

## **Prevent your friends from coughing. Stop fireworks.**

For much too long, discussion on the negative effects of fireworks focussed only on burns, and explosion injuries to the eyesight and hearing. On rare occasions, topics like animals' distress, child labour during production and the lack of safety precautions in firework factories were touched upon.

Today, we all know that the major problem of fireworks lies completely elsewhere:  
**Fireworks are mainly a fine dust problem.**

Fine dust (PM10) can aggravate both existing diseases and also cause new. Therefore, not only a minority of the population is affected, but each and every one of us.

There are of course larger sources of fine dust than that generated by fireworks, but there is not one single that causes such a tremendous load, within the shortest time, as fireworks do. When igniting fireworks, the fine dust limit is exceeded by at least tenfold..

A rise of the PM10-concentration (fine dust) in the air by  $10 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  only (ten micro gram per cubic meter of air) can cause

- symptoms in the respiratory tracts (cough, excessive flem, shortness of breath)
- bronchitis, asthma, arrhythmia
- emergency visits to doctors and emergency rooms at hospitals
- hospitalisation because of pneumonia, asthma attacks, cardiac disorder and other respiratory and cardiovascular diseases
- job absences with economic implications, and in the worst case, fatalities as a result of these diseases.

When igniting fireworks, a mixture of chemical substances are released, very similar to that of an explosion. During the burn-off process, the different materials blend and cause chemical reactions; a multitude of new substances of unknown composition and toxicity accrues.

Fine dust does not stop at borders and does not respect city or country lines: fine dust travels hundreds of kilometers into all directions and remains in the ambient air for a long time – sometimes for days. This fine dust finds its way through each and every crack of our buildings. As long as our houses cannot be 100% sealed, it is not sufficient for those concerned just to stay indoors as a protection shield against this hazard.

Whether fireworks are burned down "correctly" or "incorrectly", by amateurs in their own garden or by skilled and specially trained professionals on public events makes no difference: in the end, the emissions remain the same.

The lights and colours, the sounds and sights of exploding fireworks whilst beautiful fade away in seconds. The pollution of the air remains for a lot longer, and the deposit of heavy metals in soil and waters remains for decades. It can take several weeks for people that are sensitive to fine dust, for example asthmatics, to recover!

Can we accept that the amount of fine dust remains on the increase because of fireworks? Fireworks are after all only for amusement – can this be justified? Environmental protection and international campaigns to reduce fine dust become a farce and untrustworthy when not including the banning of fireworks.

The governments show no sign of action – it is up to you, therefore, to act!

**Join now in solidarity in favour of all those who primarily suffer a health loss by firework emissions, from high short-term fine dust loads respectively,** like unborn babies and newborn, infants, people with respiratory diseases (asthma, COPD Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, RADS Reactive Airways Dysfunction Syndrome, pulmonary emphysema, lung cancer etc.) and cardiovascular diseases, people with multiple chemical sensitivity as well as persons over 65 years of age.

**Give up therefore all intentions of letting off any kind of fireworks!**

[www.stop-fireworks.org](http://www.stop-fireworks.org)  
December 2006