Special Report N° 23/2018:

Air pollution: Our health still insufficiently protected
Why did we do this audit?

- Air pollution is a serious health issue in the EU
- Long lasting problems in many EU cities

The European Commission estimates the total health related external costs of air pollution at between €330 and €940 billion per year.

400,000 people die prematurely because of air pollution each year in the EU.
Main audit messages and recommendations

How we presented our messages and recommendations

Audit impact
Main audit messages ...

There has been steady improvement for some pollutants, but...

- The Ambient Air Quality Directive contains weak standards and monitoring rules.
- Member States often target compliance, not effectiveness.
- The Commission faces limitations in its monitoring.
- Court cases are very lengthy with scarce results.
- EU policies (for diesel, biomass) and funding are not always consistent with clean air.
- Citizen action has a growing role.
Main audit recommendations...

The Commission should:

✓ Act more effectively on the implementation of the Directive.
✓ Propose to tighten the air quality standards and planning required by the Directive.
✓ Aim to align other EU policies and funding with air quality objectives.
✓ Improve air quality information to EU citizens.
How we presented our messages and recommendations...

- Discussion with the European Commission before publication.
- Extensive presentations to stakeholders:
  - European Council’s Environment Committee;
  - European Parliament event on clean air;
  - Selected Member State events and publications;
  - Ambient Air Quality Fitness Check stakeholder workshop;
  - European Economic and Social Committee;
  - Ambient Air Quality committee hosted by Commission;
  - Clean Air Forums;
  - Contribution to relevant work by the EU’s Joint Research Centre
  - Industry and NGO stakeholders and journalists;
  - COP 24 at Katowice.
Most recommendations accepted by Commission; we systematically follow these up.

Audit messages were quoted extensively by the Commission’s “Fitness check” of November 2019.

Commission’s “Green Deal” of December 2019 then announced:

“…The Commission will draw on the lessons learnt from the evaluation of the current air quality legislation. It will also propose to strengthen provisions on monitoring, modelling and air quality plans to help local authorities achieve cleaner air. The Commission will notably propose to revise air quality standards to align them more closely with the World Health Organization recommendations.”
Final remarks
Thank you for your attention!

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