



## **Bruges Declaration on air pollution and health**

Adopted at the Annual General Assembly of AIM, 27 June 2014

We, the undersigned representatives of the International Association of Mutual Benefit Societies, bringing together 52 members from 27 countries, representing 230 million people in the world, and 160 million in Europe;

*Have adopted the following declaration:*

- Taking note that in the European Union, around 90% of city dwellers are exposed to *particulate matter and ground-level ozone*, two of the most damaging air pollutants at levels deemed harmful to health by WHO<sup>1</sup>;
- Taking note that the external health-related costs to society from air pollution in the EU are estimated to be in the range of 330-940 billion EUR per year<sup>2</sup>;
- Taking note that outdoor air pollution is one of the leading environmental causes of cancer deaths<sup>3</sup>; and that the International Agency for Research on Cancer has classified outdoor air pollution as carcinogenic to humans (group 1);
- Taking note that if the measures proposed by the EU Commission in December 2013 for emission reductions were fully followed, premature deaths from air pollution would only be reduced by 51% in 2030 (compared to 2005)
- Taking note of the World Health Organisation REVIHAAP assessment<sup>4</sup>, which concludes that health effects of air pollutants occur at lower concentration levels than previously thought, and highlights that there are new associations with conditions such as diabetes, adverse birth outcomes and cognitive development;
- Taking note that health insurers bear increased health costs from air pollution through covering for additional medication, treatment of disease including hospitalization, sick days etc.

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<sup>1</sup> EEA report on air quality in Europe – 2013 report: <http://www.eea.europa.eu/media/newsreleases/air-pollution-still-causing-harm>

<sup>2</sup> See EU Commission: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-13-1274\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-1274_en.htm)

<sup>3</sup> IARC: [http://www.iarc.fr/en/media-centre/pr/2013/pdfs/pr221\\_E.pdf](http://www.iarc.fr/en/media-centre/pr/2013/pdfs/pr221_E.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> See: <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/environment-and-health/air-quality/publications/2013/review-of-evidence-on-health-aspects-of-air-pollution-revihaap-project-final-technical-report>



## **AIM**

- Calls on the EU Member States and on the members of the European Parliament to adopt more ambitious and binding commitments for emissions reductions for the years 2020, 2025, 2030 (under the National Emissions Ceilings Directive)
- Calls on European decision-makers to align the EU's ambient air quality standards with the health-based recommendations made by WHO