

Most of the cases of health issues and mortality are caused by exposure to particulate matter which is caused by airborne pollutants from fossil fuels.

The European Fund for the Balkans has started a new campaign called “Balkans United for Clean Air” to call upon governments and citizens to prevent tens of thousands of premature deaths caused by pollution every year. The campaign will be realized in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Serbia, and North Macedonia. In Albania, the implementing partner will be the Environment and Territorial Management Institute in Tirana. They hope to emphasize regional cooperation as a necessity for the transformation of the energy sector and environmental protection system to improve both the economy and public health. Over the next three months, the project will focus on air pollution and its impact on public health, mortality, and fertility, pollution caused by big businesses, air quality in the region, and other topics that will help citizens become more informed on the topic of air quality.

Furthermore, participants call on decision-makers to refocus their policies and take “urgent steps” to reduce all forms of air pollution. This, they say is a part of the commitments they made to the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans that was agreed upon in November 2020.

They also opened a call for others to become involved in the campaign.

“The “Balkans United for Clean Air” campaign belongs to all of us and is open to all civil society organizations, informal groups, civic movements, and individuals who want to join a solidarity-based struggle for clean air in the Western Balkans. It is envisioned as a joint action of all the citizens and civic organizations across the Western Balkans prepared to engage in a solidarity struggle for clean air in every street, neighborhood, village, and city in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, North Macedonia, and Serbia.” The European Environment Agency found that Albanian citizens and residents have one of the highest risks of premature death due to air quality in Europe.

Their data found that Albania noted 5000 premature deaths attributed to particle matter and YLL with some collective 57,400 years lost during the last decade due to pollutants. It's reported that up to 23% of deaths are due to environmental matters.

In 2019, the United Nations sounded the alarm about citizens in the Western Balkans suffering from reduced life expectancy due to “alarming levels of air pollution”. They noted that those living in the region were subjected to some of the highest concentrations of air pollution in Europe, up to five times the EU guideline levels.

Source: exit.al



Balkans United for Clean Air campaign