



Exmo. Sr. D. José Luis Martínez-Almeida
Lord Mayor of Madrid
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Excelentísimo Sr. Alcalde,

At the European Public Health Association we learned that your administration wants to repeal the current provisions to decrease traffic and pollution emissions in the central area of Madrid. We are very concerned with this news.

The population of the city of Madrid is being exposed to unhealthy levels of air pollution. The main source for air pollution in cities is traffic, and the main strategy to reduce air pollution is changing mobility and decreasing the number of polluting vehicles running through the city. As you will be aware, Madrid received an official warning from the European Commission two years ago, as the clean air targets are not met in the city of Madrid. The European Directive on air quality sets standards for air pollution levels. These standards are above the levels recommended by the World Health Organization for some pollutants, in an effort to take into account feasibility criteria.

In the past decades, efforts to bring down traffic in Madrid have been rather timid, until late 2018, when the 'Madrid Central' programme seemed a positive move, with promising results. Implementing the 'Madrid Central' traffic restriction programme, which restricts polluting vehicles to enter an area of 472 hectares in Madrid, was a step in the right direction for ensuring a healthy urban area. However, with the decision to withdraw the 'Madrid Central' programme the health of inhabitants of Madrid is jeopardised.

We have learned that the courts have put the 'Madrid Central' programme back in place, prioritising the health of citizens above the right to travel by car. We call your attention to the fact that only long-term and consistent actions to reduce traffic in Madrid will improve air quality. We support the request from our member organisation, Sociedad Española de Salud Pública y Administración Sanitaria (SESPAS), to preserve the measures previously implemented, and call on you to develop strong policies to tackle the high burden of disease caused by air pollution. The reduction of air pollution contributes to safe, resilient and sustainable cities, and is also a key strategy in the efforts to mitigate climate change.



You have the opportunity to leave an enduring impact, and to contribute to public health and the common good. Across Europe, it is the effective policies of committed cities that are driving change. Madrid could and should be leading this process, for its own future and that of the planet.

Your sincerely,

Dineke Zeegers Paget
EUPHA Executive Director