
Environment: EEA, fewer deaths from pollution but still a high number of deaths. Too much smog in Italy, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Poland and Romania

“In the last decade, better air quality has led to a remarkable reduction in early deaths in Europe”. However, more recent official figures from the European Environment Agency (EEA) suggest that “almost all Europeans still suffer the consequences of air pollution, which causes approximately 400 thousand deaths across the continent”. The announcement comes from the EU Commission in presenting the EEA 2020 Report on air quality in Europe. The ‘Air quality in Europe — 2020 Report’ shows that in 2018 six member states exceeded the EU limit values on fine particulate matter (Pm2.5): Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Italy, Poland and Romania. “Only four European countries – Estonia, Finland, Ireland and Iceland – showed lower concentrations of fine particulate matter than the stricter reference values of the World Health Organisation”. The EEA’s report finds that “there is still a gap between the legal limits on air quality in the EU and the WHO guidelines”, a matter that the European Commission “wants to face through a review of the EU rules as part of the Zero Pollution Action Plan”. Virginijus Sinkevičius, commissioner for the environment, comments: “That air quality is improving because of the environmental and climate policies we have implemented is good news. But we cannot disregard the negative finding: the number of early deaths from air pollution in Europe is still too high”.

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