

To: Members of the European Parliament

**Brussels, 30 October 2024**

**Subject: Suggested hearing question from EU Healthy Air Coalition - urgency to decrease emissions of air pollutants**

Dear Member of the European Parliament,

Air pollution remains the **top environmental risk to health in Europe**, resulting in hundreds of thousands of premature deaths and hundreds of billions of euros of costs annually. Everyone is vulnerable to harm caused by air pollution and [97% of the urban population](#) in the EU breathes air which is considered unhealthy. In the coming days your institution will be holding hearings with Commissioners-designate and Vice-Presidents-designate. By ensuring clean air a prominent priority in the new European Commission you will be able to save costs and protect those most vulnerable – pregnant women, children, the elderly, those with pre-existing health conditions or facing socio-economic health inequities.

The EU Healthy Air Coalition (EUHAC) brings together non-profit health expert voices in the EU representing diverse constituencies of the health sector, including doctors and other health care professionals, scientists, public health experts and groups, respiratory or cancer patients and health insurance funds. During the upcoming hearings, we strongly encourage you to **ask the respective candidates the following question:**

*Particulate matter pollution is of key concern for health. How do you intend to urgently address failures to swiftly reduce emission of air pollutants across the EU, in particular emissions of ammonia, which contribute to the formation of particulate matter?*

### **Background**

Air pollution is a cause for all major non-communicable diseases, including cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, stroke, diabetes, dementia, and lung cancer, as well as acute respiratory infections, with growing evidence on adverse impacts on mental and neurological health. Despite the huge disease burden caused by air pollution, most of the health and economic impacts of air pollution are preventable. Measures to improve air quality can be a win-win both for health and climate mitigation and adaptation.

In the framework of the National Emission reduction Commitments Directive (NECD), emissions of fine particulate matter's (PM2.5) precursor ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) are currently not decreasing enough: according to a recent [report](#) by the European Environment Agency (EEA), "10 Member States will have to further reduce NH<sub>3</sub> emissions by up to 10% to meet their 2020-2029 national emission reduction commitments. In many Member States, NH<sub>3</sub> emissions have decreased only slightly since 2005 or in some cases increased".

We count on your support in strengthening clean air efforts during this mandate to ensure that the EU leads the way at global level in tackling air pollution for better health, quality of life and disease prevention.

Yours sincerely,

The EU Healthy Air Coalition

*EUHAC founding members are the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME), the Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL), the European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA), the European Lung Foundation (ELF), the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), the European Respiratory Society (ERS), the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) and Independent Health Insurance Funds (Mutualités Libres). We stand for urgently needed science-based policy change in the EU that prioritises prevention: prevention of lives lost, new cases of disease, health care costs, prevention of increasing socio-economic inequalities.*