

Health and economic crisis

Besides health problems, air pollution also causes economic damage in Hungary, which accounts for almost 6 percent of GDP. Due to unhealthy air, the human body is more exposed to various diseases, including the coronavirus. A series of scientific reports show that air pollution not only facilitates the spread of the coronavirus, but also makes the course of the disease more severe.

Greenpeace activists in Budapest dropped a giant 11 meter long 'Clean Air Now' banner at the Buda Castle Tunnel. Their main message was that both the current and the new governments need to prioritize tackling of air pollution in Hungary and to phase out ICE to meet the Paris Climate targets.

Last week Greenpeace Hungary handed over nearly 45,000 petition signatures of people that demand a gradual ban of polluting vehicles from Budapest and development of sustainable transport in the capital. However, when it comes to healthier air, it is not enough to act at the municipal level: government action is also needed. Greenpeace expects concrete and meaningful air quality measures at both city and government levels.

Tens of thousands of people who had spoken out for cleaner, healthier air in Budapest expect the Budapest city administration to:

- gradually ban diesel cars and other polluting vehicles from Budapest,
- withdraw diesel BKV buses from the capital,
- increase the spread and development of sustainable transport in the capital.

The target date in the petition for banning polluting vehicles is September 1, 2026, but Greenpeace and the signatories are waiting for the city authorities to set a timetable for the phase out.

"More than 13,000 Hungarians die prematurely every year due to polluted air, making Hungary one of the most polluted Member States in the EU. We have nothing to wait for. By not banning polluting vehicles, we are playing with human lives. Neither the management of the capital nor the government can ignore it no further" said Gergely Simon, Greenpeace Hungary's air quality expert.

Source: cee.press.greenpeace.org