

## Europe 'can reach Kyoto target'

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**The 15 states which were members of the European Union before 2004 can reach their promised greenhouse gas target, the European Environment Agency says.**

It says the EU should manage emission cuts slightly larger than those which the Kyoto Protocol requires it to make.

This depends on states living up to all their promises, and on some countries making bigger cuts than they agreed.

Even so, the EEA says, some individual countries will still overshoot their Kyoto targets, some by a large amount.

### **Stiff requirement**

It says the EU will cut its greenhouse gas emissions by slightly more than required under the Kyoto Protocol, the global climate change treaty, on one condition.

This is that member states implement all the policies, measures and third-country projects they are planning, and that several cut emissions by more than they have to.

The EEA's latest projections show the 15 pre-2004 EU members (the EU-15) should cut their total emissions to 7.7% below 1990 levels by 2010.

The projections are on the basis of existing domestic policies and measures already being implemented, and additional policies and measures currently planned.

### **Country targets slipping**

The agency says plans by six EU-15 states to use credits from emissions-saving projects in third countries through the Kyoto Protocol's "flexible mechanisms" would contribute a further reduction of around 1.1%, taking the total to 8.8%.

The flexible mechanisms allow the industrialised countries required by Kyoto to cut their emissions to offset against their totals the savings they help developing countries to make.

This extra reduction is more than the 8% decrease from 1990 levels that the EU-15 are committed to achieving by 2008-2012 under the protocol.

But each EU-15 country also has an agreed, legally binding target for limiting or cutting its own emissions to ensure the overall 8% reduction is met.

The EEA's projections show that at present Denmark, Italy, Portugal and Spain are on course for above-target emissions, some by a wide margin, even with use of the Kyoto mechanisms and additional measures planned.

Portugal is projected to be emitting 53.1% more by 2010 than it did in 1990, and Spain 48.3% more. Greece (38.6%) and Ireland (29.4%) are not far behind.

Germany is in danger of slightly exceeding its emission limit on the basis of existing policies and measures.

## **Failure possible**

The agency says: "This means the EU-15 may reach its 8% reduction target only if the projected failure of these member states to respect their targets is compensated by others making bigger emission cuts than required.

"This 'over-delivery' cannot be taken for granted. Without it, the EU-15 would achieve a total reduction, including use of the Kyoto mechanisms, of only 6.5%."

It says the EU's emissions trading scheme, starting on 1 January 2005, should help the bloc to achieve greater reductions.

Plans by nine member states to store carbon in deep underground or undersea caverns could make further reductions possible.

By 2002, the latest year for which data are available, the EU-15 had cut their overall emissions of the six gases specified in the protocol by just 2.9% below 1990 levels.

The latest projections are published in the EEA report Greenhouse Gas Emission Trends And Projections In Europe 2004.

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