

Minister of Environment
Cc: Minister of Health

21st of April 2017

Curbing power plant emissions reduces burden of disease – government position on the new LCP BREF, 28 April 2017

Dear Minister,

We, the undersigned representatives of health institutions and associations call on you to support the new LCP BREF standards for large combustion plants in the 28 April vote in Brussels in order to protect human health and improve air quality.

Current levels of air pollution, especially with particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide, in many places exceeds the limits set by the World Health Organisation. Air pollution is an important risk factor in chronic conditions, such as strokes, ischemic heart disease, and lung diseases, which burden our health system with high costs every year. Health-related costs of air pollution in the EU range from 390 to 940 billion euros per year.

To achieve healthy air quality for every person, extensive measures are urgently needed across different sectors. The coupling of the transport, housing and energy sectors through electric mobility and the use of heat pumps will continue to increase. Thus, present-day measures to reduce air pollutant emissions from energy industry are of high importance. The major instrument in this regard for years to come will be the new LCP BREF, which will reduce emissions of around 3,000 large combustion plants in the EU.

Pollutant emissions from only 257 European coal-fired power plants are associated with 21,000 hospital admissions, 11,800 cases of chronic bronchitis, 6.6 million work days lost and 22,900 premature deaths, according to recent estimates. The implementation of the new LCP BREF would, compared to existing limit values, reduce this health burden by up to 85% approximately. The costs for retrofit measures would be outweighed many times by the benefits to human health.

We thus expect you to take a stand for a positive vote on the draft new LCP BREF at the end of April.

Yours sincerely,

Genon K. Jensen, Executive Director, Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)
Mikaela Odemyr, President, European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA)
Dan Smyth, Chair, European Lung Foundation (ELF)
Prof Bert Brunekreef, Environment and Health Committee Chair, European Respiratory Society (ERS)

