

**Question for written answer E-005042/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Air pollution - a major contributor to stroke

Air pollution has become a major contributor to stroke for the first time, with unclean air now blamed for nearly one third of healthy life years lost to the condition worldwide.

In an unprecedented survey of global risk factors for stroke, air pollution in the form of fine particulate matter ranked seventh in terms of its impact on healthy life expectancy, while household air pollution from burning solid fuels ranked eighth. It seems that emissions from fossil fuels are more harmful to the cardiovascular system than is fine particulate matter. According to the latest findings of the National Institute for Stroke and Applied Neurosciences at Auckland University of Technology, about 15 million people worldwide suffer a stroke each year. Nearly 6 million die, and 5 million are left with permanent disabilities such as loss of sight and/or speech, paralysis and confusion. The most alarming finding was that about a third of cases are attributable to air pollution. Although air pollution is known to damage the lungs, heart and brain, the extent of this threat seems to have been underestimated. Air pollution is a problem not just in big cities, but globally.

What measures has the Commission proposed with a view to improving quality of life for European citizens by reducing air pollution?