

05 December 2025



To: EU decision makers negotiating in the trilogue

Health call for decisive, domestic EU climate mitigation to prevent disease and reduce cost

Dear Ambassadors and Members of the European Parliament,

As you start interinstitutional negotiations on the EU's climate ambition beyond 2030 on 09 December 2025, we, the undersigned health sector organisations, representing healthcare and medical professionals, patients and public health experts from across the EU, urge you to place people's health at the centre by agreeing on a decisive EU 2040 climate ambition.

Your leadership is essential to protect people across the EU from the climate-driven health emergencies that increase in frequency, intensity and geographical extent and are already affect Europeans today, especially vulnerable groups – children, the elderly, people with pre-existing conditions, and people facing health inequalities. Between 1980 and 2023, extreme weather events caused more than **240,000 fatalities**, with vulnerable groups bearing the highest burden. Decisive climate action is also crucial in a fair and inclusive transition that leaves no region or generation behind.

At a time when EU countries face growing fiscal pressures, ambitious mitigation measures will lead to health cost reductions in the short and medium term. Climate and pollution-related risks already cost the EU economy over **€ 738 billion** between 1980 and 2023.

Faster emissions cuts during the next decade will significantly reduce the health risks of climate change,

from deadly heat stress to wildfires and the spread of climate-sensitive infectious diseases. Failure to increase ambition would lock in higher temperatures that surpass Europe's capacity to adapt, with increasingly severe, irreversible impacts on health and well-being.

As health sector experts, we urge you for the following:

1. A decisive 2040 domestic goal with no pollution outsourcing: we are highly concerned about the foreseen flexibilities and offsetting mechanisms for the 2040 mitigation goal. Offsetting schemes that allow countries or companies to “compensate” for continued emissions by paying for reductions elsewhere risk outsourcing pollution instead of eliminating it at the source. Such approaches can delay the urgent domestic emissions cuts needed, while communities at home continue to suffer the health impacts of pollution. Domestic reductions need to be prioritised across all sectors, particularly those with direct co-benefits to health in the energy, transport, agriculture and housing sectors.

2. Mechanisms that safeguard greater ambition, rather than slowing climate action. Investments in a clean, healthy and just transition need predictability. A proposed 2-year review mechanism risks further slowing down climate mitigation. We are also concerned about the proposed emergency brake that risks rewarding climate laggards by allowing flexibility if Member States fail to meet the 2030 LULUCF target for net carbon removals from land and forests, and the impacts on the support to vulnerable households through the delay of ETS2.

3. A swift phase out all direct and indirect fossil fuels subsidies. The burning of fossil fuels, the main driver of climate change, also creates pervasive air pollution that cuts lives short and deepens socio-economic inequalities. Intensifying wildfires worsen air quality, aggravating health impacts. In cities, heat and poor air quality are a particular threat for people living with respiratory and cardiovascular disease. Fossil fuels are still heavily subsidised, despite commitments to the contrary. We urge you to phase out subsidies in the energy sector by 2027, and fossil fuel subsidies in the 2028-35 EU budget, in support of a clean transition, including public investments into renewable energy, pollution reduction, and climate resilience.

We count on your leadership to ensure the highest possible climate ambition, commensurate with protecting the health of current and future generations.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Stauffer, Deputy Director

Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)

On behalf of

European Organisations

- EuroHealthNet
- European Academy of Neurology (EAN)
- European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN)
- European Lung Foundation (ELF)
- European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)
- European Respiratory Society (ERS)
- Child Rights International Network (CRIN)
- Health Care Without Harm Europe (HCWH)
- Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME)
- Youth and Environment Europe (YEE)

National Organisations

- Associazione Culturale Pediatri (ACP)
- BRAL
- CANOPEA
- Deutsche Allianz Klimawandel und Gesundheit (KLUG)
- International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE) Austria / Ärztinnen und Ärzte für eine gesunde Umwelt
- International Society of Doctors for Environment (ISDE Italy)
- Institute for Health and Environment (IZO)
- Mutualité chrétienne / Christelijke mutualiteit
- Mutualités Libres/Onafhankelijke Ziekenfondsen
- Salud por Derecho