

Request for advice

In a letter dated May 18 2016, ref lenM/BSK-2016/88710, the State Secretary for Infrastructure and Water Management requested the Health Council to advise on *Health benefits through cleaner air*. In English, this request reads as follows (translation by the Health Council of the Netherlands):

The European exposure limits for air quality have served as a guideline in recent years for air quality policy in the Netherlands. Currently available scientific knowledge suggests that more far-reaching improvement of air quality may result in additional health benefits.

I think it is important to give public health a more central place within the framework of air quality policy. I would therefore appreciate receiving your vision with regard to the following:

- What is the current state of scientific knowledge on the potential health effects of air pollution?
- Can the Health Council specify which sources are presently the most important sources of air pollution in the Netherlands? Which sources should be given priority from a public health perspective?
- In addition, I request that, in your advice, you also focus specifically on the potential added value of devoting extra attention to vulnerable groups within the framework of future air-quality policy.
- What are potentially the most important focal points for future air-quality policy? Are nitrogen oxide and particulate matter still the most appropriate indicators for evaluating and updating air-quality policy or are there any other substances or indicators that provide better instruments for realising health benefits, and if so which?

I request that the Health Council also take into account the RIVM (National Institute for Public Health and the Environment) report 'Perspectives for air quality and health' (Perspectives Memorandum) in its considerations.

Please inform me how soon I can expect to receive your advice.