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Coronavirus Pandemic Shutdown Effects on Urban Air Quality

Guest Editors:

Dr. Gunnar W. Schade

Prof. Dr. Nicole Mölders

Dr. Daniele Contini

Dr. Gabriele Curci

Dr. Francesca Costabile

Prof. Dr. Prashant Kumar

Dr. Chris G. Tzanis

Deadline for manuscript submissions:
closed (12 November 2021)

Message from the Guest Editors

In a world of over 7 billion people, most of them living in urban areas, the unprecedented shutdown of much of social and economic activity to address the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a reduction of pollutant emissions that is similarly unprecedented and rapid. Satellite data on NO2 columns were circulated quickly, as were photographic documentations of increased visibility conditions due to lower particulate matter concentrations. However, emissions reductions have likely neither been uniform, nor extended to a majority of all air pollutants. Mobile sector emissions of NOx and other pollutants have been the most commonly reduced, making this a unique experiment of observing the urban atmosphere and its chemistry under conditions not expected for another few decades. The continued operation of satellite instruments, and of surface air quality measurement networks in numerous countries and cities around the world during the pandemic provides a rich data set of the ongoing effects of this reduction on air quality, and we encourage scientists to analyze these data in detail, and submit their manuscripts for publication in this Special Issue.

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Editor-in-Chief

Dr. Daniele Contini
Institute of Atmospheric Sciences and Climate (ISAC), National Research Council (CNR), Str. Prv. Lecce-Monteroni km 1.2, 73100 Lecce, Italy

Message from the Editor-in-Chief

Continued developments in instrumentation and modeling have driven atmospheric science to become increasingly more complex with a deeper understanding of concepts, mechanisms, and interactions. This is the field that innovation built and it has led to a better appreciation for the complexity with atmosphere. Human life is intertwined in this complexity as we strive to better understand our atmosphere. Climate change is constantly stretching the limits of our thinking and forcing new ideas and concepts to be played out. Welcome to the Anthropocene!

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Contact Us

Atmosphere Editorial Office
MDPI, Grosspeteranlage 5
4052 Basel, Switzerland

Tel: +41 61 683 77 34
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mdpi.com/journal/atmosphere
atmosphere@mdpi.com
𝕏@Atmosphere_MDPI