Investing in healthy urban environments – a pathway to sustainable development and equity
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Key environmental challenges, such as air pollution, poor housing and the effects of road traffic, have a substantial impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals living in urban areas of Europe, as well as on community social cohesion and resilience. There is increasing evidence on interventions and policies aimed at reducing the effects of these challenges, with some also looking at return on investment for the wider economy and for society as a whole. Knowledge of which of these interventions show 'real-world' return on investment is critical to inform European policy makers' decisions about which policies to adopt in order to implement the Health 2020 European Strategy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The presentation provides an overview of the findings from a systematic scoping review of evidence for public health and environmental policies and interventions that also have a wider social return on investment (SROI). This includes evidence on interventions with SROI for the most important environmental factors that challenge the health of urban people in Europe. Interventions with SROI are varied in target, approach, scope and impact, with examples including: £2.20 in savings in areas such as healthcare costs, for every £1 spent on preventing homelessness; heat warning systems with savings of US$468 million for a cost of US$210 000; ROI of €6.80 in medical and societal costs for speed cameras in urban settings; and savings in healthcare costs of £2.55 for every £1 invested in 'Green Gyms'.

The data will show how environmental challenges impact on the social gradient of health and potentially widening inequalities. It will also look at which types of interventions and policies for tackling environmental challenges still require further research in order to adequately inform policy makers. Finally, we will review the overarching types of interventions that produce the highest SROI: those that are multi-faceted and multi-sectoral.

Panel:
- Margareta Forsberg, Sweden
- Knut-Johan Rognlien, Norway
- Marcus Grant, UK
- Peter Beznec, Slovenia
- Ann Colles, Belgium
- Handan Türkoğlu, Turkey