



Brussels, 1 July 2024

To: Members of the European Parliament

Subject: Keep health in the scope of the EP's ENVI committee

Dear Member of the European Parliament,

The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) congratulates you on your election to the European Parliament and looks to your leadership to protect people's health in the next five years.

HEAL is the leading non-governmental alliance working for better health through a healthier environment, bringing together over 80 member organisations from the health sector, including doctors, asthma, allergy and cancer patients and not-for-profit health insurers.

Across the European Union, people's health is under threat like never before from the triple crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss. Twenty percent of early death and disease in Europe are due to pollution. The health of children, the elderly, those living with disease, and those experiencing socio-economic hardships and health inequalities is particularly at risk.

As you're considering the scope of the EP committees for this legislature, HEAL urges you to keep the current scope of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI).

First, as highlighted by the World Health Organization and in numerous studies, the environment is a major determinant of people's health, and a major risk factor for non-communicable disease, also known as chronic disease. Climate change impacts aggravate this existing disease burden, for example for [people living with chronic respiratory or heart disease](#). The increase of the severity and frequency of extreme weather events with climate change are a particular risk for children and the elderly. Thus, the health threats from environmental, climate factors have to be considered together, in a comprehensive matter, which is also a key lesson learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic. Keeping health within ENVI's scope will also align with the *Health in all policies* and the [One Health approach DG SANTE operates on](#), and support the further implementation of [Europe's Beating Cancer Plan](#).


Second, separating EP environmental, climate and health action would be a disservice to member states efforts: in the 2023 [Budapest Ministerial Declaration](#), the EU health and environment ministries commit to protecting health against the triple crises of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss; member states have since initiated a series of partnerships to amplify cooperation. In addition, EU health ministers underline the need for strengthened action on climate and environmental threats, as part of reducing the high health burden of non-communicable disease in their 21 June 2024 [Conclusions on the European Health Union](#).

Third, in the past legislature, the ENVI committee was [effective and impactful in strengthening health protection](#) in legislative proposals on environment and climate and revisions of existing laws. In many of the 66 legislative files successfully concluded, ENVI MEPs inserted a higher protection level, including for tackling air pollution, reducing exposure to health-harming chemicals (endocrine disruptors, persistent organic pollutants), improving water quality, and through increasing ambition on various files on climate mitigation. In addition, ENVI's voice was key for health in EU financing programmes, including the Programme on Environment and Climate (LIFE), and the 8 EU Environmental Action Programme (8EAP).

Fourth, we are highly concerned that time consuming conflicts of competence would arise between ENVI and a separate full health committee, which would delay effective disease prevention action by the European Parliament.

We call on you, as representatives of the people across the Union, to keep health competences within the ENVI committee.

Yours sincerely,



Genon K. Jensen
Executive Director
Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)

The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) is the leading not-for-profit organisation addressing how the environment affects human health in the European Union (EU) and beyond. HEAL works to shape laws and policies that promote planetary and human health and protect those most affected by pollution, and raise awareness on the benefits of environmental action for health.

HEAL's over 80 member organisations include international, European, national and local groups of health professionals, not-for-profit health insurers, patients, citizens, women, youth, and environmental experts representing over 200 million people across the 53 countries of the WHO European Region.

As an alliance, HEAL brings independent and expert evidence from the health community to EU and global decision-making processes to inspire disease prevention and to promote a toxic-free, low-carbon, fair and healthy future.

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