

The unheard crisis:

Environmental noise and health in cities



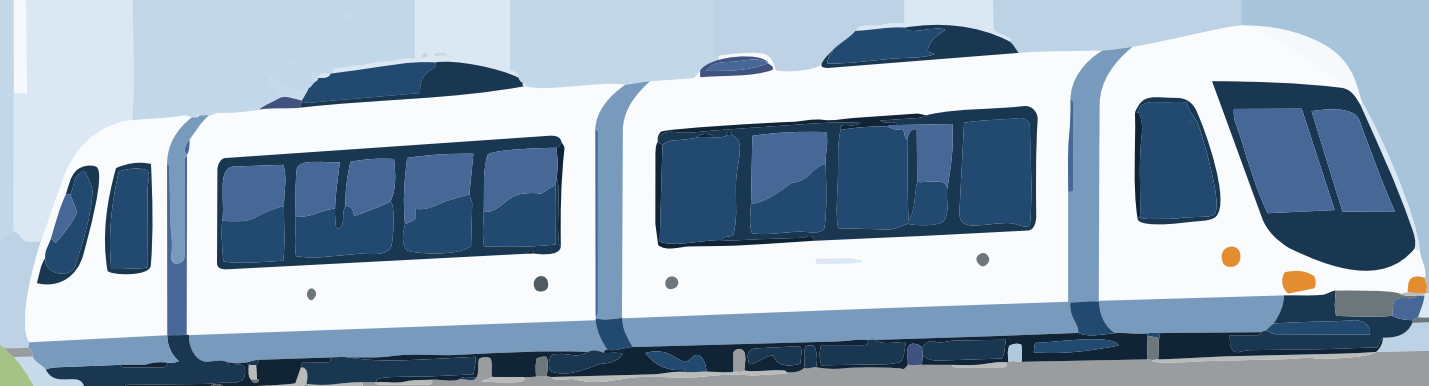
THE URBAN BURDEN
OF DISEASE ESTIMATION
FOR POLICY MAKING

Noise pollution is the second largest environmental health risk in Europe after air pollution.



At least
20%

of the EU population are exposed to unhealthy noise levels over the long term.



Sources of noise in cities



Road traffic

100 million people exposed



Rail traffic

32 million people exposed



Aviation

4 million people exposed



Industrial and construction activity



Health effects of noise pollution

The World Health Organization (WHO) considers noise to be a leading environmental cause of ill health in Europe, second only to air pollution.

55 decibels

is the threshold above which noise is considered harmful to health



Health effects:



Sleep disruption



Hypertension



Stress

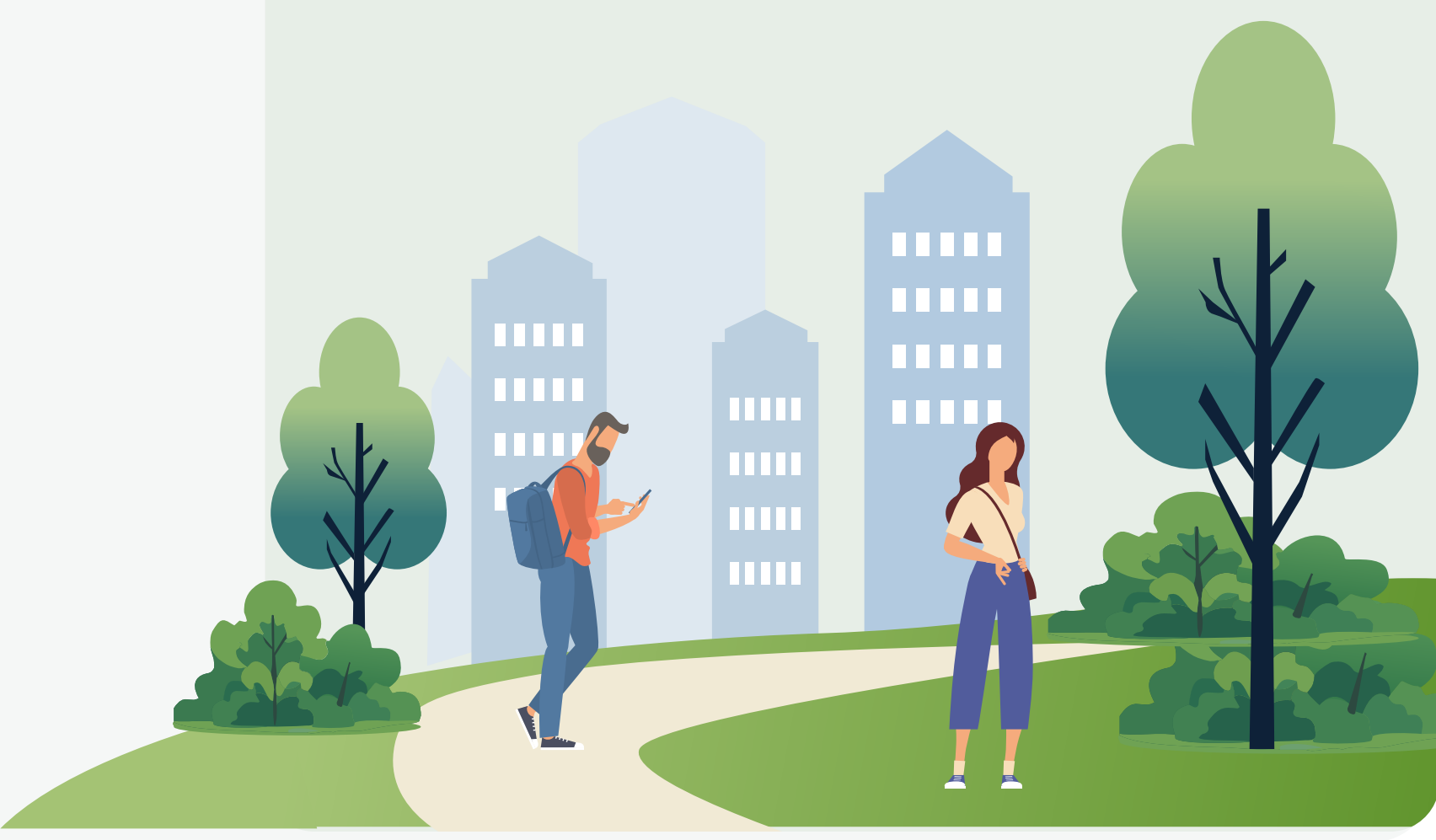


Cardiovascular disease



Cognitive impairment, particularly in children

According to the WHO, noise pollution is responsible for the loss of at least **1 million** healthy life years annually in Europe.



Unequal impacts of noise

Noise does not affect everyone equally. Older people, children, and people living with disease are more at risk.



Individuals from lower socioeconomic groups are exposed to more noise pollution, because they often live closer to high-traffic areas.

What needs to happen?

City decision makers should



Prioritise active mobility and public transportation to reduce car traffic



Set or update noise limit regulations based on the WHO 2018 guidelines



Make investments towards new road surfaces and acoustic barriers

European decision makers should



Update and strengthen the Environmental Noise Directive (END) to introduce binding, health-based exposure limits



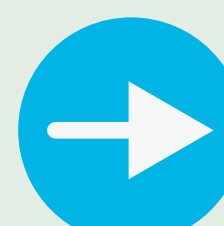
Increase funding of noise reduction measures, especially in the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework



Facilitate knowledge and best practice sharing among cities on noise reduction measures and health



Learn more



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