



Press release

Countries' emissions rise faster than ambitions

CCPI 2009 report: no country on track to prevent dangerous climate change

Poznan, December 10th, 2008. Rising absolute global emissions and increasing emissions per unit of GDP on a world-wide scale over the last few years give the backdrop to the results of the 4th edition of the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI). The Climate Change Performance Index published annually by Germanwatch and Climate Action Network Europe compares the climate protection performance of 57 industrialised countries and emerging economies. Together they account for more than 90% of global energy related CO₂ emissions.

“Their total emissions have grown more quickly than ever before,” explained Jan Burck, author of the study with Germanwatch.

“Top to bottom, no country does well enough in their emissions reduction efforts to merit a top prize” he continued.

In light of this the authors have skipped the first three places and awarded the best of the bad countries with Sweden in 4th and Germany and France in 5th and 6th place respectively. Ironically, Sweden, Germany and France are under heavy criticism for their policy shifts in the current debate on the EU Energy and Climate Package. In the case of Germany - the latest policy repositioning is not yet reflected. Italy (44) and Poland (45) - the two countries most actively blocking the package - already have a poor rank, but this might become even worse next year depending upon the final decision made this week.

“Chancellor Merkel risks a spectacular fall from grace. Just last year she was hailed for her diplomacy and vision in dealing with the climate challenge but now she seems to fail to stand up to polluting industries. This week will decide what Germany’s legacy will be on climate protection. The Index shows how much they stand to lose” stated Matthias Duwe, Director of Climate Action Network Europe.

At the lower end of the ranking, Saudi Arabia comes in last in 60th, with Canada 59th and the US 58th. Some positive changes in the US on state level move them ahead of Canada. Russia, the US and Canada have done badly due to their emissions trend, emissions level and climate policy. These countries could improve their ranking if they embraced and engaged politically to avoid dangerous climate change.

There are encouraging signals from the incoming President of the US, Barack Obama, that this is exactly what he wants to do, but those new pledges are not yet reflected in this index.

There are also some positive developments - in new emerging economies, which throw into stark relief the backtracking of EU countries. China did impressively well in the partial indicator national policy, though this has not yet substantially influenced their emissions trend. South Africa and Mexico got positive rankings given their international climate policy position and India due to improved national policy and low per capita emissions.

“Now that the EU is getting signs of growing support from around the world in leading on climate protection, it is a shame they are falling behind due to short term interests. Any country that is serious about averting dangerous climate change cannot give up action on climate due to the financial crisis. Instead there is the opportunity to bring the economy back on track by making highly necessary investments in climate protection” said Christoph Bals, Policy Director, Germanwatch.

Further Information including the publication in detail: www.germanwatch.org/ccpi

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Method and background:

The Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI), which is published annually by Germanwatch and CAN-Europe, compares the climate protection performance of 57 industrialised countries and emerging economies, that together account for more than 90 per cent of global CO2 emissions. Oekom research, a renowned rating agency, uses the Index as a basis for financial rankings.

The Index is published for the fourth time this year in Poznan, and it was updated with use of the latest available data. The CCPI allows for a well-founded country comparison since it not only considers absolute emission figures provided by the International Energy Agency (IEA) but also puts significant weight on emissions trend derived from these data (30 per cent). Furthermore, it includes an assessment of climate policy (20 per cent) based on a survey among national climate experts which complements the quantitative part of the index and provides a detailed evaluation of the individual countries' national and international climate policy.

Further country experts are available for comments and questions as follows:

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