Air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions: monitoring mechanism and implementation of the Kyoto Protocol

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The Commission presented its report on the progress towards achieving the Kyoto objectives. Under the Kyoto Protocol, the EU-15 has agreed to reduce its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by **8%** by 2008–12 compared to base year levels (1990 in most cases).

No overall objective has been set for emissions from EU-27. Out of the 12 Member States which joined the EU in 2004 and 2007, 10 Member States had GHG emissions above base year levels whereas the remaining 15 Member States had emissions below base year levels.

Cyprus and Malta do not have emission reduction commitments under the Kyoto protocol.

In spring 2007, the European Council adopted the unilateral commitment to reduce EU-27 GHG emissions **by at least 20% by 2020** compared to 1990 levels and by 30%, provided that other developed countries commit themselves to comparable emission reductions, and that economically more advanced developing countries to contribute adequately according to their responsibilities and respective capabilities. As a follow up to its commitment, the European Commission put forward in January 2008 the climate change and energy package including new legislative measures covering the main sectors of the EU economy. The proposed measures include:

a) an improved emissions trading system (ETS),

b) an emission reduction target for industries not covered by the ETS (e.g., agriculture, buildings, transport, waste) - emissions covered by the EU ETS are to be reduced by 21% from 2005 levels by 2020 and those not covered by the EU ETS by 10%, with differentiated targets per Member State according to relative levels of current and projected GDP/capita,

c) legally enforceable targets for increasing the share of renewables in the energy mix, and

d) new rules on carbon capture and storage and on environmental subsidies.

In addition to the package, the European Commission also proposed a comprehensive new strategy to reduce CO2 emissions from new cars and vans sold in the European Union. The new strategy is followed with a revision of the EU fuel quality standards. The fuel quality Directive will not only make the fuels themselves 'cleaner' but will also allow the introduction of vehicles and machinery that pollute less. The Directive is expected to lead to GHG emission reductions of 10% between 2011 and 2020. This would cut emissions by 500 million tonnes of CO2 by 2020.

EU-15: based on the latest available inventory data of 2006, total GHG emissions in the EU-15 were 2.7% below base year emissions without Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF). Since 1990, the EU-15 economy (expressed as GDP) grew by almost 40%. In 2006, EU-15 GHG emissions decreased by 0.8% compared to 2005 while the EU-15 economy grew by 2.8%.

- By 2010, eight Member States out of the EU-15, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom, are currently projected to achieve their targets using existing policies and measures, carbon sinks and the Kyoto mechanisms;
- Four MS (Austria, Finland, France and Luxembourg) are projected to reach their targets when also accounting for additional policies and measures planned;
- On the other hand, there are currently three Member States (Denmark, Italy and Spain) which are projected not to achieve their Kyoto target. However, the gaps between these countries' projections and their respective targets have been significantly reduced since last year, in particular for Spain and Italy.

Projections: the aggregate projections based on existing domestic policies and measures show that GHG emissions of the EU-15 will be **3.6%** below base-year levels by 2010 (4.4% distance from the Kyoto target). The EU-15 is projected to reduce its emissions by 8.0% by 2010, reaching the Kyoto target. Given, however, the existing uncertainties and the EU's ambitious reduction target of 20% by 2020, it is imperative that Member States not only ensure the timely delivery of emissions reductions from existing policies and measures but also that they accelerate the development and full implementation of their planned policies and measures. Assuming that all these measures deliver as expected, the projected overall reduction of GHG emissions could be up to 11.3% compared to base year levels.

Moreover, it is estimated that the National Allocation Plan decisions on allowance allocation for the 2nd trading period under the EU ETS would contribute an estimated 3.3% of the EU-15's Kyoto target which, as yet, has not been fully factored into all Member States projections.

EU-27: in 2006, total EU-27 GHG emissions were **10.8%** below base year levels without emissions and removals by LULUCF and 0.3% lower compared to 2005. The EU-27 economy grew by 3.0% in 2006. Despite the fact that in most of the EU-12 new MS, emissions are projected to increase between 2006 and 2010, nine of them that have a Kyoto target are projected to meet or even over-achieve their Kyoto targets using only existing policies and measures. Slovenia projects that it will only meet its Kyoto target when also accounting for planned additional policies and measures, the use of Kyoto mechanisms and carbon sinks.

Projections: by 2010, total EU-27 GHG emissions are projected to be about **10.1%** below base-year levels. This projection is based on the compilation of Member States own estimates which take into account all existing domestic policies and measures. The projected decline is 13.4% when the effect of the Kyoto mechanisms and carbon sinks are accounted for and it could reach 16.3% if the additional domestic policies and measures currently under discussion were to be implemented on time and deliver as estimated.