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necessary steps for cleaner air

For the past 10 years, the EU Ambient Air Quality Directives have been an essential tool to drive action against air pollution.

EU laws are vital to achieve good air quality in all member states.

Together with climate change, air pollution is considered the most important environmental issue by Europeans (*Special Eurobarometer 468*) and urgent action is demanded.

STEPS TO BE TAKEN BY MEMBER STATES

1 Immediately achieve air quality standards by rigorously implementing and applying the Ambient Air Quality Directives to help protect people's health and the environment.

2 Remove obstacles hampering cleaner air by adopting coherent national policies which do not hamper air quality objectives (e.g. biomass burning), stopping harmful subsidies (e.g. to fossil-fuels) and applying the polluter-pays principle.

3 Prevent and reduce pollution at the source by rigorously implementing existing legislation (e.g. the National Emission Ceilings Directive, Industrial Emissions Directive, Euro Standards) and by supporting the adoption of new laws to tackle pollution sources, especially from sectors lagging behind (e.g. agriculture, domestic heating, and transport - including shipping).

STEPS TO BE TAKEN BY THE EU COMMISSION

4 Enforce existing legislation by promptly launching infringement procedures and taking Member States to the European Court of Justice when they fail to protect people's health and the environment.

5 Update minimum requirements for air quality plans and air quality monitoring by immediately adopting implementing legislation to strengthen minimum content of air quality plans and ensure consistent and accurate air quality monitoring.

6 Update air quality standards in line with latest scientific evidence by setting out a clear roadmap to align EU legally binding air quality limit values with the new air quality guidelines that the World Health Organisation is expected to publish soon.

