

# A healthy environment can prevent heart disease

31 August 2015

Cardiovascular diseases (CVD), including heart disease and stroke, are the n°1 killer worldwide and in Europe, where they cause the death of over 10 000 people daily, i.e. more than all cancers combined.

Recent scientific evidence shows that air and [noise pollution](#) are environmental [health](#) risks which have severe consequences on [heart](#) health.

CVD account for 80% of all premature deaths due to air pollution. The effects may be so serious that experts advise [heart disease](#) patients to stay inside during rush hour traffic. In the UK, the government will have to submit air quality plans to the European Commission by the end of 2015. The ruling came after the government failed to comply with European limits on nitrogen dioxide set to protect health and outlined in the European Union (EU) Air Quality Directive. The European Commission also took Belgium and Bulgaria to court over poor [air quality](#) and Sweden was given a final warning.

Noise pollution increases the risk of CVD, including hypertension and heart disease. In Europe, it is estimated to contribute to at least 10 000 premature deaths due to heart disease and stroke each year.

Public policies can do much to protect health and, ultimately, to reduce the burden of CVD in Europe.

Tomorrow the European Society of Cardiology (ESC), together with the European Association for Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation (EACPR) and the European Heart Network (EHN), will be officially launching the 'Environment & the Heart Campaign' to raise awareness about the need to create healthy environments for the protection of [heart health](#) and to encourage policymakers' action.

Healthcare professionals, patient advocates,

policymakers and the wider public are invited to join the campaign by signing the online petition on [change.org/p/environment-and-the-heart](http://change.org/p/environment-and-the-heart)

The campaign is being launched at ESC Congress, the world's largest and most influential cardiovascular event, set to assemble over 30 000 delegates for five days in London. It is no coincidence that "Environment and the Heart" is the spotlight theme of ESC Congress 2015 and new research will be presented on this increasingly important risk factor.

The outcome of the campaign together with the collected signatures will be presented to European Commissioners for Health, Environment, Climate Change and Transport in Brussels on World Heart Day (29 September), which this year is also focused on creating heart healthy environments.

The campaign comes at a crucial time as Paris prepares to host the UN Climate Change conference from 30 November to 11 December this year, which aims to achieve a new international agreement to keep global warming below 2°C.

Momentum is growing to take action on environmental factors that damage health. Please use your signature to help fight cardiovascular disease.

**More information:** "Air Pollution Policy Statement." [www.bhf.org.uk/publications/po...ion-policy-statement](http://www.bhf.org.uk/publications/po...ion-policy-statement)

"Air Pollution, Climate, and Heart Disease Circulation." 2013;128:e411-e414, [DOI: 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.113.003988](https://doi.org/10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.113.003988)

"The European environment—state and outlook 2015—synthesis report." [www.eea.europa.eu/soer-2015/sy...summary#tab-see-also](http://www.eea.europa.eu/soer-2015/sy...summary#tab-see-also)

Provided by European Society of Cardiology

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