

## PRESS RELEASE

28 August 2018

### Air and noise pollution ever-growing problems

**75 million residents within EU are exposed to road traffic noise, causing an estimated 10,000 cases of premature deaths every year. Air pollution is responsible for about half a million of premature death each year within Europe.**

There are many benefits to living in an urban area, but also drawbacks. Urban residents are often exposed to harmful levels of noise and air pollution resulting in lower life quality, and in the long-term loss of lives. Although air quality in Europe has improved over the past 20 years, the rate of reduction of harmful substances in the air has decreased in recent years.

Approximately 75 million residents of European urban areas are exposed to noise levels exceeding those recommended by WHO. According to the European Environmental Agency, road traffic noise exposure in Europe may result in 43,000 cases of heart disease and 10,000 cases of premature death every year. Air pollution is estimated to cause half a million premature deaths each year in Europe; being one of the major causes to reduced life time. Further urbanisation and climate change may cause increased pollution in coming years.

In the new Sweco Urban Insight report *Wholesome Air, Serene Cities – Reduced Noise and Air Pollution in Urban Areas*, Kenneth Grenaa Lillelund, expert in infrastructure noise and urban planning at Sweco, concludes that solving noise and air pollution problems requires a long-term strategy.

“It is important to identify solutions early in the planning process as a growing population and increased traffic call for new solutions,” he says.

Reducing traffic, particularly heavy vehicles, can decrease both air pollution and noise levels. However, traffic regulation alone is not always sufficient. Designated and protected calm areas have beneficial health effects. Other tools to use are noise insulation for buildings, noise screens, soundproof windows and low-noise asphalt as well as mechanical ventilation in buildings, with controlled air intake and/or combined with effective filters.

#### Background

Urban Insight is based on a series of insight reports written by Sweco experts on various aspects of urban development from a citizen perspective. Read the report [here](#).

*For additional information, please contact:*

Johnny Nylund, Head of Press, +46 (0)73 773 5189, [johnny.nylund@sweco.se](mailto:johnny.nylund@sweco.se)

*Sweco plans and designs tomorrow's communities and cities. Our work produces sustainable buildings, efficient infrastructure and access to electricity and clean water. With 15,000 employees in Europe, we offer our customers the right expertise for every situation. We carry out projects in 70 countries annually throughout the world. Sweco is Europe's leading engineering and architecture consultancy, with sales of approximately SEK 16.9 billion (EUR 1.8 billion). The company is listed on Nasdaq Stockholm.*  
[www.swecogroup.com](http://www.swecogroup.com)