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Policy

The EU Green Deal: an opportunity for enhancing Planetary Health?

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28 October 2021

EEAC Webinar

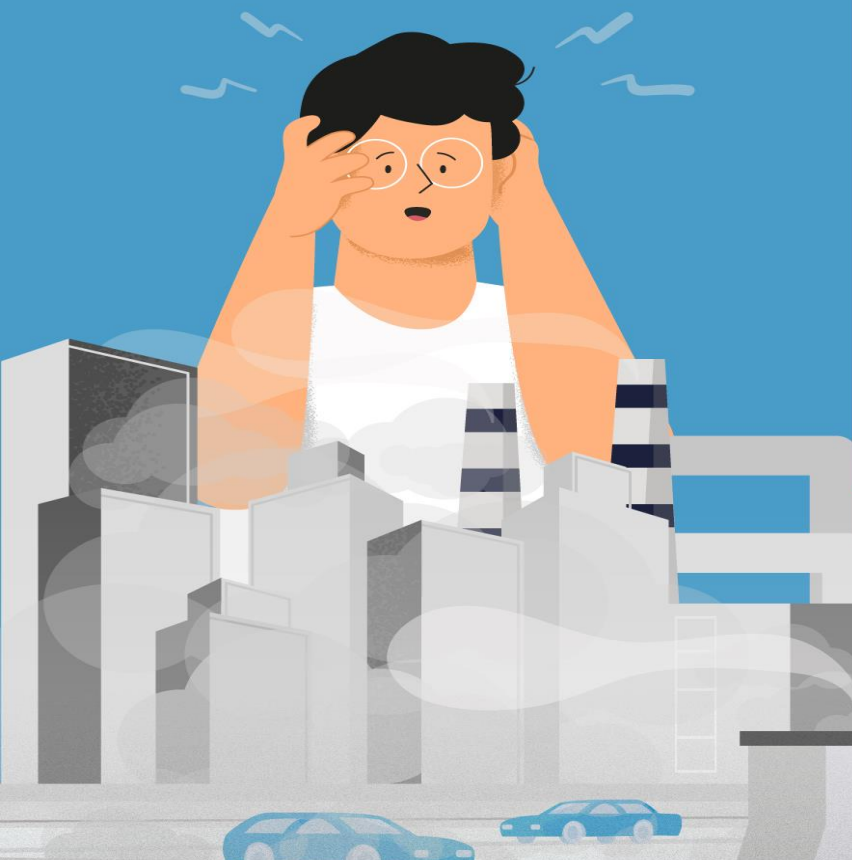
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AIR

Evidence shows
an association between certain
AIR POLLUTANTS and
DEPRESSION
(King 2018)



CHEMICAL

There is an association
between symptoms of severe
ENVIRONMENTAL CHEMICALS
and **CHILD BEHAVIOUR**
DISORDERS
(Philippat et al 2017)



NOISE

High levels of
ENVIRONMENTAL NOISE
are associated with
ANXIETY, STRESS and
HEADACHE
(Goines and Hagler 2007)



Relevant areas of the green deal for planetary health

Areas	Relevance
Increasing EU climate ambition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Address through mitigation and adaptation the far reaching climate change on health (exposure to extreme weather events, insect borne diseases, eco-anxiety)
Supply clean, affordable and secure energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce inability to keep houses warm (reaching 6.9 % in 2019) and exposure to pollutants
Mobilising industry for a clean and circular economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce exposure to hazardous pollutants and microplastics through greater circularity
Building and renovating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce inability to keep houses warm, exposure to pollutants through renovation
A zero pollution ambition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce exposure to hazardous chemicals, noise pollution, light pollution, etc... for humans and the environment as well as increase access to green spaces
Preserving and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prevention of zoonoses• Ecosystem restoration and urban greening as a public health policy
From farm to fork	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve diet and reduce agriculture-related pollution (air, soil, water) for humans and the environment• AMR resistance due to use of antibiotics and cage-farming in the livestock industry
Smart Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In light of failed objectives to curb transport emissions, key area to address for air pollution control and health (400,000 premature deaths in the EU every year)
Financing transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NRRPs, upcoming debate on exempting sustainability investments from Growth and stability pact
Leave no one behind	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extending the just transition to address health issues beyond affected industrial sectors• Sustainable equity



Latest relevant policy EGD developments

- Report from the parliament on **well-being economy/8th EAP indicators**
- **Innovation 4 sustainability:** HE missions identifying interlinkages (e.g. cancer)
- **Zero pollution:** Social inequality dimension embedded within the EU Action Plan; Sustainable chemical strategy proposal
- **Biodiversity:** Forthcoming Commission proposal for legally binding EU nature restoration targets; biodiversity mainstreaming target within EU budget
- **Farm to fork** EP vote (reduction target for use of chemicals; recommendation to limit overconsumption of meat by setting maximum intake levels)

Develop a dedicated EU
**MENTAL HEALTH &
WELL-BEING** strategy.



Integrate
RESILIENCE INDICATORS
which consider inter-linkages
between mental health and
the environment.



HOW TO REFLECT THE LINKS BETWEEN MENTAL HEALTH AND NATURE?

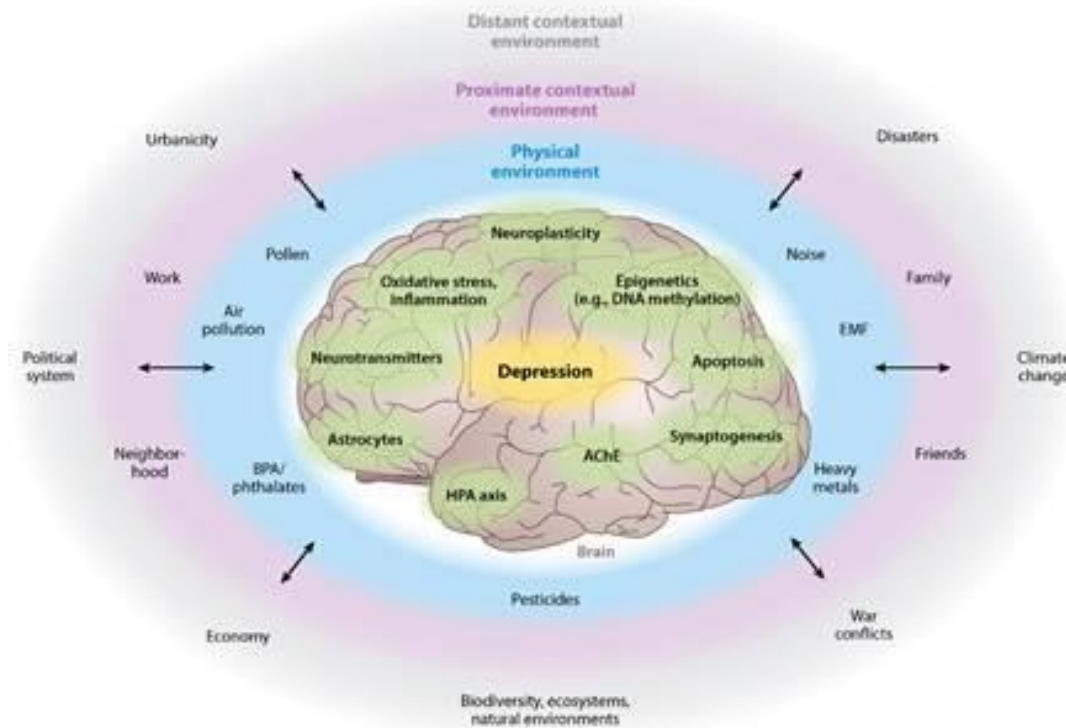
Ensure mainstreaming of
health and well-being
considerations in the
implementation of the
**EUROPEAN
GREEN DEAL.**



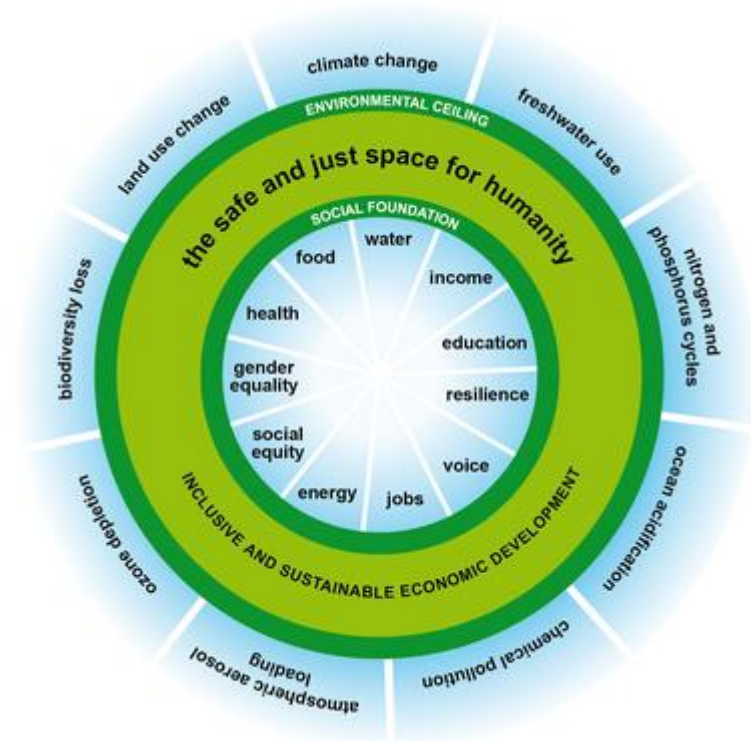
As part of Europe's
forthcoming zero-pollution
action plan, ensure that
those furthest behind
BENEFIT MOST.



FOCUS issue: building a just resilience for citizens and the environment



van den Bosch M, Meys-Uilenberg A, 2018
Ann Rev Public Health 39:239-59



Belgium has seen
a **6%** increase
in the rates of **DEPRESSION**

(Sciensano, cited in UNRIC 2020)

Around **60%**
surveyed in Poland
have experienced increased
GENERAL ANXIETY

(Dragan 2020)

In France, **18%** showed
symptoms of severe
ANXIETY, DEPRESSION
and other **MENTAL DISORDERS**

(UNRIC 2020)

In Italy and Spain, children have
DIFFICULTIES CONCENTRATING
and show **IRRITABILITY**
RESTLESSNESS
NERVOUSNESS

(WHO 2020)



COVID-19 & MENTAL HEALTH in Europe

The impact of COVID-19 on mental, neurological and substance use services:

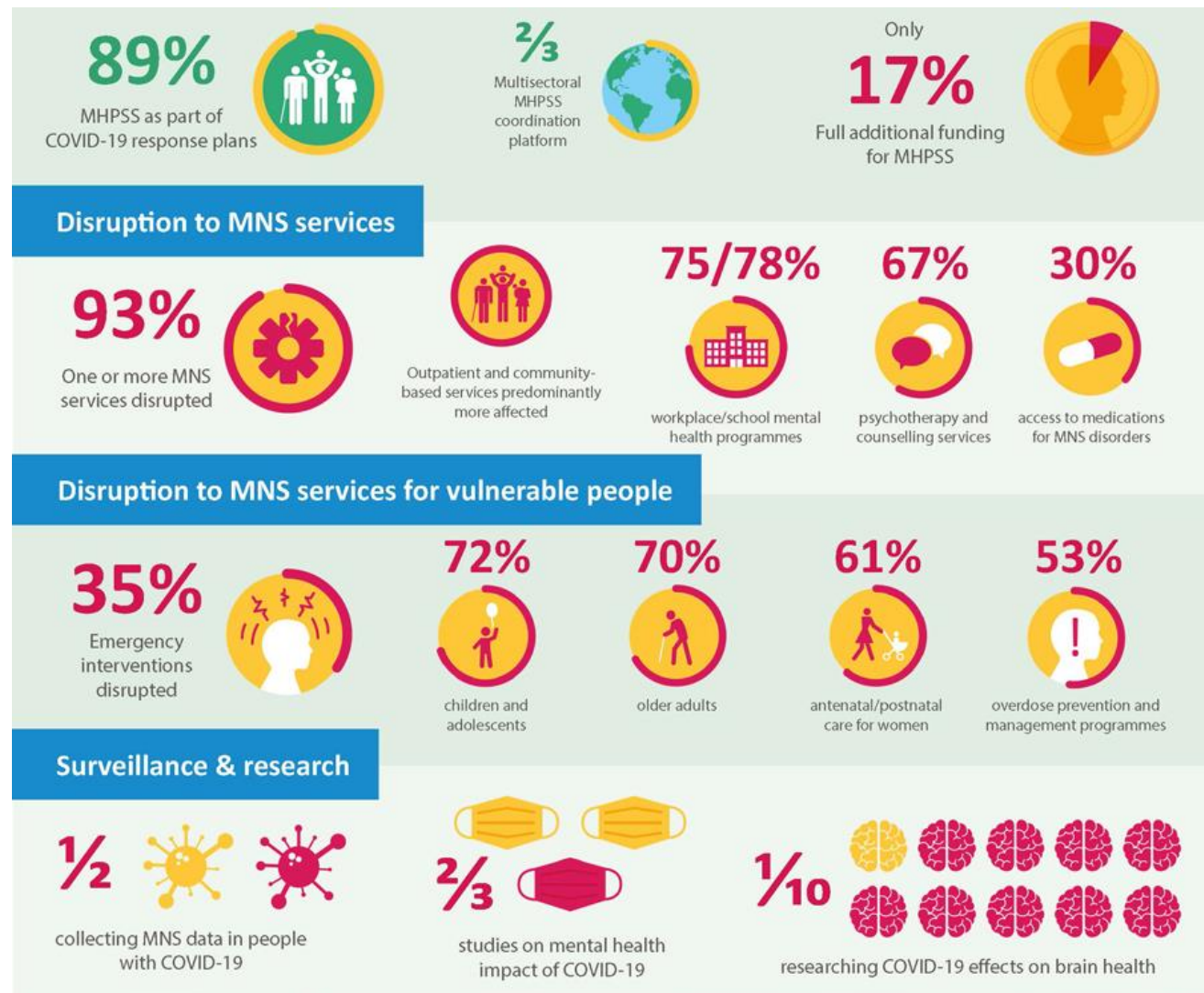
results of a rapid assessment



World Health Organization

Fear, worry and stress after are more frequent and more severe after an emergency.

Released Oct. 2020



Countries are responding to the disruption of MNS services in multiple innovative ways, including telemedicine, teletherapy interventions, hotlines and training for health care providers.

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Will We See a Wave of Mental Health Problems After the COVID-19 Pandemic?

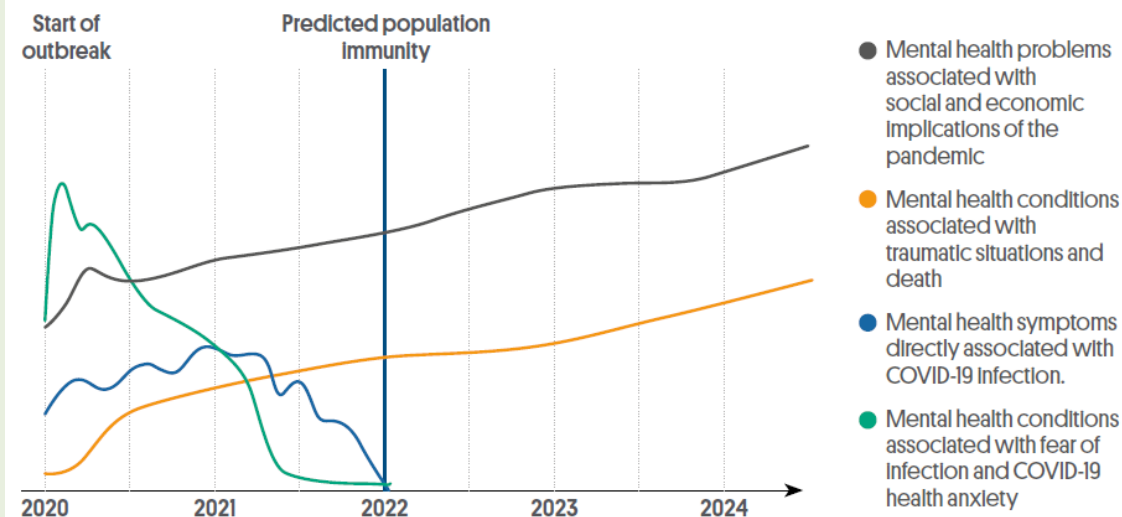
Series | COVID-19 & response strategy

ISGlobal
Barcelona
Institute for
Global Health

Authors: Ximena Goldberg, Oriana Ramirez, Matilda van den Bosch,
Liudmila Liutsko and Berta Briones (ISGlobal)*

Figure 2. The Burden and Course of Mental Health Conditions after the Start of the COVID-19 Pandemic Will Vary with Different Risk Factors.

Mental health problems directly related to the infection will decrease as the control of the spread advances. However, mental health conditions that are associated with trauma and socioeconomic impact of the pandemic will increase even after population immunity is achieved.



Source: <https://www.isglobal.org/en/-/es-la-salud-mental-la-pandemia-despues-de-la-covid-19->

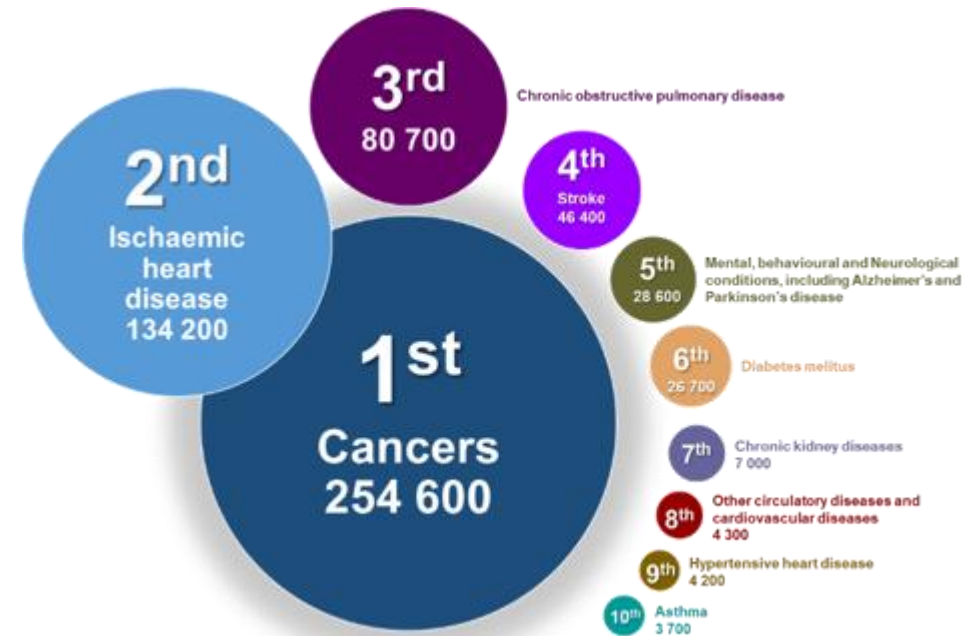
The challenge of a just transition from a health point of view



Link with prosperity: the case for a green care economy

- **Health care systems** are a major contributor to GHG and pollution (chemicals, plastics)
- Mental disorders such as depression and anxiety today affect more than **1 in 6 EU citizens** representing a massive personal and societal burden.
- Poor mental health is estimated to cost Europe over **€600 billion/year** or over 4% of GDP of which a third in direct health care spending.

Top 10 non-communicable diseases causing deaths attributable to the environment in the EU



Source: EEA – Healthy environment, healthy lives, 2018 based on WHO (2016))-
Zero Pollution EU-Action Plan, 2021



Protected areas have been estimated
to provide mental health benefits worth
EUR 5.55 TRILLION.

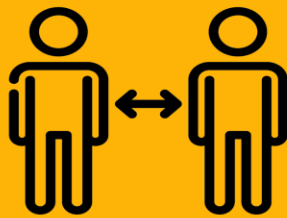
(Buckley et al 2019)

GREEN SPACES AND COVID-19

With the COVID-19 pandemic,
good quality green spaces are **more needed**
than ever in cities because they offer:



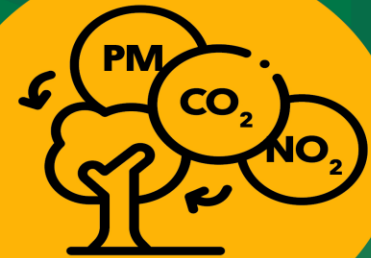
LOWER RISK OF
COVID-19 TRANSMISSION
OUTDOORS



SPACE FOR
SOCIAL
DISTANCING



BENEFITS FOR
PHYSICAL AND
MENTAL HEALTH



REDUCTION OF
AIR POLLUTION AND
NOISE LEVELS

Policy recommendations

1. **Boost public and private investments in NBS:** taxonomy, biodiversity spending targets within RRF plans; integration of biodiversity as part of the fit for 55% package; increase the prioritisation of ESIF towards biodiversity (e.g. CAP strategic plans)
2. Make **mental health is prioritised** within RRF plans
3. Role of EC and DG reform in **guiding and assessing RRF plans from MS** and supporting structural reform
4. **Fix the fundamentals** to bounce forward
 - **Well-being economy, semester and growth and stability pact**
 - Greener trade for a green recovery policies **addressing negative spill over effects of European demand** (land-use change, agricultural expansion and wildlife trade)
5. **Increasing sustainability and reducing pandemic risk due to land-use change and agricultural expansion:** EU Biodiversity Strategy to reduce indirect drivers of global biodiversity loss, through implementation of biodiversity provisions in trade agreements and the provision of market signals



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Thank you & References

- *Nature-based solutions and their socio-economic benefits for Europe's recovery*, IEEP (2021)
- *Mental Health and the Environment. Bringing nature back into people's lives*, IEEP & IS Global (2021)
- *Building on Nature: Area-based conservation as a key tool for delivering SDGs*. IEEP, IUCN WCPA, The Nature Conservancy, The World Bank, UNDP, Wildlife Conservation Society and WWF (2021)
- *Europe's role in preventing the 'era of pandemics' and protecting biodiversity*, IEEP (2021)
- *Role of a reformed European Semester within a new sustainable economy strategy*, IEEP (2020)
- *Mental health and the environment: Environmental degradation's impact on mental health and wellbeing*, IEEP (2020)

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