



# Air quality

The spotlight turned on highlighting latest evidence on the harm to health from breathing in polluted air in the lead up to EU Year of Air 2013.

HEAL promoted the work of an electric car from the Netherlands which came to Brussels to measure air pollutants in different areas in Brussels, gave policy guidance to an EU research project on children's indoor air, developed joint NGO policy demands, and even won an award for our efforts.

## Electric car becomes latest advocacy tool in EU Year of Air

HEAL organised the policy workshop "EU Year of Air – how can we reduce air pollution to improve health?" on 13 September, as part of the AGM 2012.



Birgit Beger, Secretary General of the Standing Committee of European Doctors, representing national medical organisations in 27 European countries, emphasised the importance her members gave to health prevention, including the need for clean air.



Roberta Salvi of the European Federation of Allergy & Airways Diseases Patients' Association (EFA) described how the lives of people with lung problems were affected by poor air quality.



Professor Bert Brunekreef, one of the leading researchers in the field, gave an overview of the health effects of air pollution and an introduction to the electric, air monitoring car he had brought with him to Brussels.

It provides recommendations on policy from the 11,000 respiratory experts that are ERS members.



HEAL Executive Director Génon K. Jensen speaks to members and partners.

Professor Bert Brunekreef is a member of the European Respiratory Society (ERS), and he took the opportunity to present their "10 Principles for clean air" to the meeting.

## Photo diary of the measuring

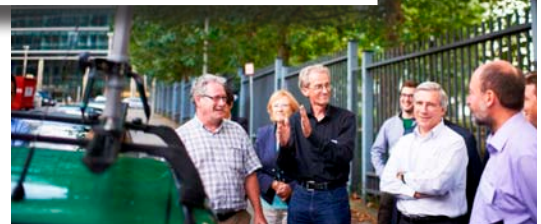


The measuring vehicle

How does air pollution measuring work? The Institute for Risk Assessment Sciences (IRAS), University of Utrecht, has developed a vehicle which can measure pollution levels in real time.



Inside the vehicle



Kees Meliefste and Bert Brunekreef explain how the measuring works.

## Guiding policy in EU wide study on kids' air at school

HEAL provided the EU funded research project SINPHONIE with expertise for the policy context and recommendations to decision-makers as a member of its advisory board.

Researchers in the SINPHONIE project conducted the first-ever European wide monitoring of indoor air quality in schools and health effects on children. Forty scientists worked in 118 schools in 24 countries, involving around 350 classrooms and 8,000 students.

An earlier French analysis showed that three out of 10 children are exposed to poor indoor air in schools, which leads to an increase in asthma and rhinitis. Children who suffer from allergies are the most at risk from poor indoor air.



## HEALer Anne Stauffer receives a Clean Air London 2013 Award for her tireless work on air quality



HEAL Deputy Director Anne Stauffer

## Scientists warn on health effects of air pollution

The Global Burden of Disease assessment by 450 experts published this year shows that air pollution is one of the top-ten global risk factors.

The Europe office of World Health Organization, one of the authors of the assessment, issued a wake-up call to take air pollution problems

more seriously. The review of scientific evidence showed effects at lower concentration levels and associations between air pollution and new conditions such as diabetes, adverse birth effects and harm to the cognitive development of children.

HEAL shared widely the WHO results, which provide evidence-based science that EU policies are inadequate.

## Three priorities set in a common vision

HEAL was joined by over 60 environmental, health and citizens' non-profit organisations, led by HEAL, in a call for three priority actions, which would put the EU on track towards achieving healthy air quality in 2013, EU Year of Air.

## Recommendations

- Ambitious reduction commitments in the National Emissions Ceilings Directive (NEC) for a range of pollutants, including PM2.5, methane, black carbon and mercury.
- Measures to cut emissions from all major sources, for example shipping and agriculture.

· Enforcement and strengthening of ambient air quality limits. Currently, EU limits are above the recommendations by the World Health Organization.

The joint position statement formed part of a response to an EU public consultation on the future of air quality, to which many of HEAL's members from all over Europe contributed.

*"Concrete opportunities for preventing ill-health are always good news for health insurance organisations. We intend to support all advocacy efforts in favour of reducing exposure to polluted air, including from coal-powered electricity stations in Europe."*



Dr Philippe Swennen, Project Manager, Association Internationale de la Mutualité (AIM)

## MEDIA COVERAGE

*'We know and see that air pollution continues to be a massive problem for the health of individuals and for our economies, and we think that the MEPs need to strengthen the guidelines and should reject attempts to weaken them,'*

Anne Stauffer told a European Parliament hearing on air quality, 27 September 2012, Euractiv, Lawmakers urged to back tough clean air package.

*'There is now no doubt that air pollution, and especially fine particulate matter (PM2.5), has many serious consequences for health and leads to avoidable premature deaths,'*

The Lancet, Air pollution: Europe's avoidable health risk, March 2013