



# EUROPEAN HEALTHCARE CLIMATE SUMMIT

TOWARDS CLIMATE-SMART HOSPITALS  
IN EUROPE

26 OCTOBER 2021 | HCWH EUROPE



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# INTRODUCTION

Building on the success of the previous two years, Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) Europe hosted another edition of the **European Healthcare Climate Summit** in October 2021. Bringing together a wide range of stakeholders working on the nexus between climate and health, the summit was an opportunity to launch the new ***Healthcare Decarbonisation Toolkit: Experiences from the Mediterranean region*** and to discuss feedback on the policy recommendations developed alongside the toolkit.

Over 75 sustainability practitioners, hospital managers, health professionals, and academics from across the European healthcare sector joined us at the European Healthcare Climate Summit. Participants not only provided crucial input to our policy recommendations for building comprehensive climate and health policies in the Mediterranean region, but also gained practical insight on how to initiate decarbonising their own facilities.



## SESSION 1: HEALTHCARE DECARBONISATION TOOLKIT

The first part of the event was dedicated presenting the outcome of HCWH Europe's ***Low-carbon healthcare in the Mediterranean region*** project, supporting hospitals across Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Italy to establish internal carbon management teams and plans to transition to zero emissions healthcare. This project also facilitated networking between hospitals in the region and encouraged an exchange of best practice. By taking a hospital-level approach during the project, HCWH Europe was able to provide more hands-on support to participants and pilot a bottom-up methodology to carbon management, which formed the basis of a toolkit for healthcare decarbonisation.

The *Healthcare decarbonisation toolkit: Experiences from the Mediterranean region* will facilitate the integration of climate action into healthcare planning and is aimed at those working in hospitals that want to develop a carbon management plan for their organisation. While it is based on Mediterranean experiences, the lesson learnt and methodology can be applied by any European hospital.

## SESSION 2: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Whilst the toolkit focuses on healthcare providers, the *Low-carbon healthcare in the Mediterranean region project* also highlights key gaps in the climate and health policies of Mediterranean countries. A series of policy recommendations for the region were also developed as part of the project and discussed during the second half of this year's European Healthcare Climate Summit. We presented the health and climate policy landscape in the Mediterranean region and gathered valuable feedback during breakout sessions to support the development of **the final policy recommendations**.

# EUROPEAN HEALTHCARE CLIMATE SUMMIT 2021

## TOWARDS CLIMATE-SMART HOSPITALS IN EUROPE

Tuesday 26 October 2021, 10:30 – 13:00 CEST



### AGENDA

10:30 – 10:35	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Opening words and housekeeping. <i>Will Clark, Executive Director - HCWH Europe</i></p>
10:35 – 10:55	<p><b>The path to zero carbon healthcare: A toolkit for healthcare providers in the Mediterranean region and beyond</b></p> <p>Presentation of the <i>Low-carbon healthcare in the Mediterranean region</i> project and launch of the <i>Healthcare decarbonisation toolkit: Experiences from the Mediterranean region</i>. <i>Mireia Figueras Alsius, Climate Officer - HCWH Europe</i></p>
10:55 – 11:35	<p><b>Experiences from the Mediterranean region</b></p> <p>Presentations by project participants, who will present key takeaways and experiences from the development of their carbon management plans. <i>Representatives from:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Departament de Salut Xàtiva - Ontinyent, Spain</i></li> <li>• <i>Hospital Universitario Lucus Augusti, Spain</i></li> <li>• <i>Hospital Pedro Hispano, Portugal</i></li> <li>• <i>General Hospital of Syros, Greece</i></li> </ul>

<p><b>11:45 – 11:55</b></p>	<p><b>From practice to policy</b> Introduction to the policy landscape for health and climate in the Mediterranean region. <i>Mai Shafei, Research and Data Assistant - HCWH Europe</i></p>
<p><b>11:55 – 12:45</b></p>	<p><b>Breakout sessions</b> Consultation on policy recommendations to create more robust policies in support of healthcare decarbonisation.</p>
<p><b>12:45 - 12:55</b></p>	<p><b>A vision for climate and health policy in Europe</b> <i>Pilar Aparicio Azcárraga, Director General of Public Health - Ministry of Health, Spain</i></p>
<p><b>12:55</b></p>	<p><b>Closing remarks</b> <i>Mireia Figueras Alsius - HCWH Europe</i></p>

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HCWH Europe gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the European Commission's EU Life+ programme. The Low-carbon health-care in the Mediterranean region project is part of the European Climate Initiative (EUKI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU). The views expressed do not reflect the official views of the EC and the BMU.

# PRESENTATIONS

## THE PATH TO ZERO CARBON HEALTHCARE

MIREIA FIGUERAS ALSIUS, CLIMATE OFFICER - HCWH EUROPE



Mireia provided an overview of the new *Healthcare Decarbonisation Toolkit: Experiences from the Mediterranean region* and explained how it can support any healthcare provider in Europe to develop a carbon management plan (CMP), that charts a course for decarbonisation in line with the Paris Agreement.

Mireia went on to give a brief description of the tools and resources that are part of the toolkit:

- **Introduction to carbon management:** The key concepts of carbon management and why it is important for healthcare to reduce its carbon emissions.
- **A step-by-step guide to carbon management:** Developed, piloted, and refined as a part of the project, this guide explains how to develop effective carbon management plans for healthcare providers.
- **Carbon management plan template:** A template to support healthcare providers to draft their own carbon management plan.



- **The carbon management team:**

Supporting healthcare providers to set up a carbon management team.

- **Carbon reduction opportunity**

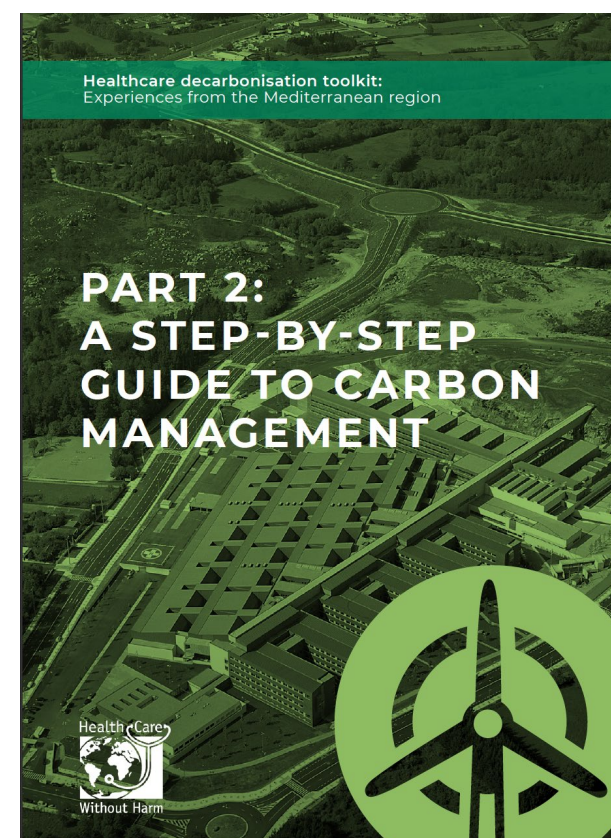
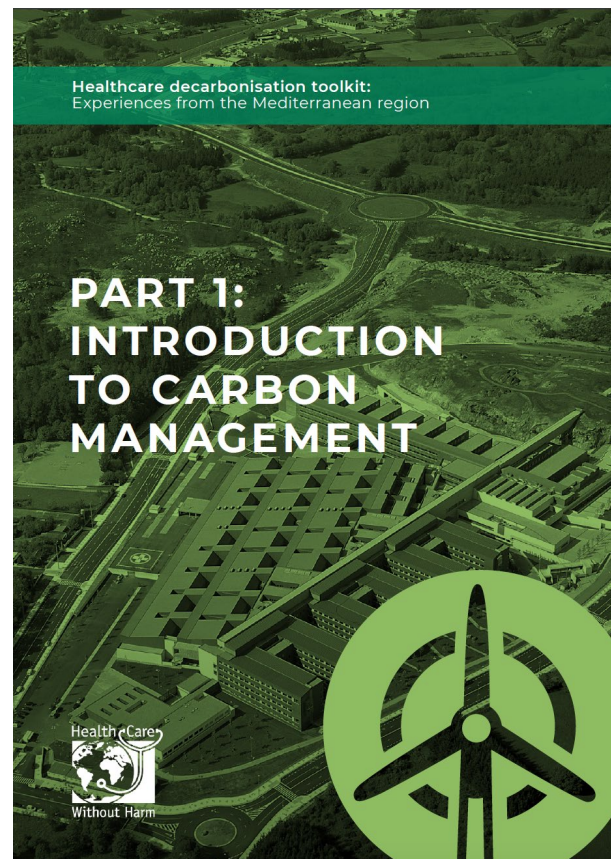
**calculator:** This tool allows healthcare providers to estimate how reducing carbon emissions will drive cost savings.

- **The Climate Impact Checkup - healthcare's GHG emissions calculator:**

This tool allows any healthcare facility in the world to calculate and track its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Mireia also explained where to find the toolkit, which is available exclusively for members of HCWH's *Global Green and Healthy Hospitals (GGHH)* network via the *GGHH Connect* platform. It is available in five languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and Greek).

To close, Mireia introduced the pilot hospitals that participated in the *Low-carbon healthcare in the Mediterranean region* project for more than two years and developed their CMPs following the toolkit's methodology. By piloting the guidance outlined in the toolkit, they were vital to its development and helped to ensure that it was a practical hands-on guide useful to any healthcare provider in Europe.



## EXPERIENCES FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

Participants of the *Low-carbon healthcare in the Mediterranean region* project presented attendees with their experiences of healthcare decarbonisation, sharing their successes, challenges faced, and key lessons learnt.

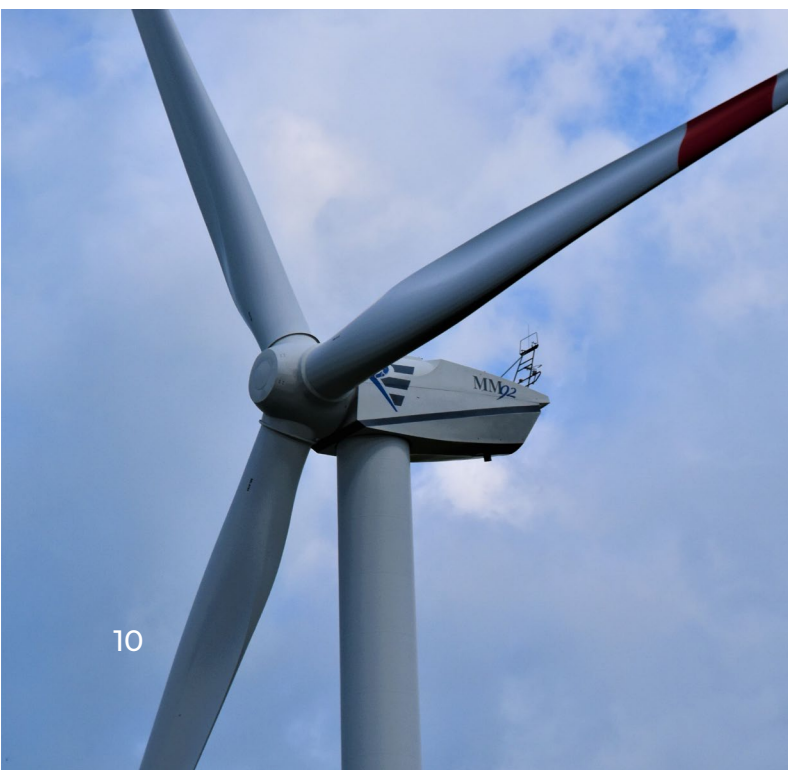
The hospital representatives also shared the emissions reduction objectives that they have committed to with the implementation of their CMPs. On this trajectory, they are all set to reach net-zero emissions by 2050.

### SPAIN - LLUÍS ALCANYÍS HOSPITAL, XÀTIVA

MARÍA JOSÉ MORA, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PROJECT MANAGER



María José began her presentation by highlighting the specific climate challenges facing the Valencia region of Spain, often referred to as *“the pan of Valencia”*, due to its hot summers and dry weather. She went on to describe Lluís Alcanyís hospital’s sustainability efforts before their involvement in the project. Though they had a strong overall commitment to sustainability, supported by awareness raising campaigns and very motivated hospital staff and board members, they lacked resources, capacity, data, and methodologies for their baselining, as well as a clear strategic direction, and staff training.







These missing elements were barriers to making their hospital more sustainable.

Maria José went on to highlight the creation of a *Sustainability and Urban Health Committee* as a key success factor of Lluís Alcanyís Hospital's CMP. Another relevant success for the hospital was the involvement of the board, local authorities, and staff (medical and non-medical) in the development of their CMP.

Maria José then outlined what her hospital achieved during their participation in the *Low-carbon healthcare in the Mediterranean region* project, calling particular attention to the *Carbon Footprint Seal* that the hospital obtained from the Spanish Climate Change Office in recognition of their efforts to calculate and reduce their GHG emissions.

Besides those achievements, Maria José also shared some of the challenges that Hospital Lluís Alcanyís faced during the project, such as the lack of available data to calculate their carbon footprint baseline and the fact that some medical staff were dismissive of climate change and its impact on health.

Maria José also took this opportunity to share some advice for healthcare providers that want to take similar steps toward zero-emission healthcare. Based on her experience, it is vital to listen to staff ideas before developing a CMP.



## SPAIN - HOSPITAL UNIVERSITARIO LUCUS AUGUSTI

KIKO INSUA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT



Kiko started his presentation by giving an overview of the environmental work at Hospital Universitario Lucus Augusti (HULA) before the *Low-carbon healthcare in the Mediterranean region* project began. HULA had already established an environmental department and annual, monitored environmental objectives. However, the hospital did not have any emissions measurement or reduction strategies, something that was addressed thanks to their participation in the project.

During his presentation, Kiko drew attention to the fact that their previous work and experience with sustainability and the creation of a multidisciplinary carbon management team were key for the successful development of their CMP. The key challenge for HULA was to make sure that the CMP was a key organisational document, dynamic, and updated regularly.

Kiko shared some of the main actions that they will be taking in order to achieve their emissions reduction targets. These measures included switching to zero-emissions vehicles, the installation of photovoltaic panels, and green procurement policies. In addition to this, Kiko highlighted how the economic savings from these measures will finance other sustainability actions.

The key lessons learnt during the project were an improved understanding of their hospital emissions, improved teamwork, and the importance of establishing actions with clear goals over time.

Kiko closed his presentation by mentioning that based on his experience, it is crucial to distribute tasks among team members and implement the CMP in daily management.



## PORTUGAL - HOSPITAL PEDRO HISPANO

TIAGO DAVID FONSECA FERNANDES,  
PHYSICIAN - HYPERBARIC MEDICINE  
UNIT

Tiago's journey to decarbonising his hospital began with a 2018 **HCWH Europe project focused on anaesthetic gases**. Before joining the *Low-carbon healthcare in the Mediterranean region* project, the hospital had a good track record in sustainability but did not have a dedicated team or any means of evaluating their carbon footprint.

Hospital Pedro Hispano's main ambitions for participating in the project were to develop a CMP, create a permanent sustainability working group, and become leaders in low-carbon healthcare. He highlighted that all their goals were met during the course of the project.

Tiago shared some of the hospital's main emissions reduction priorities, which include improving energy autonomy and efficiency as well as reducing emissions from transportation and anaesthetic gases. Tiago also drew attention to their installation of an innovative halogenated gas capturing system that prevents its release into the environment, with the aim of reducing their emissions from anaesthetic gases.



Photo credit: Photo ULSM



Photo credit: Photo ULSM

Tiago considered the main challenges during the project were mainly related to uncertainties in carbon footprint estimations (especially for scope 3 emissions), as well as the fact that the project was mainly delivered online. Tiago also highlighted the importance of coordinating the team well during the CMP development.

He closed his presentation by saying that a main benefit of joining the project was the team's enthusiasm, which multiplied innovation and effort, and that there was a feeling of recognition among the team. He also explained that it was difficult to finalise the development of the CMP because there were a growing number of contributions from the group.

## GREECE - GENERAL HOSPITAL OF SYROS

MICHALIS ZOULOUFOS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER - GENERAL HOSPITALS OF SYROS AND NAXOS ISLANDS



Michalis started his presentation by highlighting that data collection and the identification of emissions sources were both the biggest challenges and achievements of the hospital's participation in the *Low-carbon healthcare in the Mediterranean region* project. He stressed that this was the first time the hospital gathered data to calculate their carbon footprint baseline. Another crucial success of the project was that their CMP was approved by the Executive Board, which will unlock the necessary resources for its implementation.

In terms of lesson learnt, Michalis highlighted that team work was crucial to implement a significant change in terms of carbon reduction commitments. A key challenge they faced when developing the CMP was disagreement amongst the team about the definitions of "climate change" and "climate crisis". To avoid misunderstandings, they established definitions of the two terms for the purposes of the CMP and their continued sustainability work.



Related to this, Michalis mentioned that the definitions and opinions of what climate change and climate crisis are were not the same for all the actors involved in the development of the CMP, and therefore they had to establish an internal common language about those two topics.

Michalis' advice to any healthcare provider that wants to develop a CMP is to be proactive and take action sooner rather than later. Michalis drew attention to the fact that time is running out and that in Syros they are committed to work hard to meet their objectives, even though they are understaffed. Their CMP establishes measures and initiatives that will guide the hospital's next steps to take immediate climate action.

For more information about the participating hospitals and their experience, GGHH members can download these case studies (*Healthcare carbon management in the Mediterranean region*) on [\*\*GGHH Connect\*\*](#).



## FROM PRACTICE TO POLICY

MAÏ SHAFEI, RESEARCH AND DATA ASSISTANT - HCWH EUROPE



Maï introduced the policy landscape in the Mediterranean region for health and climate. She presented an analysis of climate and health policies at national, regional, and local levels in Greece, Italy, Spain, and Portugal to see if the climate-health nexus was represented.

The conclusions of this research showed that in all four countries policy makers acknowledge that health and climate are interconnected issues. Common to all countries is the recognition that climate change has a significant impact on public health. Awareness and monitoring are the most common policy initiatives identified in the region and many of the measures cited focus on tackling heatwaves and their effects on health. However, the policy landscape across the countries analysed is more fragmented in regard to committing the health sector to decarbonisation - there is a common need for stronger decarbonisation policies in the health sector.





Maï summarised the three key takeaways from the research that became the basis for the policy recommendations. To build a resilient, zero-carbon healthcare system that is protected from the worst impacts of climate change and supports a healthy society, it is important for policymakers to:

- Recognise the contribution healthcare makes to climate change.
- Implement net-zero roadmaps for healthcare that are compatible with the 2015 Paris Agreement.
- Ensure the healthcare sector's resilience and preparedness in times of climate and health emergency

These recommendations also formed the basis of the consultation process at the Summit described below. Participants gave their insight and opinion on changes they would like to see to improve the inclusion of the climate-health nexus in policies and promote healthcare decarbonisation.





# CONSULTATION PROCESS

The second half of the Summit was dedicated to a consultation on the project's policy recommendations. Participants were split into breakout rooms to facilitate discussion moderated by HCWH staff. Moderators asked set consultation questions and attendees were also given the opportunity to give free input, ask questions, and discuss existing policy in the region.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE BREAKOUT SESSIONS

The breakout sessions led to fruitful discussion in which participants shared their experiences with policy and pointed out barriers or gaps they faced. Three key takeaways were highlighted across the breakout rooms.

### RECOGNISE

Considering the recognition of the climate and health nexus, the main consensus was that there is a general lack of recognition of the issue in existing policies. Healthcare often falls through siloed policies in which healthcare is not a stand-alone sector and this leads to a lack of tools for carbon reporting, an exclusion from carbon markets, and a general lack of support.

Furthermore, participants highlighted a general lack of coordination between ministries or regional authorities and a lack of coordination between policy and healthcare actors. Both top-down and bottom-up approaches are crucial in improving policies as well as improving adherence to measures and provision of support.

## MITIGATE

Discussing important measures and support systems for mitigation as well as gaps in existing policies, participants highlighted gaps regarding action on scope 3 emissions. Attendees agreed that there is a need not just for monitoring but also actions along the value chain. Policies throughout the value chain need to be updated and improved to include climate positive practices.

Participants also highlighted that stronger requirements and support could improve emissions monitoring and the integration of mitigation measures. Support is an important element - knowledge sharing, expertise, and financial support for zero emissions infrastructure and energy are all necessary steps in making sure the health sector is not contributing to climate change.



## PREPARE

Although the main focus of the policy recommendations is mitigation, one section is dedicated to preparing the healthcare sector to be resilient to existing and future climate change impacts. This was also reflected in the consultation process during the Summit. The main takeaway regarding healthcare resilience in the face of climate change impacts was the need for better communication.

Attendees highlighted that the healthcare sector is a critical sector and needs to be among the first to know about climate change events so that it can react. This requires a strong monitoring system, a strong and regularly tested early warning system, and staff that have been trained to face climate impacts.

They also noted that governments at a national and international level need to create strong resilience plans and ensure that health systems are ready and informed of short to long term impacts within their regions on a regular basis. Of particular importance, according to the consultation, is the need for plans to cover entire regions, rather than just individual countries. The Mediterranean is set to face extreme weather events, many of them generalised over the entire region. Therefore, the region as a whole needs to be considered in any international climate emergency plans.





# A VISION FOR CLIMATE AND HEALTH POLICY IN EUROPE

The closing remarks of the 2021 European Healthcare Climate Summit were given by Pilar Aparicio Azcárraga, Director General of Public Health - Ministry of Health, Spain.

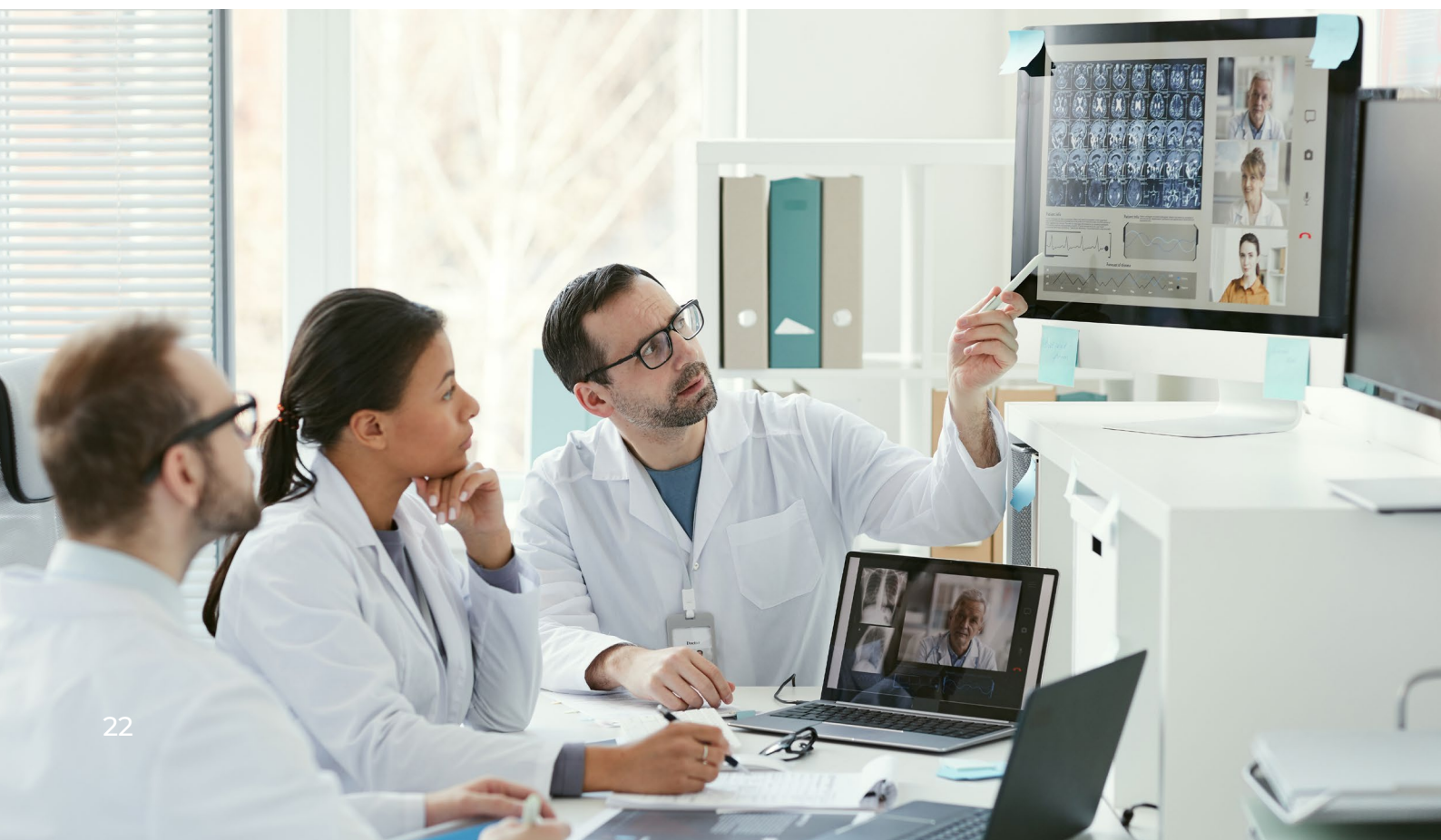
In her remarks, Pilar expressed concern that all populations will be affected by climate change, but that some are more vulnerable than others, such as children and elderly people. Pilar also drew attention to the fact that the health sector is not only responsible for significant emissions, but also on the frontline to provide healthcare during climate events. The sector should therefore set an example and provide a benchmark for decarbonisation, benefitting society, the environment, and health.



The Director General of Public Health went on to explain that Spain in particular, and the wider Mediterranean region are experiencing many challenges due to climate change and it is necessary to acknowledge that the healthcare sector's contribution to climate change represents **4.4% of global net emissions**. For that reason, it is important that policy synergies exist between climate and health action.

In light of this, Pilar said public health policies need to address some important issues. As a first step, they need push health systems and institutions to reduce their emissions and support the creation of a healthcare sector that is compatible with the Paris Agreement and includes strong mitigation practices within the sector and throughout its supply chain. Secondly, they need to address the fact that the impacts of climate change on health are already being felt and therefore the healthcare sector must be prepared to handle these impacts and communicate them to the population.

Finally, she highlighted that those policies need to reflect the importance of cooperation between health and climate governance. Health and climate change are inextricably linked, through healthcare emissions and the increasing burden that climate change places on health. For this reason, collaboration between health and climate governance is essential.



Pilar explained how this collaboration already exists between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge in Spain. Both ministries worked closely together to develop the Strategic Plan of Health and Environment, which they hope will have a positive impact in the future.

Pilar also expressed her strongest support for numerous decarbonisation initiatives both in the public and private health sector in Spain, which are also evidence of the successful cooperation between the two ministries.

She also stressed Spain's involvement in the **COP26 Health Programme**, which commits them to developing a climate-resilient and low-carbon health system. Finally, Pilar conveyed institutional support for the community of actors in the health sector committed to addressing the climate emergency.



# NEXT STEPS: ACCELERATING HEALTHCARE DECARBONISATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The feedback gathered at this year's European Healthcare Climate Summit played a critical role in helping HCWH Europe to develop policy recommendations. It helped to highlight which aspects of the policy recommendations attendees supported or disagreed with, as well as what was missing.

This feedback was incorporated into the final policy recommendations, which are [now available on HCWH Europe's website](#) in five languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and Greek). The policy recommendations will be shared with policymakers and relevant stakeholders at the EU, national, and regional levels.



# GET INVOLVED!

## SUBSCRIBE

If you would like to be kept up to date with the latest developments from our Climate-smart Healthcare programme, you can [subscribe to our newsletter here](#).

## JOIN THE NETWORK

If you are interested in reducing the environmental footprint of your hospital/health centre, or the impact of your day-to-day work in healthcare, there are a number of ways you can join our network:

- Organisational [membership of Global Green & Healthy Hospitals](#) (hospitals, health systems, and other healthcare providers only) - giving your institution free access to a range of exclusive tools and resources, including the *Healthcare Decarbonisation Toolkit*.
- [Doctors for Greener Healthcare](#) - bringing together doctors from across Europe to collaborate, share best practice, and advocate for a healthy future by reducing the environmental impact of healthcare.
- [Nurses Climate Challenge Europe](#) - empowering nurses across Europe to take action against the health impacts of climate change.



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Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) Europe is the European arm of a global not for profit NGO whose mission is to transform healthcare worldwide so that it reduces its environmental footprint, becomes a community anchor for sustainability and a leader in the global movement for environmental health and justice. HCWH's vision is that healthcare mobilises its ethical, economical, and political influence to create an ecologically sustainable, equitable, and healthy world.



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