

# Climate crisis to deliver substantial death toll if left un-checked

New report by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), 'Climate change and its impact on lung health: a focus on Europe,' warns hidden climate impacts are worsening the respiratory health crisis & recommends urgent policy action.

Higher temperatures and ozone levels, extreme weather and poorer air quality all affect respiratory health. The effects of climate change increase death rates and instances of disease, yet climate policy has largely ignored the link between climate change and respiratory health.<sup>1</sup>

The report presents alarming new evidence to force joint action between climate change and public health experts, industry and policymakers.

It's time for us all to prioritise **#ActionOverWords** in the fight against this climate health crisis!

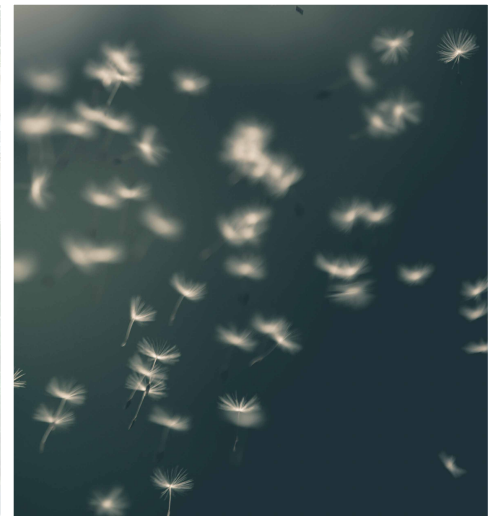
Climate change: Europe's big unknown killer

**Up to 13.6% European deaths caused by respiratory disease – this is just the beginning.<sup>2</sup>**

## We all know about the climate crisis, but not its health impacts



Germany, 2021



### HIGHER TEMPERATURES

Contribute to an increase in ozone, heatwaves and pollen levels.<sup>1</sup>

**The unknown impact:**

Ozone is a key contributor to deaths for those with respiratory disease and causes new cases for many.<sup>3</sup>

Heatwave-related issues particularly impact people aged 65+ and those with COPD (Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) and asthma.<sup>4,5</sup>

Increased pollen levels worsen conditions like hay fever or asthma and can also cause illness in previously healthy people.<sup>6</sup>

### WEATHER

Extreme weather events caused by climate change are creating dangerous living conditions and increasing microparticle levels.<sup>1</sup>

**The unknown impact:**

The climate crisis exacerbates inequality, with disadvantaged communities most affected.<sup>1</sup>

### POLLEN

Climate change is causing longer pollen seasons and making allergies worse.<sup>1</sup>

**The unknown impact:**

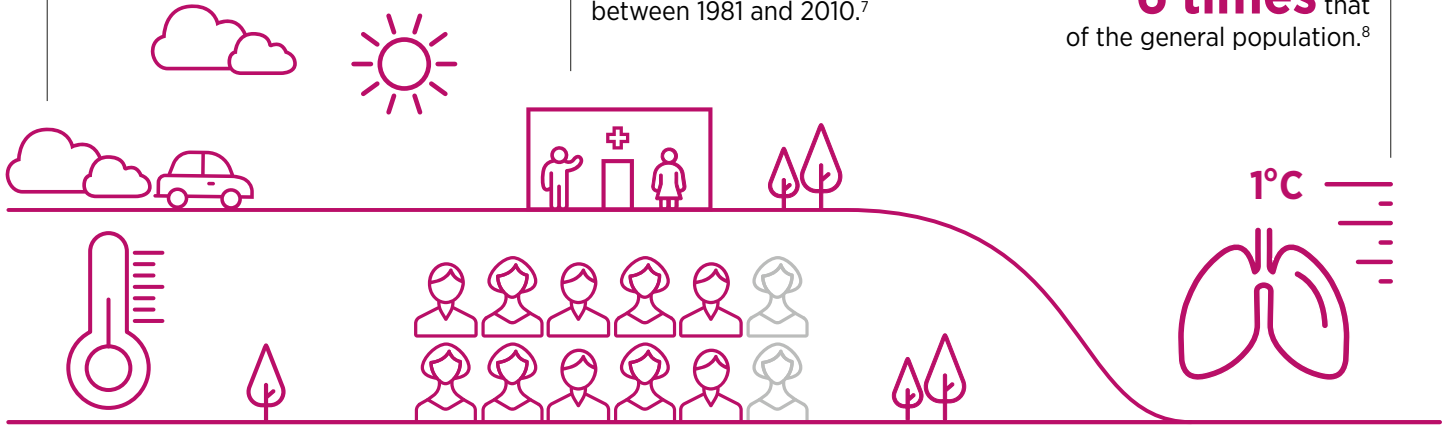
Allergen microparticles can penetrate lower airways to cause serious problems for people with respiratory disease and they cause the onset of respiratory conditions.<sup>6</sup>

# Key report findings

Heatwaves lead to **higher death rates** among people with COPD and asthma.<sup>5</sup>

There could be **more than x2** as many European heat-related respiratory hospital admissions between 2021 and 2050 than between 1981 and 2010.<sup>7</sup>

For each 1°C increase, premature death risk for respiratory patients is **6 times** that of the general population.<sup>8</sup>



Deaths from heatwaves up by **53.7%** in people aged 65+ in last 20 years.<sup>5</sup>

**+20%** premature deaths from ozone levels in the last decade.<sup>3</sup>

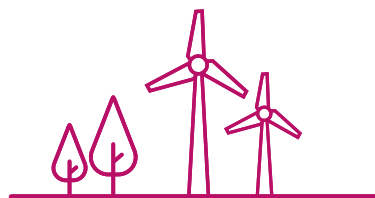
## Urgent need for action, not just words

### HOW CAN WE HELP?



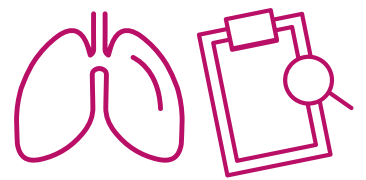
#### ASK BUSINESSES TO TAKE URGENT ACTION TO

- Take transparent steps to reduce environmental impact
- Verify and track progress to international measurement standards
- Collaborate with policymakers to develop solutions



#### CALL FOR CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY TO

- Focus on respiratory health improvement
- Engage with all stakeholders
- Reduce emissions and tackle climate change in all sectors
- Raise awareness in the healthcare community



#### TAKE COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY TO

- Conduct further research on the impact of climate change on respiratory health
- Address air quality issues in populated urban areas

**If we are to stop the climate related respiratory deaths, we need to act now to halt the climate emergency – it is time to prioritise people and planet.**

# Infographic references

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Visit [www.actionoverwords.org](http://www.actionoverwords.org) for the full EIU report and for more information about Chiesi's sustainability efforts.

Economist Intelligence Unit. 'Climate Change and its impact on lung health: a focus on Europe' (2021).  
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