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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	AOB for the meeting of EPSCO (Health) of 2 December 2025: EU Strategy on Climate and Health <i>- Information from the Netherlands, supported by Austria, Czechia, Estonia, France, Slovenia and Spain</i>

Request

Austria, Czechia, Estonia, France, The Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain would like to request the European Commission to publish an EU strategy on climate and health in Q2 of 2026, as part of the European Health Union (internal) and the EU Global Health Strategy (external).

The aim is to develop a dedicated and common EU approach to climate and health, including adaptation as well as mitigation, for both the internal and external dimensions of the EU.

An EU strategy on climate and health would enable coordination of efforts by Member States and the European Commission, and ensure that climate health considerations and priorities are integrated across EU policies¹.

1. Including for instance in the forthcoming European Integrated Framework for Climate Resilience

Reason

Climate change is fundamentally impacting both European and global health in a myriad of ways. Notably through increasingly frequent extreme weather events, such as heatwaves, storms and floods; increases in zoonoses and food-, water- and vector-borne diseases; and mental health issues.

Europe is the fastest warming continent in the world, and in addition to the impacts of climate change on EU citizen's individual health, the systemic risks to Europe's world-class health systems are increasing. These climate-related health risks also lead to significant financial and economic costs in Europe through increased healthcare demand and lost productivity.

At the same time, Europe's health sector is itself contributing to climate change with an estimated 5% of greenhouse gas emissions. It therefore also has a unique position to help mitigate the climate crisis, both by reducing its own footprint and by leveraging its authority to drive the broader transition to a low-carbon economy.²

Hence, if Europe wants to stay resilient, competitive and influential - as also reflected *inter alia* in the EU Preparedness Union Strategy, the EU Medical Countermeasures Strategy, the EU Clean Industrial Deal and the EU Global Health Strategy - then it needs a dedicated and coordinated position on climate and health. An EU strategy would help ensure such a strong and consistent approach across all policy areas, both internally and externally.

Yet, currently, there is no existing Union strategy dedicated to climate and health. Both the European Green Deal (mitigation) and the EU Adaptation Strategy (adaptation), lack a clear focus on health and the health sector. This gap not only sets back the EU's internal ambitions, but also hinders the EU's external ability to shape global governance, including at WHO and UNFCCC/COPs, and to partner with non-EU countries or the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) on this topic.

2. As institutions dedicated to health and well-being, the sector is faced with an ethical imperative to mitigate environmental harms that could adversely affect public health, and the need to show leadership in reducing its own environmental impact (around 5% of global emissions).

Previous discussions

The need to scale up and coordinate EU ambitions on climate and health, has previously been discussed in the EPSCO Council. The Netherlands already called for an EU agenda on climate and health in the EPSCO-Council in 2023, and Malta subsequently drafted an EU non-paper in 2024 on health and climate adaptation, calling for greater European ambition in this area³. Last year, the Council of the EU agreed to invite the European Commission to establish an EU agenda on climate and health in collaboration with Member States on both the adaptation and mitigation side⁴. However, this has not yet been followed up on.

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3. Supported by Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, and Slovenia.
 4. <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9900-2024-INIT/en/pdf>