

# WHAT MEASURES SHOULD BE TAKEN TO BETTER BREATHE?

## Fighting air pollution in urban areas

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### SYNTHESIS OF THE WORKINGPAPER

Air is a vital element for man. Each of us breathes more than 15,000 litres of air every day. The quality of such air is thus a major public health issue.

However, one in every 7 deaths in the world, according to the WHO, and 16,500 deaths in France, according to a study by Apekom in 2012, are related to air pollution. New statistical, scientific and epidemiologic studies have indeed stressed out a direct link with respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.

In 2014, French people have been frequently exposed to chronic levels of excessive air pollution; the threshold values of some pollutants being regularly exceeded, France faces litigation with the European Commission.

This note presents an overall assessment of outdoor air pollution in urban areas and underscores the fact that current measures do not meet the expectations of major health challenges. It establishes an overview of measures taken at national and local levels in France, as well as around the world. The diversity of possible measures shows that actions can be efficient if proactive and coherent policies are led.

Following a synthetic analysis of atmospheric pollution as a health issue, based notably on the emblematic case of the Paris region, this study aims at introducing structuring and feasible proposals in all French cities to efficiently fight air pollution.

Accordingly, it presents three strong and innovating measures to develop in territories:

- Strengthening real-time information for general audience, more particularly through public display of pollution levels and their integration into weather forecasts.
- Making restricted traffic compulsory during pollution peaks, while continuously monitoring background location.
- Prohibiting infrastructure building for sensitive populations near pollution sources

