



HEALTH COSTS OF AIR AND TRANSPORT POLLUTION IN EUROPEAN CITIES

LAUNCH OF NEW STUDY AND ONLINE DISCUSSION | 2& OCTOBER

OPENING SPEECH BY SASCHA MARSCHANG, ACTING SECRETARY GENERAL

Good Morning, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am glad to be here today to welcome you on behalf of the European Public Health Alliance.

Today's webinar is an important step in our journey to better understand the [lethal impacts on air pollution on our health](#) which we examine from the lens of cities via a new piece of research which would be [presented today](#) and with an in depth policy discussion with expert panel members representing both the European and the city perspective.

I would like to thank the support and hard work of our [11 national partner organisations](#) who helped us to commission this important report and while our European event they are also marking the important consequences in their cities.

Holding this important discussion from our side is a contribution from the European public health community to the European wide efforts to mark the **2020 European Week of Regions and Cities** and the **European Green Week**. On this occasion, I would like to express my gratitude to the continuous support and help **EUROCITIES** provided to us and to my team to organise this event - without this help, [this event](#) could not have taken place.

But this week also the **Global Climate Change** week. And as we are all experiencing the new waves of the COVID-19 epidemic, we should not forget about the hard work of medical professionals who also recognise the toxic relationship between air pollution, health and the climate crisis. This is why the European Public Health Alliance is gladly supporting the [Medics for Clean Air](#) campaign during which medical professionals are raising their voice demanding clean transport and clean air.

One month ago we marked the [fifth anniversary of dieselgate](#), a scandal which still has its health consequences. We think that by delivering additional evidence to the table of European, national and city level decision makers that will help to put an end to illegal level of air pollution and will stop the aggravating health and climate burden of emissions.

Let me be clear on this: we need a **renewed commitment to a complete phase out of the polluting combustion engine**, as the correct conclusion of the Dieselgate scandal! Anything else might be too little too late, and ultimately it could compromise Europe's long-term healthy recovery and Green Deal objectives.'

Let me finish where I started: our study reveals the magnitude of the damage toxic air is causing to people's health and the **huge health inequalities** that exist between and within countries in Europe. To a large extent, the situation can be influenced by transport policies and cities can reduce costs by switching

to zero-emission urban mobility. Governments and the European Union should bear these costs in mind for transport policy in order to support, not to hinder, a healthy recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Thank you very much for your attention and I am looking forward to have an inspiring discussion today during this event!