



More pressure for climate protection

Germanwatch presents its new international Climate Change Performance Index - Germany ranks fifth, USA, Russia and Canada are far behind

Press release

Berlin, 20 February 2006. The environment and development organisation Germanwatch presents today the results of the new international Climate Change Performance Index. The index compares the climate protection performance of 53 industrialised and emerging countries that, together, are responsible for 90 percent of the world-wide carbon dioxide emissions. Germany ranks fifth of the Index, the USA rank last but one, Saudi Arabia ranks last. The top ranks are covered by Iceland, Latvia and Great Britain.

"The goal of the Climate Change Performance Index is to increase the political and societal pressure on those countries that have neglected their homework on climate change up to now", explains climate expert Jan Burck who developed the index together with executive director Christoph Bals and climate expert Manfred Treber of Germanwatch. The index is the first to provide for a substantiated comparison of countries, for it does not only consider the absolute extend of the climate-damaging emissions of carbon dioxide, but also their trend. The trend is recorded in the sectors of energy, industry, transport and buildings. The countries' climate policies constitute a third factor of the evaluation. The index is based on data of the International Energy Agency (IEA); the climate policy has been evaluated by 30 international climate protection experts.

One-eyed among the blind

"But even the countries that are ranking high can not just sit back and relax", emphasises Burck. "The index is only a comparison of countries. Those who rank high are more like the one-eyed among the blind." A lot would still remain to be done in climate protection.

Also Professor Hartmut Graßl, former director of the Max Planck Institute for Meteorology, emphasises this during the presentation of the index in Berlin: "All countries compared in the index signed the Framework Convention on Climate Change and therefore committed themselves to prevent large-scale, dangerous climate change. In order to achieve this, the emissions have to decline by 80 percent in industrialised countries and by 50 percent on the global level by the middle of this century. The framework for is to be provided by politics. The Climate Change Performance Index creates transparency and thus additional pressure for taking this challenge seriously."

"With the index we will regularly disclose which countries do fulfil their responsibility and which don't", says Germanwatch executive director Christoph Bals.

The country ranking clearly shows that many of the countries that contribute most to climate change have only fulfilled this responsibility inadequately so far. Six of the ten largest producers of carbon dioxide emissions that blow almost 60 per cent of the global emissions in the air, can be found in the last third of the index: Japan ranks 34th, Italy 38th, Canada 45th, the Russian Federation 48th and the USA rank 52nd, thus being the last but one.

Germany: accumulated needs regarding the heating of buildings and generation of electricity

The index also shows that Germany does not rank high in all fields of climate protection. Even though it is the leader in international climate policy and the only industrialised country which was able to slightly lower its transport emissions (rank 4), it ranks only 31st in the

buildings sector, which records the heating needs. While the above-average increase in renewable energies since 1998 leads to a good 10th rank, it only comes down to a 23rd rank in the total generation of electricity.

Germanwatch deduces from these results that the ecological tax in the transport sector and the Renewable Energy Law in climate policy did not miss their targets. In the buildings sector it would still remain to be seen how the recent decisions on benefit measures for building insulation and restoration will affect the future results.

An important factor for the future performance of Germany, however, would particularly be the upcoming decisions on the construction of new power plants. "A trend towards carbon and lignite would thwart Germany's entire climate policy", warns Christoph Bals. Also an expansion of nuclear power could not be a solution for the climate misery, due to the risk potential, costs and extrusion of the renewable energies from the market.

According to Bals' assessment, Germany will only be able to lower its carbon dioxide emissions in the energy sector in a sharp and sustainable way if something happens regarding both supply and demand. "We need investment security for energy efficiency measures. In addition to this, wind, solar and biomass facilities need to be expanded on a large scale."

Calculation method for the index

To calculate the index, as a first step, the carbon dioxide emissions of a country are put into relation to the Gross Domestic Product, primary energy consumption and the population. Thereby it is taken into consideration that, for example, an American on average emits annually twenty times more carbon dioxide than an Indian. As a second step, the emission trends are being calculated, i.e. how did the emissions develop during the period between 1998 and 2003 in the sectors of energy, transport, buildings and industry, thereby taking into consideration that emerging countries like China and India have accumulated needs in industry. The last step concerns the evaluation of a country's national and international climate policy. The USA for example could make up ground of up to ten ranks in the index, if they would abandon their blocking attitude in climate policy.

The example of South Korea illustrates that a high level of carbon dioxide emissions does not come down to a bad evaluation in the index. Even though the country emits less than half of India's amount of carbon dioxide, South Korea ranks 49th, while India ranks 10th. Together with Germany and Great Britain, India is the only large emitter that is comparatively well ahead in the index. China was able to position itself in the middle field, ranking 29th. From the group of developing countries, only 14 emerging countries, including China, India, Brazil and Morocco, can be found in the ranking. All other developing countries do not belong to the 53 world's largest producers of carbon dioxide emissions.

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The country ranking and the 16-pages publication: "The Climate Change Performance Index – A Comparison of the Top 53 CO₂ Emitting Nations" are available on the internet at:

<http://www.germanwatch.org/ccpi.htm>