

Italy approves new anti-pollution measures

December 30 2015



A police officer controls cars and scooters during the limited traffic day in central Rome on December 29, 2015

Italy's centre-left government on Wednesday authorised local authorities to cut traffic speed limits by 20kph (12 mph) and office heating by two degrees in response to spikes in deadly air pollution.

The move follows this week's introduction of traffic restrictions in Rome, Milan and other cities after a rise in the concentration of health-threatening fine dust particles in the air as a result of a long spell of

unseasonably dry, warm and windless weather.

After talks with regional governors and city mayors, Environment Minister Gian Luca Galletti announced the immediate release of 12 million euros (\$13 million) to help local councils replace older buses with more environmentally friendly models and to encourage the use of public transport through cut-price daily passes.

In addition, a national Environmental Coordination Committee is to be set up with a brief to develop a strategy for combatting [air pollution](#) and a budget of 405 million euros.

Air pollution contributed to 84,400 premature deaths in Italy in 2012, according to the latest report for the European Environment Agency.

Of these, 59,500 were attributed to particles in the air, the problem which has caused this week's alerts.

In some places, the concentration of particulates has been recorded at over twice the 50 mg per cubic metre maximum recommended by the World Health Organization.

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