



PRESS RELEASE

How coal power plants make us sick – Romanian version of HEAL report launched today

Bucharest, 9 December 2013 - Today, the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) and Bankwatch Romania launched the Romanian version of HEAL's report "The unpaid health bill, how coal power plants make us sick" [1]. The study shows that out of 10,000 industrial facilities in Europe, coal power plants are the top 20 most damaging to health and environment. Among these 20, Romania has five including power plants in Turceni (second place), Drobeta Turnu-Severin, Craiova-Isalnita and Mintia-Deva.

Emissions from coal power plants in Europe cause over 18,000 premature deaths, approximately 8,600 new cases of chronic bronchitis and over 4 million lost working days each year. The health impact in Europe is estimated at EUR 43 billion per year. Altogether, coal power plants in Poland, Romania and Germany are responsible for more than half of the health impacts. Romania takes second place for the top coal power plants pollution, alongside Germany. Pollution impacts in Romania stand at 2,731 premature deaths, approximately 1,284 new cases of chronic bronchitis and over 619,660 lost working days each year. The health impacts of coal power plants in Romania are estimated at up to EUR 6.4 billion per year.

Julia Huscher, Coal and Health Officer of the Health and Environment Alliance, says: *"Coal power plants represent the most important source of air pollution in Romania. Lignite power plants are the most problematic; we also need to consider that besides the air pollution generated by these power plants, mining activities also have a significant impact, through air and water pollution. The European Union is proposing stricter pollution norms at power plants starting from 2016, but the Romanian government has requested to delay such measures at 42 power plant units until 2020 [2], which does not represent the best decision in terms of health protection. Thus, Romania should reduce current air pollution levels and not apply derogations to existing power plants."*

Ionut Apostol, of Bankwatch Romania, says: *"Currently, Romania has an overcapacity for electricity production. Thus, for the short and medium term we have the flexibility to plan what our electricity production sector should look like and gradually quit the use of coal, the most polluting form of energy."* [3]

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Notes:

[1] The report (in Romanian) can be downloaded at <http://bit.ly/1LEmL9>; the printed study is available in limited numbers, to request a copy please send an email to ionut@bankwatch.org; a presentation of the

study, in English, is available at <http://bit.ly/1jD29vI>

[2] Details regarding the Industrial Emissions Directive are available at <http://bit.ly/1bRqAUc> The Romanian Government prepared a National Transition Plan for delayed compliance with the directive; the plan is available at <http://bit.ly/18vL7uD> Decisions at the European Commission regarding these derogations are expected this week.

[3] A few details regarding Romania's coal power plants sector are presented in a material available in Romanian at <http://bit.ly/1bRqk7z>

***The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)** is a leading European not-for-profit organisation addressing how the environment affects health in the European Union (EU). With the support of more than 65 member organisations, representing health professionals, not-for-profit health insurers, patients, citizens, women, youth and environmental experts, HEAL brings independent expertise and evidence from the health community to different decision-making processes. Members include international and Europe-wide organisations, as well as national and local groups. Website: www.env-health.org*

***Bankwatch Romania** is a non-profit, non-governmental, environmental organisation. The aim of the association is to prevent the negative environmental and social impact of public and private projects, promote sustainable alternatives and public participation in decision-making. Website; <http://bankwatchromania.wordpress.com/>*