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Deal on stricter air pollution limits: A bitter-sweet victory

Air Quality Directive

This evening, the Parliament and the Council have reached an agreement on the Air Quality Directive, which sets new EU-wide action to reduce pollution limits up to 2.5 times lower than current targets by 2030. However, the deal falls short of the limits recommended by the World Health Organisation.

Nicolae Ștefănuță MEP, Greens/EFA Group Shadow Rapporteur for the file, comments:

“This deal is a step forward in reducing air pollution in Europe by 2030. Thanks to our efforts, the Directive will introduce the right for people who get cancer to claim compensation if their authorities are not complying with the new pollution limits. It also includes the right for citizens to bring non-compliant authorities to court.

“However, Europe will not be able to breathe easy until we take much bolder steps to tackle the kind of pollution we are witnessing right now in places like Milan. This deal is a missed opportunity to put the Directive on track to meeting the recommendations made by the World Health Organization for air quality.

“It is disgraceful that every year, hundreds of thousands of people die prematurely from air pollution in Europe. The current reactionary attack on the Green Deal and environmental protection measures is undermining efforts to get a grip on pollution. Peoples’ health and the environment cannot continue to choke under lax laws and poor enforcement of existing pollution rules.”

More:

What the new directive provisions will entail for the citizens are stricter limits for harmful particles, aiming to achieve the objective of zero pollution by 2050 and new rights for the citizens who are affected by the pollution. For the first time citizens living in very polluted areas where violations of the quality air standards are established by the measurements will be able to access justice and ask for compensation for the health damages due to the inaction of the public authorities.

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