

# Impact of climate change on health in Wallonia

## Senior scientists

- ▶ Séverine HENRARD
- ▶ Niko SPEYBROECK

## Research Field and Subjects

Climate change (CC) is a global concern and decisions are taken to limit anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions through attenuation efforts. On the other hand, certain impacts of CC are inevitable and will require human adaptation. Since 2006, the European Commission has encouraged European countries to evaluate CC impacts at national and regional levels in order to implement several adaptation strategies starting in 2012. In this context, the Belgian government has asked Wallonia, Flanders and the Brussels-Capital Region to study their CC impacts in order to develop a comprehensive and inclusive federal plan. In Wallonia, this research was led by the Agence wallonne de l'Air et du Climat (AWAC). The work was undertaken by EcoRes and TEC (Tourisme Transports Territoires Environnement Conseil) and assisted by scientists from the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB), the Université de Liège (Ulg) and the Université catholique de Louvain (UCL). The UCL team, from the Institute of Health and Society (IRSS), was in charge of the evaluation of present and future health-related vulnerabilities due to CC.

An initial assessment indicated that future, and sometimes current effects of CC on health in Wallonia may result in direct mortality and morbidity from heat waves, especially for the elderly and other vulnerable populations. Furthermore, there are links between poor health and climate-mitigated environmental factors such as water and air quality, which can result in allergies, respiratory diseases, and food-borne diseases, amongst others.

That being said, much of the future impact and risks of CC on health in Wallonia remains uncertain. For example, the future emergence of numerous serious and less serious vector-borne diseases is difficult to predict.

Research and prioritised allocation of resources should be focused on continued studies and monitoring initiatives that could play an important role in the evaluation of current and potential health impacts of CC.

## Representative Reference

- ▶ Groupement ECORES – TEC – Wallonie, L'adaptation au changement climatique en région wallonne. Rapport final, version du 31 mai 2011.  
([http://airclimat.wallonie.be/spip/IMG/pdf\\_Note\\_d\\_orientation\\_strategique\\_cplte.pdf](http://airclimat.wallonie.be/spip/IMG/pdf_Note_d_orientation_strategique_cplte.pdf)).

## Funding

- ▶ Wallonie : Agence wallonne de l'Air et du Climat (AWAC)

## Partnership

- ▶ Wallonie: Agence wallonne de l'Air et du Climat (AWAC)
- ▶ Other Universities (ULB, ULg)
- ▶ EcoRes ([www.ecores.eu](http://www.ecores.eu))
- ▶ Tourisme Transports Territoires Environnement Conseil (TEC)

## Products and Services

- ▶ Scientific consulting on health issues
- ▶ Statistical analysis
- ▶ Data analysis of epidemiological patterns

## Keywords

Climate change  
Health

## Contact

Séverine HENRARD  
[severine.henrard@uclouvain.be](mailto:severine.henrard@uclouvain.be)  
Tel. 32 (0)2 764 34 68

## Web Sites

<http://www.uclouvain.be/irss.html>  
[http://airclimat.wallonie.be/spip/IMG/pdf\\_Note\\_d\\_orientation\\_strategique\\_cplte.pdf](http://airclimat.wallonie.be/spip/IMG/pdf_Note_d_orientation_strategique_cplte.pdf)