



Press release

Climate report: How Austria could improve health and save money

Ground-breaking report reveals massive health benefits from higher climate change targets

Cancun, Mexico, 6 December 2010 - Public health in Austria would benefit up to 606 million Euros per year by 2020 if the European Union decides to strengthen their climate change targets, according to figures released today by Health and Environment Alliance and Health Care Without Harm Europe.(1)

Figures for Austria are released today to coincide with "Health Day" in Cancun and as a stimulus to Austrian negotiators at the climate change talks. (2) They are provided as an extension to a ground-breaking report published in Brussels in September 2010.

The report - Acting now for better health: A 30% target for EU climate policy - commissioned by the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) and Health Care Without Harm Europe (HCWH Europe), provides the first-ever estimates of the health savings for different Member States should the EU move from the current 20 per cent target to a 30 percent target on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. (3)

For the EU as a whole, the anticipated benefits could be as high as €30.5 billion. These savings would be on top of the up to €52 billion health gains anticipated as a result of emission cuts to reach the EU's current 20 per cent target.

The study offers conclusive evidence that cleaner energy and cleaner air, associated with an immediate move to 30% domestic cuts in greenhouse gases by 2020, would go a long way to paying for itself in better health through Europe.

The new figures for Austria show that cleaner air resulting from the achievement of a higher European target would result in public health benefits of between €210 million and €606 million per year from 2020. (4)

This would include:

- An increase in life expectancy of 2,800 years spread across the population.
- 260,000 fewer days of restricted activity
- 25,000 fewer days when people need to use respiratory medication
- 2,800 fewer consultations for upper respiratory symptoms and asthma
- 60,000 fewer working days lost annually due to cardiac and respiratory problems.

Austria would do well compared to many other EU countries as a result of a stronger EU target on emissions reductions. It comes in 14th in the EU27 ranking.

Health benefits for EU countries

Benefits per year by 2020 (upper bounds):

Germany €8.1 billion

Poland €4.0 billion

France €3.5 billion

Italy €3.4 billion

Romania €1.4 billion (NEW)

Czech Republic €1.3 billion (NEW)

Netherlands €1.1 billion

Greece €1.0 billion (NEW)

Hungary €1.0 billion (NEW)

Belgium €0.9 billion

Spain €0.9 billion

UK €0.9 billion

Slovakia €0.7 billion (NEW)

Austria €0.6 billion (NEW)

Bulgaria €0.3 billion (NEW)

Portugal €0.3 billion (NEW)

Other EU countries €1.1 billion (NEW CALCULATION)

(Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Slovenia, Sweden)

Total (all EU countries) **€30.5 billion**

The report, Acting now for better health: A 30% target for EU climate policy, goes beyond recent European Commission figures on health benefits, which did not provide national figures and calculated health benefits on the basis of increased mortality due to exposure to air pollution only. The analysis covers the costs of both death and ill-health, such as restricted activity due to heart and lung conditions, hospital costs, consultations, and medication.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. **The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)** aims to raise awareness of how environmental protection improves health. It brings together more than 60 organizations working at the European level. Website: www.env-health.org and **Health Care Without Harm (HCWH)** is a global coalition of more than 440 organizations in 52 countries working with the health sector to reduce its impact on human health and the environment while advocating for global environmental health. www.noharm.org
2. More details of "Health Day", 6 December 2010 at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 16) in Cancun, Mexico will be available at www.env-health.org from 5 December 2010.
3. The report - Acting now for better health: A 30% target for EU climate policy - commissioned by the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) and Health Care Without Harm Europe (HCWH Europe) was published on 14 September 2010. It included figures for the EU as a whole plus Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, Spain and the UK. The full report and a background briefing are available at www.env-health.org/r/93 and <http://www.noharm.org/europe/issues/climate/>. Original press release is available at http://www.env-health.org/IMG/pdf/140910_HEAL_HCWH_Europe_PR_Co-benefits.pdf
4. The figures for Austria, which are released for the first time today, are pasted below.

HEALTH BENEFITS FOR AUSTRIA FROM STRONG CLIMATE POLICY

It is estimated that cleaner air in Austria resulting from the achievement of a '30% internal' rather than a 20% reduction in emissions would result in public health benefits of between €210 million and €606 million per year from 2020.

Annual health benefits include:

- An increase in life expectancy of 2,800 years spread across the population.
- Better health and lower health costs: 260,000 fewer days of restricted activity; 25,000 fewer days when people need to use respiratory medication; 2,800 fewer consultations for upper respiratory symptoms and asthma.

Other benefits: A more productive workforce: 60,000 fewer working days lost annually due to cardiac and respiratory problems.

Impact assessment, all figures per year	Baseline in 2020	Reduction in EU damage compared to the 2020 baseline	
	Following 20% cut	Cut of 30% with flexibility	30% internal cut
Mortality - Life years lost, people >29 years	23,106	1,340	2,794
Infant deaths (1 to 12 months)	4	0	0
Chronic bronchitis, cases	1,168	59	122
Cardiac and respiratory hospital admissions	621	36	75
Restricted activity days (RADs) working age population	2,037,548	124,803	260,303
Of which, working days lost	448,261	28,580	59,609
Days with respiratory medication use by adults and children	208,172	11,857	24,730
Days with lower respiratory symptoms among adults and children	2,703,113	166,638	347,559
Consultations for asthma and upper respiratory symptoms	24,564	1,359	2,835

Economic assessment, €millions	Benefit from 30% with flexibility cut in GHGs in 2020	Benefit from 30% internal cut in GHGs in 2020
Mortality – lower bound (lower estimate of VOLY applied)	70	146
Mortality – upper bound (upper estimate of VSL applied)	260	542
Morbidity	31	64
Total, lower bound mortality valuation	101	210
Total, upper bound mortality valuation	291	606

