



**OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT BARROSO ON
THEMATIC STRATEGY ON AIR QUALITY
30th JUNE 2005**

Mr. J.M. Barroso
Commission President
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 BRUSSEL
Belgium

Dear President Barroso,

The European Commission is under a legislative obligation under the 6th Environmental Action Programme to come forward with a Thematic Strategy on air pollution in 2005. DG Environment committed in Parliament to publish this strategy in July with accompanying proposals for revised and new air quality legislation. We the undersigned, in the interest of people's health and well-being, ask you not to give in to pressures from governments or industry to delay.

According to the European Commission's own Impact Assessment¹ every year 369,980 people die prematurely because of air pollution. To put this in perspective this represents losing nearly the population of Malta every year. Premature death, health care and medication due to air pollution amounts to between 3% to 10% of the EU GDP but this figure does not include the pain and suffering of individuals and their families.

European citizens need strict air quality standards that reduce this burden on our society, especially the impact on vulnerable groups – infants, children, the elderly and those suffering from asthma and other respiratory diseases. In children, outdoor air pollution is associated with acute lower respiratory tract infections, asthma, low birth weight, and impaired lung function. Evidence is now overwhelming that small particles (PM10 and PM2.5) are for a large part responsible for these adverse health impacts and deaths.

The European Commission, together with Environment and Health Ministers throughout Europe signed in Budapest in 2004 the WHO Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe in which you committed *to prevent and reduce respiratory disease due to outdoor and indoor air pollution, thereby contributing to a reduction in the frequency of asthmatic attacks, in order to*

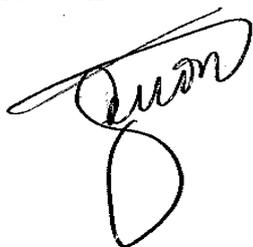
¹ Baseline Scenarios for the Clean Air for Europe (CAFE) Programme Final Report Authors: Markus Amann, Imrich Bertok, Janusz Cofala, Frantisek Gyarfas, Chris Heyes, Zbigniew Klimont, Wolfgang Schöpp, Wilfried Winiwarter submitted to the European Commission Directorate General for Environment, Directorate C Environment and Health for the study on Development of the Baseline and Policy Scenarios and Integrated Assessment Modelling Framework for the Clean Air for Europe (CAFE) Programme LOT 1 Contract No B4-3040/2002/340248/MAR/C1

*ensure that children can live in an environment with clean air*².

Our children have a right to breathe clean air and the Commission has a mandate to achieve this fundamental right. The reduction of the adverse health effects of air pollution is an important case where European Union can show that it really makes a difference to people's everyday lives.

Yours Sincerely,

Genon Jensen



Director EEN

Susanna Palkonen



EFA Executive Officer

Tamsin Rose



Secretary General

European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)

The European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) represents over 100 non-governmental and other not-for-profit organisations working on public health in Europe. EPHA's mission is to promote and protect the health of all people living in Europe and advocate greater participation of citizens in health-related policy making at the European level.

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European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA)

EFA is a collaborative Network of allergy, asthma and COPD patient associations in Europe with the mission to improve the Quality of Life of people with Allergy, Asthma and COPD and of their carers throughout Europe.

EFA Vision is a European Community that shares the responsibilities for substantially reducing the frequency and severity of Allergies, Asthma and COPD and recognises their social environmental, economic and health implications.

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European Public Health Alliance – Environment Network (EEN)

EEN advocates protection of the environment as a means to improving the health and well being for European citizens. Launched in 2004, it brings together groups that want to ensure that health is at the centre of environment issues.

Member groups include NGOs specialising in public health, environment-related health conditions and women's environmental and health concerns and associations representing health care and environmental professionals. One of EEN's key objectives is to bring health expertise to the environment policy-making process.

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² Fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health Budapest, Hungary, 23 25 June 2004 Children s Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe EUR/04/5046267/7 25 June 2004 ORIGINAL: English.