

ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH: A EUROPEAN OVERVIEW



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In this presentation

- **The BIG picture: main environment and health challenges at the global and regional level**
- **How COVID-19 is impacting on the environment and health agenda and priorities**
- **Moving forward together: policies and tools to support the collective response to environmental challenges to health**

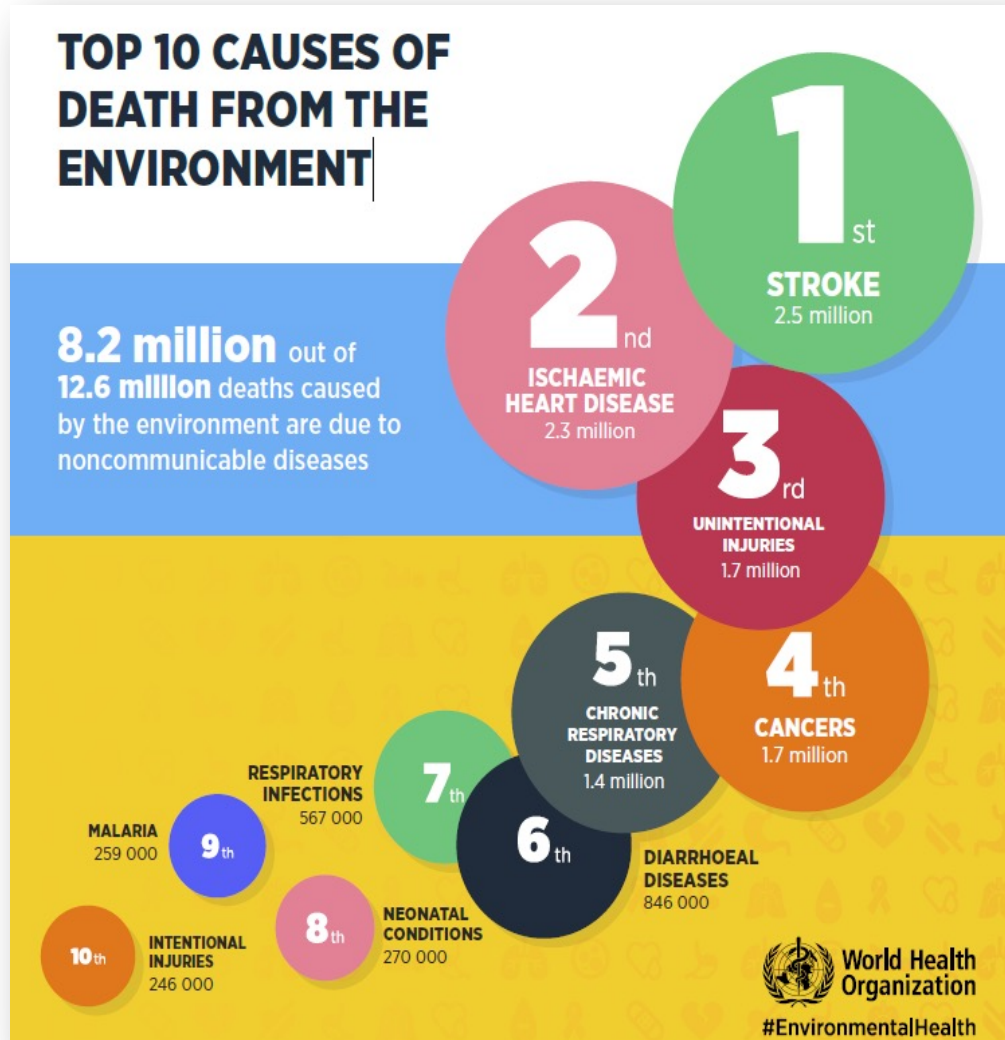
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Environmental burden of disease



- ✓ Globally, 12.6 million deaths per year are linked to the environmental conditions (23% of all deaths)
- ✓ Every year, **at least 1.4 million Europeans** still die prematurely as a consequence of polluted environments
- ✓ This is at least 15% of Europe's total deaths
- ✓ 50 million healthy life years are lost in the European Region due to environmental hazards
- ✓ There are major inequalities in the distribution of risk between and within countries

Where environmental health inequalities can affect you

URBAN ENVIRONMENTS AND TRANSPORT

Air pollution

Noise annoyance

Fatal road traffic injuries

Recreational or green areas

Chemical exposure

Contaminated sites

HOUSING CONDITIONS

Flush toilet

Bath or shower

Overcrowding

Dampness in the home

Adequately warm

Adequately cool

BASIC SERVICES

Drinking-water

Sanitation

Energy poverty

INJURIES

Fatal poisoning

Fatal falls

WORK SETTINGS

Fatal injuries

Working environments



Source: Environmental health inequalities in Europe. Second assessment report (2019) <https://www.euro.who.int/en/publications/abstracts/environmental-health-inequalities-in-europe.-second-assessment-report-2019>

Air pollution and health



- Around **7 million premature deaths** are attributable to the joint effects of ambient and household air pollution and of these, more than **500 000 happen in the WHO European Region**.
- Air pollution is now recognized as the single biggest environmental threat to human health, along with climate change.
- Air pollution affects:
 - NCDs,
 - cardiovascular and respiratory diseases,
 - lower respiratory tract infections,
 - preterm birth,
 - and other causes of death in children and infants

The updated WHO Air Quality Guidelines provide a new tool to support action and save lives

- Based on a systematic review of the new evidence, several of the updated AQG levels are now lower than 15 years ago.
- New features include new AQG levels for peak-season O3 and 24-h NO2 and CO, as well as new interim targets

Download from::

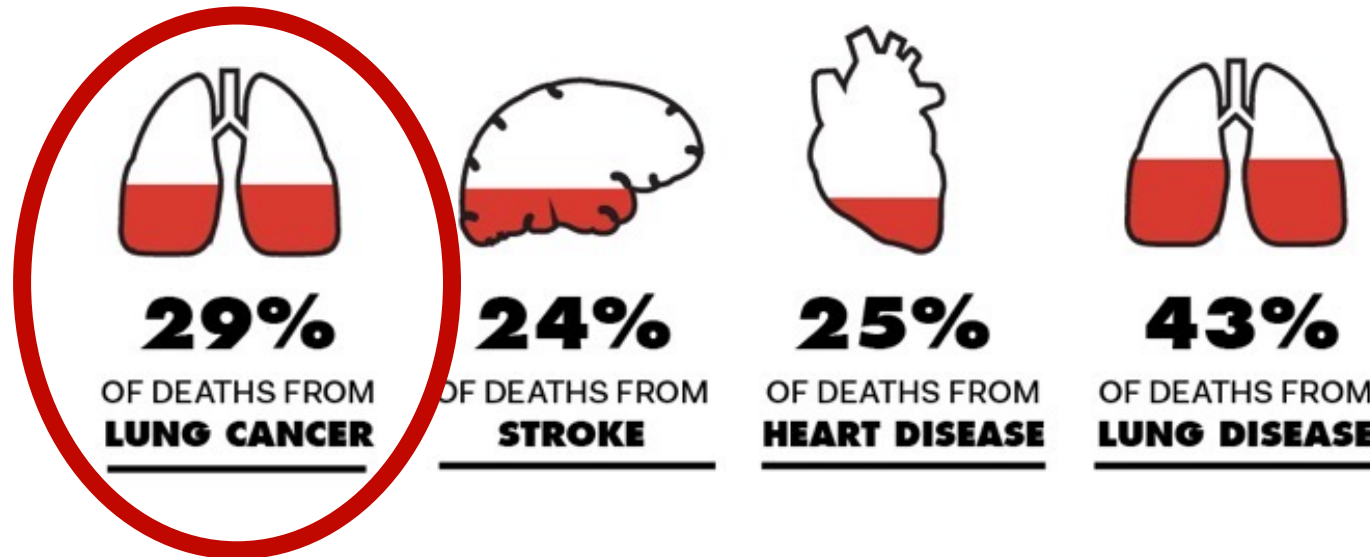
<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/345329>

1 in 8 deaths

worldwide from air pollution, mainly from NCDs

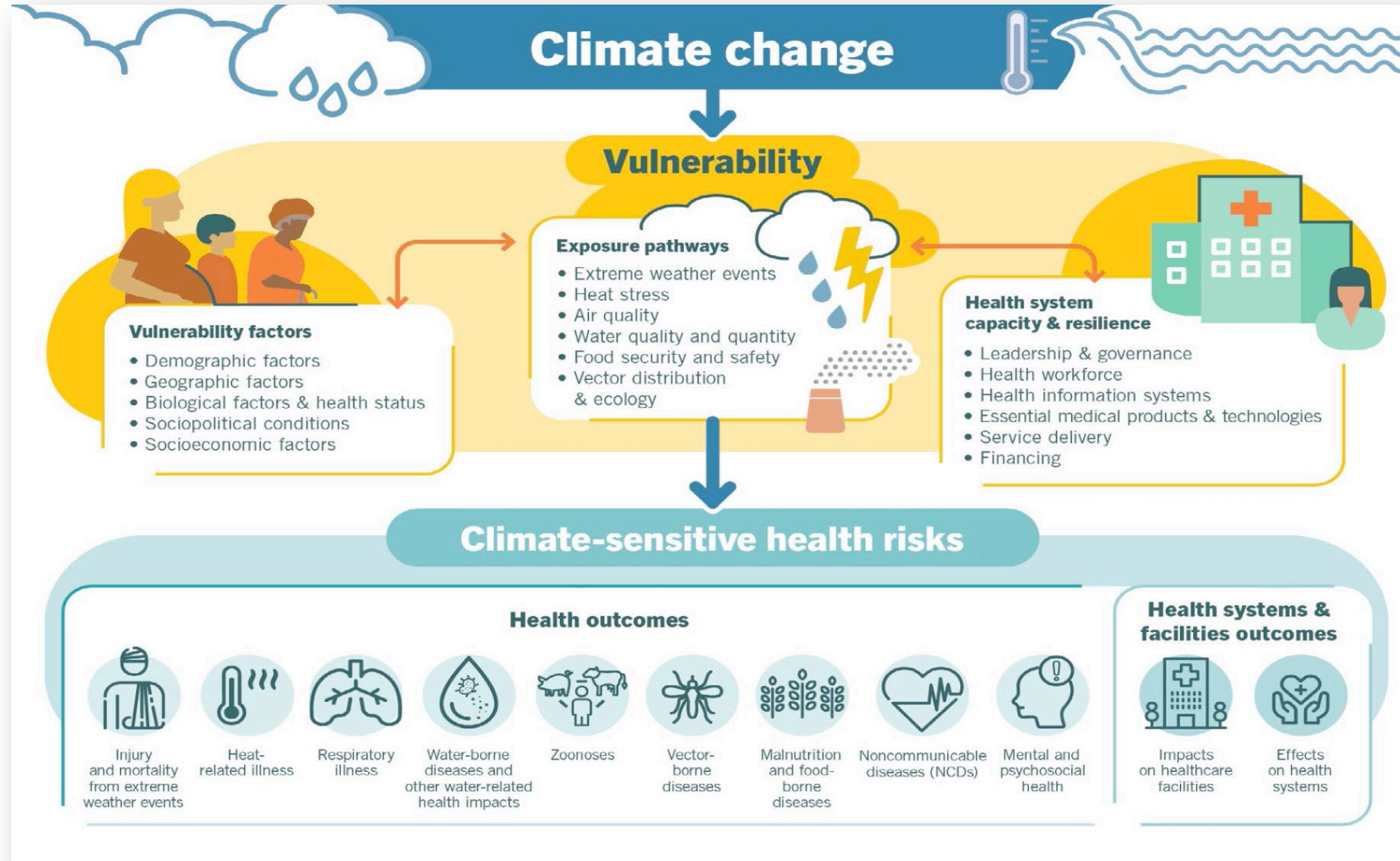
THE **INVISIBLE KILLER**

Air pollution may not always be visible, but it can be deadly.

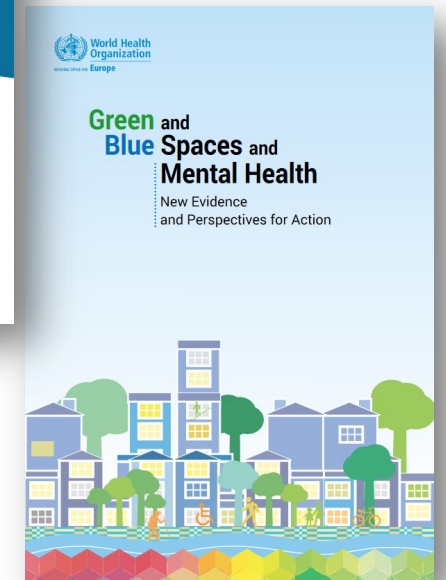
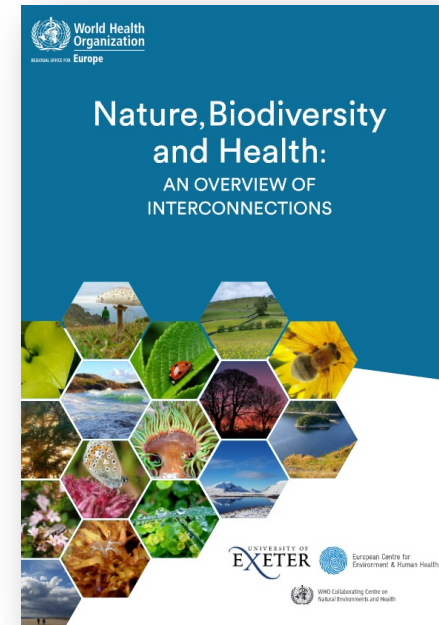


Population attributable fraction (PAF) for mortality attributable to the joint effects of household and ambient air pollution in 2016

Vulnerabilities and climate health risks



The growing understanding of the links between nature, biodiversity and health



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Topics brought to the fore by the immediate public health response to infectious diseases

- WASH (hygiene);
- Workers' health;
- Waste
- Disinfectants
- Public space/transport
- Indoor air
- Zoonoses

Topics for prevention/resilience/preparedness to infectious diseases and beyond – build forward better

- Climate change/COP-26 and beyond
 - *Energy transitions/De-carbonization*
- Systems approaches –One health approaches
- Biodiversity/nature and health
- Air Pollution - in climate change and NCDs agenda
- Urban agenda: Housing (crowding; new needs – studying/working/nursing; mental health; violence)
Transport/mobility
- (Circular) economy – Waste
- Digital revolution

Environment and health areas brought to the fore by COVID-19 IN CITIES

DURING THE CRISIS:

TWO PUBLIC HEALTH OBJECTIVES :

1. Hygiene
2. Physical distancing



- Make hand hygiene (HH) accessible for all
- Manage urban transport and mobility
- Manage the increased production of waste
- Access to urban nature and green spaces (link to mental health and physical activity)
- Housing and indoor conditions (enhanced impact through lockdowns)

Environment and health areas brought to the fore by COVID-19 IN CITIES

AFTER THE CRISIS:

PUBLIC HEALTH OBJECTIVES:

1. Increase Urban resilience
2. Address systemic failures
3. Reduce inequalities

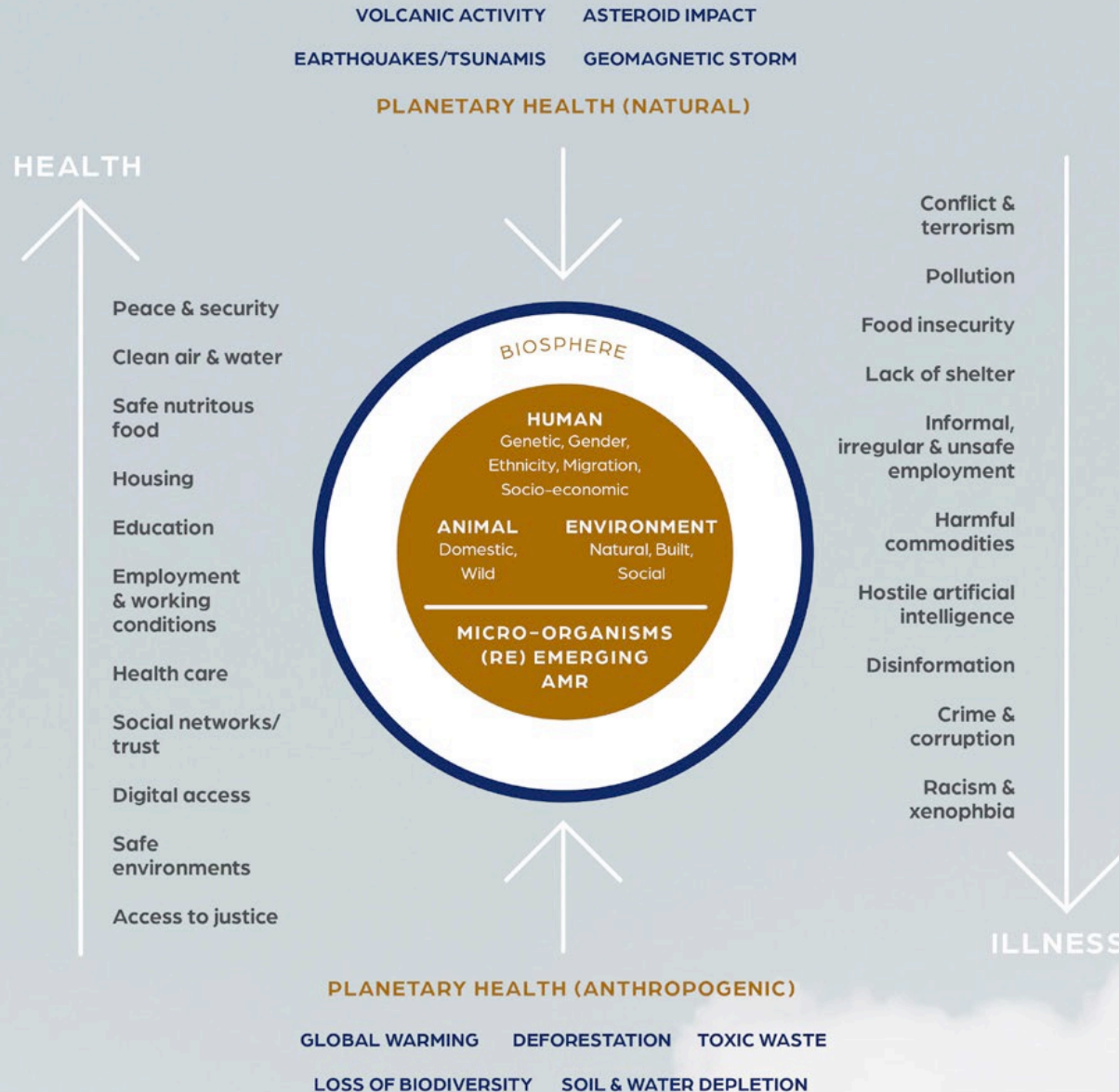


- Consolidate the lessons learnt through lock-downs
- Rethink urban and transport planning
- Reduce air pollution
- Value urban nature and green/blue spaces
- Housing and indoor conditions
- Climate change

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THE DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH IN THE 21ST CENTURY



Need to embrace complexity and adopt comprehensive frameworks:

- Global warming;
- Loss of biodiversity
- Environmental pollution

Source: [Evidence Review. Drawing light from the pandemic: a new strategy for health and sustainable development. \(2021\)](#)

Building forward better – mutual benefits for environment and for health:

Protect and preserve the source of human health: Nature

Invest in essential services, from water and sanitation to clean energy in healthcare facilities

Ensure a quick healthy energy transition

Promote healthy, sustainable food systems

Build healthy, livable cities

Stop using taxpayers money to fund pollution



Prescriptions and Actionables for a Healthy and Green Recovery

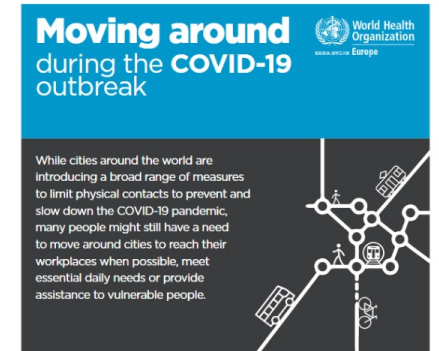


Addressing the links between environment, health and the COVID-19 pandemic

Development and publication of technical guidance and advocacy initiatives

Expert consultations

Knowledge and policy in the making
Series of webinars on the EH dimension of COVID-19



Do not move around if you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing.

In this case, stay home and seek medical attention as your local health authority advises.



Whenever possible, consider riding bicycles or walking.

This provides physical distancing while helping you to meet the minimum requirement for daily physical activity, which may be more difficult due to increased teleworking, and limited access to sport and other recreational activities.

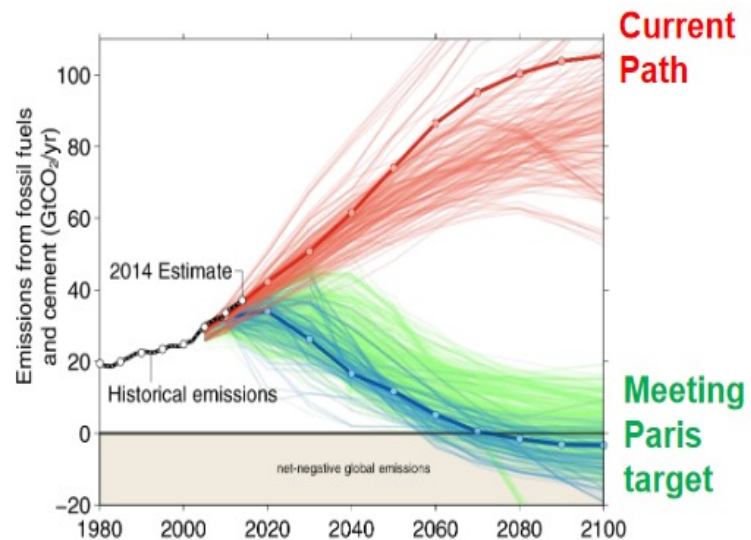


Climate change: three tasks for public health

Help reduce carbon emissions
for promoting health
(air pollution)

Protect health from
full range of rising
climate risks

Make health systems
more sustainable
("lead by example")



- 1. Commit to a healthy recovery.**
- 2. Our health is not negotiable.**
- 3. Harness the health benefits of climate action.**
- 4. Build health resilience to climate risks.**
- 5. Create energy systems that protect and improve climate and health.**
- 6. Reimagine urban environments, transport, and mobility.**
- 7. Protect and restore nature as the foundation of our health.**
- 8. Promote healthy, sustainable, and resilient food systems.**
- 9. Finance a healthier, fairer, and greener future to save lives.**
- 10. Listen to the health community and prescribe urgent climate action.**



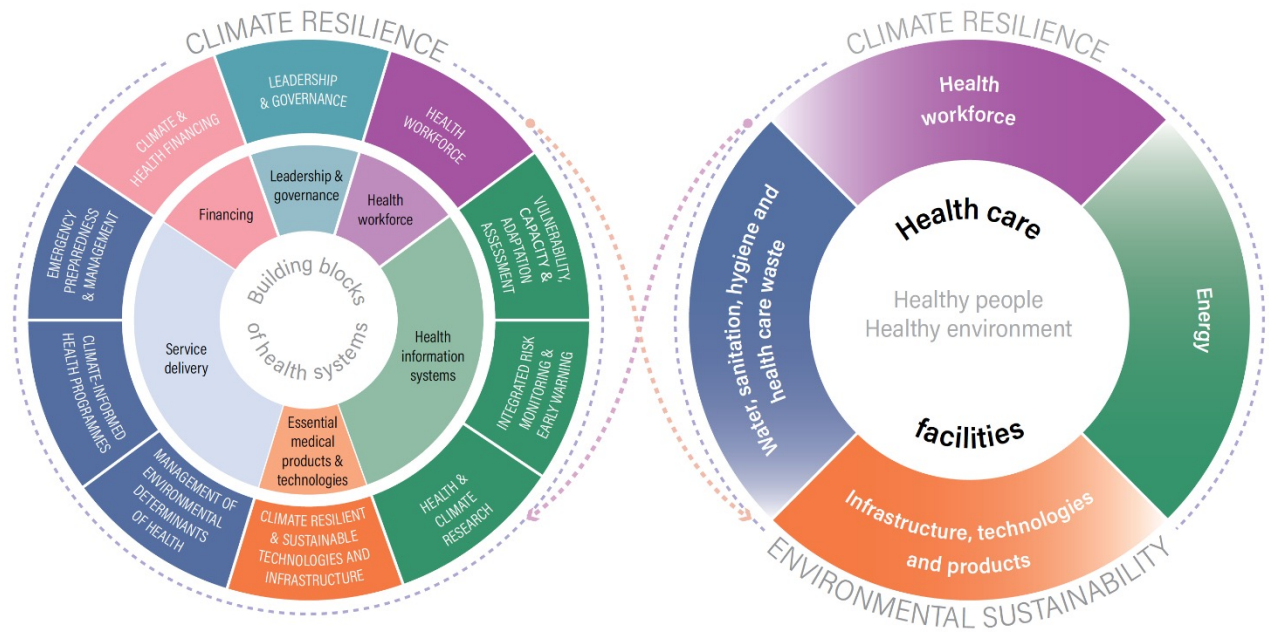
COP26 SPECIAL REPORT ON
CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH

THE HEALTH ARGUMENT FOR CLIMATE ACTION

COP26 Health Initiatives on Climate Resilient and Low Carbon Sustainable Health systems

Countries commit to:

- Conduct climate change and health vulnerability and adaptation assessments (V&A);
- Develop a Health National Adaptation Plan (HNAP);
- Use the V&A and HNAP to facilitate health access to climate change funding;
- High ambition/high emitters
- Deliver a baseline assessment of GHG emissions of the health system
- Develop an action plan or roadmap by a set date to develop a sustainable low carbon health system.



52 countries and growing...



Belgium, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom

OUR COMMITMENT

Zero Regrets

Working Group on Health in Climate Change of the European Environment and Health Task Force



Developing transformative leadership for environment and health

- ✓ Bonn Environment and Health School supporting capacity building in Member States
- ✓ Focus on developing transformative leadership
- ✓ Environment and health research priorities



The journey to Budapest: working in partnership across sectors to address the environment and health challenges of the 21st century



Series of Ministerial Conferences on Environment and Health



1989
Frankfurt

1994
Helsinki

1999
London

2004
Budapest

2010
Parma

2017
Ostrava

**2023
Budapest**

Thank you

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mondiale de la Santé

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Europe



Weltgesundheitsorganisation

REGIONALBÜRO FÜR
Europa



Всемирная организация
здравоохранения

Европейское региональное бюро