



Council of the  
European Union

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## OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

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From: General Secretariat of the Council

On: 20 December 2018

To: Delegations

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Subject: European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 23/2018 entitled "Air  
pollution: Our health still insufficiently protected"  
- Council conclusions

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Delegations will find in the Annex the Council conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 23/2018 entitled "Air pollution: Our health still insufficiently protected", as adopted by the Council at its 3666th meeting held on 20 December 2018.

**European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 23/2018 entitled "Air pollution: Our health still insufficiently protected"**

**- Council conclusions -**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING its conclusions on improving the examination of special reports drawn up by the Court of Auditors in the context of the discharge procedure <sup>1</sup>:

1. WELCOMES the Special Report No 23/2018 by the European Court of Auditors entitled "Air pollution: Our health still insufficiently protected";
2. TAKES NOTE of the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Special Report and ACKNOWLEDGES them as a timely and important contribution for the ongoing Fitness Check of the Ambient Air Quality Directives;
3. IS AWARE that citizens' health is still affected by air pollution, which remains the biggest environmental risk to health in the Union causing more than 400 000 premature deaths each year and that the significant human and economic costs have not yet been reflected in adequate action across the Union;
4. RECOGNISES that people in urban areas are particularly exposed and that concentrations of air pollutants have not been reduced sufficiently enough to ensure that Union air quality standards are met throughout the Union;

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<sup>1</sup> 7515/00 + COR 1.

5. STRESSES that air quality has significantly improved over the past decades with the adoption of Union air quality standards with the Ambient Air Quality Directives as major drivers of such improvements; ADMITS, however, that not all goals of the Ambient Air Quality Directives have been fully met;
6. STRESSES the need for further effective air quality measures and coherent legislation across Union policies and for an enhanced emphasis on and prioritisation of air quality policies therein;
7. ADDRESSES the importance of designing and aligning other sectoral policies such as energy, agriculture, spatial planning and transport and of making the necessary investments to contribute to reducing air pollution as the benefits of air quality policies greatly exceed their implementation cost;
8. EMPHASISES that improving public awareness and information on air quality and its health impact is crucial to overcome the existing deficits and SUPPORTS the Commission in its efforts thereof;
9. WELCOMES that the Commission is currently performing a Fitness Check of the Ambient Air Quality Directives;
10. INVITES the Commission therefore to consider a revision of the existing legal framework in due consideration of the results of the ongoing Fitness Check in order to enable a more efficient and effective implementation and enforcement of air quality provisions and ADVISES to take the latest scientific evidence on human health impacts into account and to take the WHO guidelines into consideration.

