



European Commission



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Zero pollution: New rules for healthy air

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#EUGreenDeal



Every year, as many as **300,000** Europeans **die prematurely** due to air pollution.



Air pollution is the greatest environmental threat to health and a leading cause of stroke, cancer and diabetes, costing public authorities **€231-853 billion per year**.



Most Europeans live in **cities**, where science shows air is **too polluted** to be healthy.

Why we need to act

Dirty air **damages** crops, buildings, forests and ecosystems, and makes groundwater acidic and overgrown with algae.



The Conference on the Future of Europe and recent surveys show **Europeans** are seriously **concerned** about air pollution. They want stronger action from the EU, the industry and employers.



Air pollution affects the **vulnerable** most: children, elderly, ill, socio-economically disadvantaged people.



How has existing EU legislation improved air quality until now?

- Since 2008, EU clean air policy **reduced** share of air quality zones with particulate matter (PM) **exceedances** by **50%**.
- Between 2000 and 2020, **emissions** of the main air pollutants have **decreased** by between 13% and 84%, depending on the pollutant.
- Today, **70% fewer early deaths** are attributable to air pollution, compared to the 1990s.



Why are existing EU rules not enough?

- Scientific evidence of health impacts of dirty air is now stronger, which prompted the World Health Organization to call for stricter limits.



- Better air quality monitoring and modelling is needed to improve air quality management and enforcement of rules.



- Preventive air quality plans would enable authorities to take faster action to improve air quality.



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Key measures



- ▶ **Stricter thresholds for pollution**, more closely aligned with new limits set by the World Health Organization.
- ▶ Enhancing the right to clean air, **improved access to justice**.
- ▶ Current law does not include provisions for citizens to claim compensation for health damage due to air pollution. The new rules will bring more effective **penalties** and **compensation possibilities** for violating air quality rules
- ▶ Strengthened rules for air quality **monitoring to support preventive action** and targeted measures.
- ▶ Requirements to **improve air quality modelling**, especially if and where air quality is poor.
- ▶ Better **public information**.



The **new standards** will cost **less than 0.1 % of GDP**, at least 7 times lower than benefits to economy and society.



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