

TRANSCRIPTION OF THE PODCAST “CLIMATE CHANGE, CITIES AND QUALITY OF AIR”

Female: “Life is the air we breathe. In many cases, living in large cities is synonymous with air pollution. Vehicle traffic and corrosive dust and gases from industries and heating systems impact on the quality of life of large cities”.

Male: “Images of Asian cities, such as Beijing, where people walk the streets wearing a mask have been common for some years. And we are aware of the phenomenon of grey clouds of pollution, appearing over large cities when rain or wind is scarce”.

Female: “About one-third of lung cancers, heart attacks, and strokes in the world's population are caused by air pollution. Health costs, the loss of hours worked or the lower productivity of the agricultural sector, are equivalent to 0.5% of world GDP”.

Male: “The plenary of the European Parliament backed in 2016 the legislative bill that sets stricter national ceilings by 2030 on emissions of the major pollutants -nitrogen oxide, fine particles and sulfur dioxide -that accelerate climate change and cause deterioration in air quality”.

Female: “Many municipalities are also taking measures, such as those in Madrid, Paris or Mexico City, who have committed to prohibit the circulation of diesel vehicles by their urban centers from the year 2025”.

Male: “But what are the causes of so much pollution and what responsibility do citizens have?”.

Female: “Transport is responsible for a high percentage of greenhouse gas emissions; Likewise, the private vehicle is the main cause of air pollution in cities. Cars cause 80% of carbon dioxide emissions and 60% of particle emissions. But, <lid you know that diesel-powered vehicles are the most polluting?”.

Male: “This type of engine expels into the air micro particles and nitrogen dioxide. Micro particles can penetrate the lungs and circulatory system, contributing to cardiovascular, respiratory and brain disease, and even death”.

Expert: “Is the contaminant that in 2014 the WHO officially classified as carcinogen and is heavily influenced by diesel engines in cities. The diesel engine itself was a/so declared as carcinogenic to humans and is the primary contaminant”.

Female: “According to the European Environment Agency, the origin of air pollutants, as well as having it in transport, also comes from heating and industry. This Community body also had an impact on noise pollution in the ambient noise in the city is caused by 80% only by road traffic”.

Female: “Do you know in economic terms how much can be caused by air pollution? According to the European Commission, the annual losses are estimated at about 15 billion pounds in lost work days, 4 billion pounds in healthcare expenses, 3 billion pounds for loss of crops and 1 billion for damage to buildings and infrastructure”.

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Male: “The predictive increase in temperature, can alter other meteorological variables such as wind, humidity, clouds and rainfall. For example, if wind and rains are scarce, the worse air we will breathe”.

Expert: “In spite of these long episodes of heat and extended periods without rain, they will reproduce because at the time they are going to damage the quality of the air and increase the amount of particles and tropospheric ozone”.

Female: “The best remedy for this problem is to base our daily consumption on clean and renewable energies. We must encourage the use of public transport, bicycle and electric vehicles. To achieve all these goals is important that gas emissions are controlled and the use of alternative energy sources is encouraged”.

Male: “Fifty-four per cent of the world's population lives in urban areas and by 2050 the figure is expected to rise to almost 70 per cent. This figure should be sufficient to raise awareness of the future of cities, where two-thirds of the world's population will soon live. The quality of the air and the life of the inhabitants of the big cities will be paramount for its development”.

Female: “The proposed measures are expected to reduce the effect of air pollution on health by 50% by 2030. Something very necessary, because 40 million European citizens are still exposed to particles above the community limits”.

Male: “But we must keep working. One of the challenges to improve air quality in cities is urban planning and transport, where there are many courses of action. The structure of a good-sized city determines how its habitants move, integrate, have fun. The city model with priority for the car is unsustainable in short term”.

Female: “We must restructure our cities, reduce the need for cars and, of course, continue to decrease its pollutant emissions. The use of a private vehicle should be changed to clean public transport and collective public transport services should be promoted. The use of the bicycle and the public bicycle rental service”.

Male: “Administrations should favor the implementation of electric vehicles and install recharging points in private and public car parks, buildings already built and new ones. For this, the sponsorship and support of power companies will be decisive”.

Female: “Electric vehicles currently account for 1 % of the total amount of vehicles on the roads, but sales in 2016 were up more than 1,000% over those recorded in 2010. It is expected that this trend will continue to more than one third of new vehicles sales in 2040”.

Male: “Air quality is a global problem, because to a greater or lesser extent it affects all cities. We need to improve energy efficiency and diversification, pursue a sustainable development policy and, above all, raise the awareness of the seriousness of the problem to future generations”.