



Priority 5.4: Addressing the climate change crisis and its impacts on health

Secure the EU's capacity for resilience and robustness in an era of permacrisis. The EU faces a converging set of crises, ranging from pandemics and geopolitical conflicts to climate change and socio-economic instability. It is essential to implement a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approach to create a strong healthy environment. A key component of this environment should be the promotion of health-focused research for implementation and innovation, given the cross-cutting impact of health on all areas of life. An important element should be the promotion of research and innovation in health. Furthermore, to secure people's ability to adapt and thrive in such challenging circumstances, the EU must:

- 5.4. Effectively approach climate change and health at all levels. Rapidly phasing out fossil fuel use is necessary to improve public health and protect the environment. The EU and Member States should ambitiously lead climate mitigation and adaptation changes for a just and green transition. Additionally, the EU should do more to implement the Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development Goals agenda.

Climate change and its related impacts on the planet have been affecting the health of people across the EU and globally. The EU should focus on considering climate and health together in its policymaking, rather than as separate issues. The energy transition must happen, and a truly Just Transition means nobody is left behind.

Taking a cross-sectoral approach to climate and health

Climate and health need to be approached together, at all levels of governance:

- The implementation of the **Green Deal** should be ensured and continued in the next mandate of the European Commission and European Parliament.
- The Commission should focus on **encouraging cross-sectoral policy developments** and work on synergies between the Green Deal, health, and agriculture policies to meet the [Paris Agreement's](#) objectives and [Sustainable Development Goals](#).
- **Health impact assessments** should be integrated into climate-related policies, ensuring that potential health risks and benefits are systematically evaluated before implementation.
- The **resilience of healthcare facilities** should be enhanced to face climate-related challenges, such as extreme weather events and disease outbreaks. Health systems should be equipped to provide essential services even under adverse climate conditions. In addition, health systems should be decarbonised and made more sustainable to help with the transition to net-zero.
- Air pollution, planetary health and decarbonisation considerations should be part of the **curricula** and lifelong learning opportunities for the health workforce and other health professionals.

- **Ambitious climate-related targets** should be set and guided by science; policies developed on the global stage; and diplomatic efforts strengthened to secure international commitments that align with health-focused climate goals.
- Climate change impacts on health are usually quantified through the number of deaths, emergency admissions and hospitalisations. Policy should respond to the **latest science and cohesive indicators** of public health risk, with future avenues open to other types of data indicators.

Supporting the energy transition

The energy transition needs to be supported and fossil fuels rapidly phased out to reduce the impact on human and planetary health:

- The link between the use of fossil fuels and environmental pollution (e.g., impact on air quality, soil water and noise levels) should be highlighted in policies as **risk factor** for NCDs, including cancer. This connection also impacts the implementation and achievement of the SDGs and of access to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a universal human right.
- The EU should commit to specific dates and plans for rapidly **phasing out fossil fuel** use as an accepted part of everyday life in Europe, such as in the transport system, in personal car use, and for heating and cooking appliances in our homes. Given the adverse effects of producing power from fossil fuels (e.g., climate change and pollution), this phase out should be addressed from both a public health and an economic point of view. Renewable energy should be promoted as the only way forward.
- The EU should promote and foster the **use of public transport, cycling, and walking** by investing in sustainable transportation infrastructure. This includes promoting efficient and affordable clean regional transport, such as rail travel, as well as Multimodal Digital Mobility Services, while disincentivising private car use and air travel. Policies that encourage the adoption of electric vehicles and discourage the use of fossil fuel-powered vehicles should be implemented, where there are no options for zero pollution mobility.
- Investments should be made in the expansion of **renewable energy infrastructure**, including solar, wind, hydro, and geothermal sources. Incentives should be developed for the adoption of renewable technologies for both households and industries.

Ensuring a just and green transition

This energy and green transition must be just and should leave no one behind:

- EU policies need to ensure that the transition towards a sustainable economy is **just, fair, and inclusive**. Policies should support workers and communities affected by the shift away from fossil fuels, creating new job opportunities in clean energy sectors.
- While approaching **climate change mitigation and adaptation**, the EU should keep in mind that climate change, including its negative health effects, disproportionately affect marginalised groups who are often the first impacted and have a lower resilience due to factors out of their control. Policymaking should protect the most vulnerable, guided by current and future research and evidence. More studies should be developed to inform the policymaking processes.
- **Public awareness campaigns** should be launched to inform citizens and policymakers about the health implications of climate change and the benefits of transitioning to clean energy sources. This can foster public support for climate action and healthier lifestyles.



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