

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

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The Commission has presented the fifth progress report for monitoring Community greenhouse gas emissions and the first report under Decision 280/2004/EC concerning a mechanism for monitoring Community greenhouse gas emissions and for implementing the Kyoto Protocol (280/2004/EC).

After accession of the new Member States, this year's report contains for the first time

emissions data from 25 Member States. The report states that in 2002, the greenhouse gas emissions of the 25 Member States (EU-25) decreased slightly compared to 2001. However, compared to the base year³ they were estimated to be 9.0 % lower.

After two consecutive years of increase, the greenhouse gas emissions of the EU-15 Member States have declined slightly compared to 2001. Emissions were 0.5 % lower in 2002 compared to 2001 thus reaching 2.9% below base year emissions. The distance above the linear Kyoto target path was reduced by 0.2 % to 1.9 %. In order to achieve the further reductions necessary for reaching the Kyoto target effective implementation of existing and additional policies and measures is required.

Aggregate projections for the EU-25 with existing domestic policies and measures show that the following Member States expect to reach their Kyoto targets: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Similarly, aggregate EU-15 projections suggest that with additional policies and measures, the projected use of the Kyoto mechanisms will be sufficient to reach the collective EU-15 Kyoto target. However, it should be noted that projections do not yet include some important measures that will soon start to deliver, like for instance the EU Emissions Trading Scheme which will take effect on 1 January 2005. Similarly, projections do not yet include emissions and removals from land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF).

Still, performance among Member States remains variable. 11 Member States are on track to achieve their emissions reduction commitments. Of these, France, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom are the EU-15 Member States on track to achieve their commitments under the burden sharing agreement (Council Decision 2002/358/EC). However, 12 Member States are still above their target paths: Ireland, Portugal and Spain by more than 20 %. For five Member States, the gap has even widened, for three (Finland, Portugal and Spain) by more than 1 % compared to 2001.

As regards the emissions of the main economic sectors, the report shows the changes since 1990 for the EU-15. When looking at the country-by-country statistics, the most striking result is that contrary to the general trend transport emissions in the United Kingdom and Germany have been declining - indeed for the third consecutive year in Germany. This would seem to reflect the combined effects of improved fuel efficiency, higher fuel prices and broader transport policies.