effects of air pollution on the individual and on the healthcare system firsthand. From this perspective, we call on you to stand firm in upholding the 2035 phase-out of ICE vehicles. The health of all European citizens depends on this commitment – we cannot afford to compromise.

The evidence is clear; according to the European Environmental Agency, road transport is one of the leading sources of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) – 56.5% and 29.3% respectively. According to the WHO's 2021 Global Air Quality Guidelines, these particles have no known safe exposure levels; what we do know is that they have a **significant impact on human health**. Especially when combined, these pollutants contribute to **increased mortality from cardiovascular, respiratory, and metabolic diseases**. In addition, PM_{2.5} exposure is linked to **lung cancer**, with evidence showing both an increased risk to develop it, and higher mortality among those affected. In densely populated urban areas, where combustion engines are concentrated, the situation is even more severe, with higher exposure and fewer mitigation options, increasing health risks. In Europe, for instance, over 7% of cardiovascular deaths are attributable to air pollution, including from vehicle emissions, with numbers even higher for more specific cardiovascular diseases.

Simply put, **phasing out ICE vehicles means fewer premature deaths, and improved quality of life with healthier children, and longer, more active lives for all European citizens**. Not only does this lead to more resilient healthcare system and a more just society, it also means reduced healthcare costs and economic benefits, **boosting European competitiveness**. The solution is within our grasp; what is needed now is the political will to stay the course.

For these reasons, we maintain our strong support to the European Union's commitment to end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2035. This is not only vital for public health and reducing toxic air pollutants, but also for the environment and the climate. Delaying or weakening this goal puts lives at risk, prolongs Europe's dependency on fossil fuels, undermines our right to clean air, and feeds environmental and climate crises.

We have the opportunity to do this equitably: transforming production while minimising negative impacts on employment, with support from governments, industry, and citizens. The undersigned stand united in support of these measures and call on policymakers to act.

Signatories

European Cancer Organisation (ECO)

European Confederation of Primary Care Paediatricians (ECPCP)

European Lifestyle Medicine Council (ELMC)

European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)

European Respiratory Society (ERS)

European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS)

International Diabetes Federation - European Region (IDF Europe)

International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE Italy)

VAS-European Independent Foundation in Angiology/Vascular Medicine

Health for Future, Austria

Initiative Gesundes Österreich (IGÖ), Austria

Kinder- und Jugendgesundheit Leuchtturm, Austria

Slovenian Coalition for Public Health, Environment and Tobacco Control, Slovenia

Kabinet praktického lékařství 3. lékařská fakulta Univerzity Karlovy, Czech Republic

Respire, France

Berufsverband der Fachärzte für Psychosomatische Medizin und Psychotherapie (BPM) e.V., Germany

Berufsverband der Kinder- und Jugendärzte:innen BVKJ e.V. - Ausschuss Kindergesundheit und Klimawandel, Germany

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Allgemeinmedizin und Familienmedizin e.V. (DEGAM), Germany

Health for Future, Germany

KlimaDocs e.V., Germany

KLUG - Deutsche Allianz Klimawandel und Gesundheit e.V., Germany

Physicians Association for Nutrition e.V., Germany

Praxis Dr Schulze, Germany

Stiftung Gesunde Erde - Gesunde Menschen, Germany

Associazione Culturale Pediatri (ACP), Italy

Dipartimento di Epidemiologia del Servizio Sanitario Regionale del Lazio (DEP), Italy

Lega Italiana per la Lotta contro i Tumori (LILT), Italy

Civilization Transformation Section of the Polish Society of Health Programs, Poland

No Gravity, Slovakia

Asma y Alergia, Spain

International Society of Doctors for Environment, Switzerland