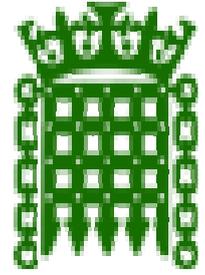


Light Rail (UK)

All Party Parliamentary Light Rail Group

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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Air pollution costs Europe \$1.6tn a year in early deaths and disease, say WHO



A faint view of the landmark Arc de Triomphe is seen through a pollution haze in Paris. Photograph: Yoan Valat /EPA

Costs of dirty air are equivalent to about a tenth of Europe's GDP, with Germany, UK and Italy among the hardest hit economically

Tuesday 28 April 2015 17.00 BST Last modified on Wednesday 29 April 2015 15.46 BST

The financial cost of air pollution in Europe stands at more than \$1.6tn (£1.5tn) a year, [a study by the World Health Organisation \(WHO\) has found](#), equating to about a tenth of the GDP of the continent. While air pollution has long been known to be a major environmental burden, the costs in human and economic terms have not been categorised before.

This meeting by invitation only, where MPs, Stakeholders etc., within the Light Rail industry and invited members of the Public will have a chance to discuss debate and raise questions concerning Light Rail & Trams.

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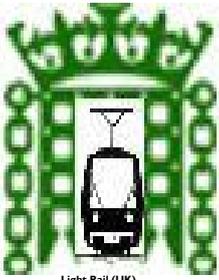
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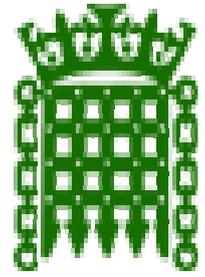
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The costs come in the form of 600,000 premature deaths each year, and the sickness caused to hundreds of thousands of other people from preventable causes, such as pollution from small particles that come from the exhausts of diesel vehicles, and nitrogen dioxide, a gas that can inhibit breathing in vulnerable people.

The figures are from 2010, the latest year for which full data is available, and cover the whole of the European region, including non-EU states such as Norway and Switzerland, and are compiled by the WHO Regional Office for [Europe](#) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Zsuzsanna Jakab, regional director for Europe at the WHO, said: "Curbing the health effects of air pollution pays dividends. The evidence we have provides decision-makers across the whole of government with a compelling reason to act."

In many east European countries, the WHO data shows, the economic costs of dirty air are more than 10% of their GDP. On absolute economic costs, the top 10 list is dominated by major economies including the UK, Germany and Italy.

In the UK, air pollution has become so bad in London that the European Union is to levy fines on local government, reflecting years in which the extent of pollution has been in excess of EU standards. The Supreme Court is expected to issue judgment on Wednesday on a case brought against the UK government for its breach of EU pollution limits.

The WHO report found that air pollution was the single biggest environmental health risk in Europe, with the damage from outdoor risks such as diesel exhaust pollution accounting for 482,000 deaths in 2012 from heart and respiratory diseases alone. The deaths or sickness of at least one in four Europeans can be traced to environmental pollution, according to the organisation.

In March, [the European Environment Agency warned that](#) hundreds of thousands of people would die prematurely over the next two decades from air pollution because of governments' failure to act. However, the issue of air pollution has attracted little political attention in the UK, and has played little part in the current general election campaigns by the major political parties.

Courtesy : The Guardian

[Fiona Harvey](#)

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/apr/29/supreme-court-orders-uk-to-draw-up-air-pollution-cleanup-plan>

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