

World Heart Federation

RC75

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH PROCESS

PROGRESS REPORT

AGENDA ITEM 12

Honourable Chair,

Distinguished Delegates,

The World Heart Federation commends WHO and Member States for recognizing **climate change and health** as a core pillar of the *Second European Programme of Work 2026-2030* as well as for the strides made in implementing the *European Environment and Health Process*. WHF also applauds WHO Europe for integrating the region's agenda on noncommunicable diseases and environmental health within a single organizational unit. WHF encourages continued leadership and concrete outcomes that address the shared drivers of cardiovascular disease and environmental challenges.

We note with concern that Europe has become the fastest-warming continent, with an estimated **1.4 million deaths** annually attributable to environmental risk factors. Air pollution is widely recognized as a leading cause of noncommunicable diseases, especially cardiovascular disease, with nearly **eight million deaths** worldwide attributable to exposure to both outdoor and indoor air pollution. Extreme heat events further increase the risk of cardiovascular complications, especially among vulnerable populations.

We call on Member States to invest in climate-resilient health systems that can anticipate, prevent, and respond to the growing health impacts of climate change and air pollution, with particular attention to cardiovascular health. Addressing air pollution and extreme heat must be a priority, given their well-established role in cardiovascular morbidity and mortality. Health professionals must be equipped with knowledge and tools to manage these risks, while policies should foster co-benefits such as active transport and healthy urban design. By integrating climate-sensitive interventions into

cardiovascular prevention, Member States can build more equitable, resilient, and sustainable health systems.

Therefore, the World Heart Federation urges Member States to:

1. Adopt and implement the [WHO 2021 Air Quality Guidelines](#);
2. Transpose the newly adopted European Union [Directive on Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe](#) into national legislation, ensuring stricter and updated air quality standards across EU Member States;
3. Phase out **fossil fuel use and subsidies** as well as engage in negotiations towards a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty;
4. Equip **health and care professionals** with knowledge and skills to address climate-related health hazards, including through the [WHO Air Pollution and Health Training Toolkit for Health Workers](#);
5. Foster environments that deliver **co-benefits** and promote **health equity** through intersectoral policies and interventions, with a strong focus on addressing social, commercial, and environmental determinants of health; and
6. Translate other international agreements and initiatives on climate change and health – such as the [COP28 Declaration](#) and [WHO Resolution WHA77.14](#) – into national and regional policies, strategies, and actions.

To support global efforts, the [EHN Paper on Air Pollution and Cardiovascular Diseases](#), [WHF Policy Brief on Air Pollution](#), and [World Heart Report 2024](#) may serve as practical tools to guide implementation in line with the [Budapest Declaration](#), [WHO Updated Roadmap for Enhanced Global Response to the Adverse Health Effects of Air Pollution](#), and [WHO Global Action Plan on Climate Change and Health](#).

Thank you.

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