

E-news update May 8 2006

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EU

- 1.1. EC defends role in policing NAPs

27 April 2006

The European Commission defended its role in setting the cap on emissions as the first wave of reported carbon dioxide emissions in 2005 showed them to be lower in some cases than the cap.

A spokesperson at the EC said that the allocation process was not faulty, although she conceded that it was based on imperfect data.

In negotiating the caps with the individual member states, the EC took a tough line, she suggested.

"We try to be as close to reality as possible," she said.

"We rely on data given by governments and it is cross-checked with the emissions data that they submit to the UN," she said.

The emergence of emissions reports from France, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Spain all suggested that actual emissions in 2005 were far lower than market expectations. In the case of the Czech Republic, France and the Netherlands, actual emissions came in below the cap that the governments had set. As the market had expected the contrary, the price of CO2 began its tumble from €29 as the market closed on Monday to €16 on Thursday afternoon.

"In the case of France, the emissions projections for energy growth were too high and we said so," the spokesperson said. Paris had to come back with downwardly revised projections. "The same happened with the Czech Republic," she said.

Nevertheless, a pattern is beginning to emerge of actual emissions being below what were supposed to be stringent caps. The danger is that if the pattern is repeated across the EU, the market price for CO2 allowances could fall to zero.

The European Commission called the emissions trading scheme "one of our flagship measures" for the EU to meet its Kyoto Protocol commitments in a vote of confidence for the scheme.

"We know the system is working," she said, adding that the system had at least extracted reliable data on carbon dioxide emissions across the EU.

Second phase NAPs

While the national allocation plans for the first phase of the scheme were based at least in part on emissions projections, the results for 2005 would provide a benchmark for the second phase plans. The Commission is due to publish the full emissions reports for the whole EU on 15 May.

The European Commission does not comment on market prices, she said, but it had "taken note" of the market price.

"As we move into the second phase we are dealing with actual emissions data from 2005 and that of course will inform the second phase (allocation plans)", she said.

"This shows the EU emissions trading directive is doing a very important job. We have emissions data for the first time and we hope the market will respond positively" to the reliable information that the directive was generating, she said.

She brushed aside any suggestion that the process by which actual emissions are verified left too much room for emitters to manipulate the results. "We have confidence in and rely on certified verifiers," she said.

ENERGY AND EMISSIONS

2.1. CO2 Price Crash Signals Tougher EU Pollution Goals

1 May 2006, Reuters

A price crash which last week wiped nearly 40 billion euros (US\$50.19 billion) off the value of Europe's greenhouse gas trading scheme will not endanger the market but is likely to make Brussels toughen pollution targets.

Carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions prices halved this week after several countries said they had undershot last year's pollution quotas, dampening demand for carbon credits and diluting the incentive to clean up.

The European Commission responded saying a second round of quotas, from 2008, should take into account these latest figures, signalling the need for stricter emissions limits.

Businesses included in the scheme -- Europe's main tool for meeting Kyoto Protocol targets -- had feared it would push up costs as a result of power price rises, concerns partly eased by this week's carbon price collapse.

"This (price drop) does potentially strengthen the political hand of the European Commission in relation to phase two National Allocation Plans," said Anthony Hobley, general counsel to the London-based Climate Change Capital fund, which has over US\$100 million invested in carbon markets.

Already Britain has said it could increase the quotas in the second round, while Germany has said it had planned only for a tiny cut, of 1.6 percent.

But green groups saw the price fall as evidence that countries had deliberately inflated the pollution projections, to avoid potentially costly reduction.

France, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic have come in under their target.

"We've said all along that the allocations were too lax in the first round of national allocation plans, and you no longer need to take our word for it. The market has reflected that." said Greenpeace climate policy adviser Steve Sawyer.

"The allocations need to be ratcheted down for these companies in the next round."

Collapse: The ground-breaking EU market has made a commodity of carbon dioxide -- widely blamed for climate change -- by linking the greenhouse gas to tradeable carbon credits, making pollution a financial burden to Europe's most energy-hungry businesses.

Carbon credit prices could now plummet to as low as one or two euros, from a 31-euro high last week, traders say, depending on the full EU emissions picture that emerges in the next two weeks.

A slump would persist until 2008, when the new credits are handed out, they say.

"The key unknown is whether the price signal has in fact stimulated some emissions abatement in the industry sectors or whether the lower emissions are the result of gaming the allocation process," said Abyd Karmali, UK managing director of ICF Consulting.

"Anything can happen," one trader, who declined to be named, said on Friday when referring to forthcoming data releases from countries including Britain and Germany. "(If the price collapsed) that would persist in principle in phase 1."

Participants and politicians cautioned against a panic reaction to this week's crash, citing the novelty of the scheme.

"We have seen the market inflated and we are now seeing a settling back," said Barbara Helfferich, spokeswoman for Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas, on Friday.

"We need to realise this is a very young market and it is the first compliance phase. We are not surprised there are fluctuations as a market such as this one has to settle," she said.

ICF's Karmali added: "The first phase of the EU scheme was always likely to be the most volatile as price discovery takes a while to occur in such markets."

Story by Gerard Wynn and Stuart Penson

2.2. Spanish 2005 emissions 10.9 MtCO₂ above cap

26 April 2006

The companies covered by the Spanish national allocation plan faced a shortfall of 10.9 million allowances in 2005, according to the environment ministry.

The data was released in an official press release, which puts the power generation sector short by 15.3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide in 2005.

Industrial sectors and "other" combustion were long by 2.7 MtCO₂ and 1.8 MtCO₂ respectively.

According to Point Carbon data, the existing installations covered by the national allocation plan were allocated 172 million allowances for 2005, putting the emissions 6.3 per cent above the allocation.

The data is based on verified emissions reports that were submitted to the government - 99.8 of installations had done so, the government said.

Coal-fired generators emitted a net 13.4 MtCO₂ over their allocations, while combined-cycle gas-fired plants came in under their cap by 3.3 MtCO₂. Other fossil fuel generators emitted 4.4 MtCO₂ over their caps.

The ministry said that hydroelectric power generation was down 40 per cent in 2005 on the previous year, while nuclear power output was also down adding another 3.9 MtCO₂ to the power sector's results.

The data was released at the launch of a roundtable on climate change policy which is launched as the national allocation plan for the second phase of the scheme is negotiated.

2.3. French 2005 CO₂ emissions come in 11.6 per cent under allocation

26 April 2006

The installations covered by the French national allocation plan that have submitted verified reports so far emitted 11.6 per cent less than allowed in 2005, according to the French environment ministry.

The total allocation in the French national allocation plan for 2005 was 156 million allowances, the official said. Point Carbon understands that 150.8 million allowances were earmarked for existing installations, implying that French companies had a surplus of 18 million allowances in 2005.

Some 1,030 installations in the French NAP had submitted their verified reports on time, out of a total 1,085. An official in the French ministry said that, since then, other installations may have submitted their reports, but the percentage figure was unlikely to change to any great extent. "The percentage of verified emissions is something like 99 per cent," the official said.

In the case of those installations that had not verified their emissions on time, the government would begin to estimate their emissions from the start of May.

2.4. Dutch companies confirmed long in 2005

25 April 2006

Dutch companies covered by the EU ETS emitted 80.4 million tonnes of CO₂ in 2005, while they were allocated allowances for 86.5 million tonnes, the Dutch Emissions Trading Authority confirmed today.

Marc Allesie of the emissions trading authority told a seminar in The Hague today that companies that were long in 2005 had up to 20 per cent excess allowances. He emphasised, however, that some Dutch companies were short as well, and that those who emitted less than they had received allowances for primarily did so because of the early action reward implemented in the Phase 1 NAP.

The 6.1 mt length is opposed to the Dutch government's 3 per cent reduction factor in the first phase national allocation plan, which should have made for a shortfall of 2.7 million tonnes.

2.5. Czech ETS companies emit 15 per cent less than allocated in 2005

25 April 2006

Czech companies covered by the EU emissions trading scheme emitted 83 million tonnes of CO₂ in 2005, 15 per cent less than their allocation of emissions allowances, according to Deputy Minister of Environment Tomas Novotny.

Novotny announced the figure in a message distributed to Czech media. The existing installations covered by the National Allocation Plan were allocated allowances to cover 97.1 million tonnes of CO₂. The 15-per-cent long position is based on preliminary reports, but an official at the ministry told Point Carbon that "I don't think there will be a problem using that number."

This means that Czech companies were able to sell approximately 14 million allowances into the market for the first year of the emissions trading scheme. Novotny urged Czech companies to invest the EU ETS-related income in improving energy efficiency and develop clean technology.

The Czech Republic is currently hammering out its national allocation plan for the second phase of the EU ETS, but the 2005 data is unlikely to have an affect on the outcome.

"In general we aim to optimise the number of allowances to allocate to the extent that the European Commission can accept. It makes no economic sense to put out a more stringent plan than the EC will accept, and the Czech Republic is below its Kyoto target," Tomas Chmelik at the ministry told Point Carbon.

The Commission hinted in its allocation process guidance published in December that member states on track to comply with its Kyoto target can keep their Phase 1 caps, while those lagging would be expected to make cuts.

The Czech Republic is thus unlikely to reduce the 97.1 million tonnes/year for existing installations in the 2008-2012 period. There is, however, a possibility that it might call for an increase.

"We have to do some more analysis work before we know, but if it turns out we have to apply for an increased cap, then we will do so," Chmelik said.

The Czech Republic hopes to submit its NAP to the European Commission by the 30 June deadline, but the upcoming election might delay the process.

2.6. World's Biggest Solar Farm Planned for New Mexico

Two start-up companies and New Mexico plan a US\$1.6 billion solar power farm that would be 30 times the size of the world's biggest one now, with enough power for 240,000 homes.

They also plan a factory to make photovoltaic panels for the farm, near the Mexican border in New Mexico, developers said on Wednesday.

Once the panels are spread out over 3,200 acres near Deming, New Mexico, they will be able to generate about 300 megawatts of electricity while the sun shines, said lead developer Ed Balch of New Solar Ventures, a private company.

New Solar Ventures and another start-up company, Solar Torx, both based in Phoenix, will operate the joint venture.

Balch said New Solar Ventures is the technological arm and Solar Torx runs the financial -- fund-raising -- end.

"It depends on the greenbacks," Balch said when asked if the US\$1.6 billion project will get off the ground. The factory to build the panels will cost about US\$650 million and the farm of solar panels will cost about US\$950 million, Balch said. He would not disclose names of any investors.

The New Mexico State Land Office on Tuesday agreed to lease the first 640 acres in the first of several phases of leases. The total could climb to 3,200 acres, but one state official said that much expansion will be sticky as federal as well as state land is involved.

"If this is built, it would be the biggest solar farm in the United States by an order of 60," said Noah Kaye, spokesman for the Washington-based Solar Energy Industries Association.

The biggest solar farm using photovoltaic panels like the ones to be used in the proposed farm near Deming, New Mexico is in Springerville, Arizona and can make 5 megawatts of electricity, Kaye said.

The biggest one in the world is in Bavaria in Germany, and can produce 10 megawatts.

A megawatt can power about 800 homes.

Balch and a half dozen others are all the staff that New Solar Ventures has now, but that will expand to between 300 and 400, most working in the factory that will make the photovoltaic panels. He said he has about 70 advising engineers helping on the project from around the United States.

It could take up to five years to have the full 300 megawatts on line and connected to the grid, Balch said. But the farm could connect to grid sooner. It will take about 18 months to build the factory and construction on the solar farm is to start in about two years Balch said.

The panels will be 10-feet by 5-feet and will stand on pedestals about six to eight feet tall, Balch said.

Story by Bernie Woodall

2.7. CO2 Market on Brink as Price Continues to Slide

28 April 2006, Planet Ark

European carbon prices continued a collapse on Thursday that has wiped up to 50 percent off the value of carbon credits over the past week, hitting power prices and rattling utilities' share prices.

Traders said the carbon slide could spell the end for the first phase of the European Union's pioneering carbon trading market from 2005 to 2007.

Carbon credits for December 2006 delivery fell as low as 14 euros in early Thursday trading on the European Climate Exchange -- down more than 50 percent from a high of 31 euros last week.

Prices had recovered to some 17 euros at 1000 GMT, in a highly volatile market.

The EU scheme sets a cap on total emissions by smokestack industries of heat-trapping carbon dioxide (CO2) and requires companies to have a carbon credit for every tonne of emissions.

If emissions are below the cap, companies can sell their surplus carbon credits, dampening demand, and 2005 emissions published by states including Spain and France this week has taken the floor from under the market.

"From a market perspective it's terrible news," said James Emanuel, Head of Carbon Trading at brokers CO2e.com.

"If there's a (net carbon credit) surplus there's no incentive to reduce emissions and the (carbon) price collapses. It won't go to 0, it would effectively go down to the administrative cost of the scheme... it could be 1 euro, who knows?"

Carbon credits impact power prices by adding to the cost of power generation, and the carbon slide hit shares of utilities, which are also Europe's biggest polluters, and therefore the most exposed to the European carbon trading scheme.

"It's because of falling CO2 prices. They have also caused power prices to decline," said Herbert Wertz, fund manager at Generali Asset Management.

British Energy was down 1.8 percent, International Power 1.2 percent, RWE 2 percent, EON 2.1 percent and EDF 3.1 percent.

Morgan Stanley said on Thursday the utility stocks expected to come under most pressure from the carbon price collapse are nuclear power firms British Energy and Electricite de France, which have no exposure to carbon but high exposure to falling power prices.

Czech power giant CEZ, which has a surplus of CO2 credits and will see this asset drop in value, also stands to lose from the carbon sell-off.

Story by Gerard Wynn

2.8. World Bank Misses Double Dividend on Poverty and Climate Change

23 April 2006, FoE International * International Rivers Network press release

According to International Rivers Network and Friends of the Earth International, the investment framework on energy and development approved by the World Bank's Development Committee today fails to address climate change and reduce poverty.

Aviva Imhof, campaigns director of International Rivers Network, comments:

"The Development Committee today approved a business-as-usual plan that will fail the poor and fail the climate. Governments and the World Bank should massively increase their funding for energy efficiency and renewable technologies like wind, solar, efficient biomass and mini hydro. Such technologies bring a double dividend of combating climate change and reducing poverty."

Janneke Bruil, IFI program coordinator of Friends of the Earth International, says:

"The investment framework that the Development Committee approved today lets Northern governments off the hook. Rather than promoting more destructive large dams, coal, oil and nuclear power projects in the global South, Northern governments should clean up their own act and reduce emissions at home. We don't see how the poor or the global climate will truly benefit from the World Bank's new energy plans."

Background:

The Development Committee today discussed the World Bank report, Clean Energy and Development: Towards an Investment Framework. The report contains the following fundamental flaws:

The World Bank approach will not achieve poverty reduction: Nearly 1.6 billion people do not have access to electricity. Most of them live in rural areas, and many of them are not connected to electric grids. An approach that concentrates on centralized, grid-based power plants will not reach these people. Decentralized, renewable sources of energy such as wind, mini-hydro, solar photovoltaics and biogas are often the least-cost solutions for off-grid areas.

The World Bank's proposed Investment Framework gives short shrift to such solutions. It focuses on large-scale projects, including coal, large dams and nuclear power. The World Bank report admits that "renewable energy technologies – wind, mini-hydro, and biomass-electric – are the least-cost option for off-grid electrification applications" (p. 91), but does not propose any additional funding for such options.

The World Bank approach does not appropriately address climate change:

Combating climate change is primarily the responsibility of the North. Per capita, poor countries use only 5% of the modern energy services consumed by the industrialized countries. Meeting the basic human needs for electricity of all the 1.6 billion people who presently have no access to modern energy would only increase global carbon emissions by 2%.

Effectively combating climate change primarily requires action in the North, including much deeper emissions reductions under the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. The World Bank claims that its paper "takes a global perspective and is not Bank-centric" (p. 1). Yet its recommendations fail to address the responsibility of the North, and do not call for any commitments under the Kyoto Protocol post-2012. In addition, the framework does not address the need to phase out subsidies for export-oriented oil, coal and gas projects.

Large dams – no solution to the world's climate problems:

In addition to promotion of coal and nuclear power, the Bank's paper proposes large dams as a central pillar of its new Investment Framework, particularly for Brazil, India, and Sub-Saharan Africa. It ignores the following lessons of hydropower development:

Most large dams have massive social and environmental impacts, but hardly benefit the poor in off-grid areas.

Many large reservoirs cause significant greenhouse gas emissions. The World Bank's Nam Theun 2 Project has the potential to release roughly the same amount of greenhouse gases as a combined cycle natural gas project generating the same amount of electricity.

Since global warming is worsening droughts, increasing dependency on large hydro increases the risk of power cuts and the vulnerability of poor countries' economies to climate change.

CLIMATE IMPACTS

3.1. Climate change causes Tibet's glaciers to melt faster

2 May 2006, From Monsters and Critics.com, By DPA

Global warming is causing Tibet's glaciers to melt faster than expected at a rate of 7 per cent annually, triggering droughts, expanding desertification and increasing sandstorms in China, Xinhua news agency reported Tuesday.

The study of meteorological data over four decades based on data from 681 Chinese weather stations prompted Professor Dong Guangrong and experts at the Beijing Academy of Sciences to warn that climate change would have 'serious' implications, the report said.

West China's Qinhai-Tibet plateau or the 'roof of the world,' which accounts for 47 per cent of China's total glacier coverage, is shrinking at 7 per cent annually, Dong said.

Global warming has caused deserts on the Qinghai-Tibet plateau to expand, Han Yongxiang of the National Meteorological Bureau Global said, according to the report.

Average temperatures in Tibet have risen 0.9 centigrade since the 1980s precipitating the melting of the glacier and tundra on the plateau, according to statistics from the Tibet weather bureau.

So far this year, north China has met with 13 sandstorms. In mid April, one such storm covered Beijing with an estimated 330,000 tons of sand. More than 10 million people mainly in north China have been enduring a severe drought and lack of drinking water since mid April.

Tibet has lost 3.4 billion yuan (around 425 million dollars) to 9.5 billion yuan (around 1.19 billion dollars) because of desertification, statistics by the Tibet regional government showed.

3.2. Global Warming Behind Record 2005 Storms – Experts

26 April 2006, Planet Ark

The record Atlantic hurricane season last year can be attributed to global warming, several top experts, including a leading US government storm researcher, said on Monday.

"The hurricanes we are seeing are indeed a direct result of climate change and it's no longer something we'll see in the future, it's happening now," said Greg Holland, a division director at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado.

Holland told a packed hall at the American Meteorological Society's 27th Conference on Hurricanes and Tropical Meteorology that the wind and warmer water conditions that fuel storms that form in the Caribbean are "increasingly due to greenhouse gases. There seems to be no other conclusion you can logically draw."

His conclusion will be debated throughout the week-long conference, as other researchers present opposing papers that say changing wind and temperature conditions in the tropics are due to natural events, not the accumulation of carbon dioxide emissions clouding the Earth.

Many of the experts gathered in the coastal city of Monterey, California, are federal employees. The Bush administration contends global warming is an unproven theory.

While many of the conference's 500 scientists seem to agree that a warming trend in the tropics is causing more and stronger hurricanes than usual, not all agree that global warming is to blame.

Some, like William Gray, a veteran hurricane researcher at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado, attributed the warming to natural cycles. Gray said he believes salinity buildups and movements with ocean currents cause warming and cooling cycles. He predicted the Caribbean water will continue to warm for another five to 10 years, then start cooling.

More warming to come

Whatever the cause, computer projections indicate the warming to date -- about one degree Fahrenheit (half a degree Celsius) in tropical water -- is "the tip of the iceberg" and the water will warm three to four times as much in the next century, said Thomas Knutson, explaining projections from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory in Princeton, New Jersey.

Adam Lea, a postdoctoral student at Britain's University College London in Dorking, Surrey, presented research based on British, German, Russian and Canadian studies that concludes half of the increased hurricane activity in the tropics could be attributed to global warming.

Holland, director of the Mesoscale and Microscale Meteorology Division of the federal research center, said tropical storm anomalies in the 1940s and 1950s can be explained by natural variability.

But he said carbon dioxide started changing traceable patterns in the 1970s and by the early 1990s, the atmospheric results were affecting the storm numbers and intensities.

"What we're seeing right now in global climate temperature is a signature of climate change," said Holland, a native of Australia. "The large bulk of the scientific community say what we are seeing now is linked directly to greenhouse gases."

Hurricane Katrina, which tore onto the Louisiana and Mississippi coasts on Aug. 29, was the deadliest Atlantic hurricane in 77 years and the costliest ever, with property damages estimated at US\$75 billion.

This year, the weather service's Tropical Prediction Center expects more hurricanes than usual, but not as many as last year's record 14.

Story by Thom Akeman

CONFERENCES

4.1. Training for CLIMATE COMPASS Promoters

29 May - 2 June & 3 July - 7 July 2006, Frankfurt, Germany.

CLIMATE COMPASS is a new methodology developed by the Climate Alliance and funded by the European Commission, to support cities and municipalities to set up an action programme for climate protection. CLIMATE COMPASS Promoters assist local authorities in preparing such a programme.

Please find more info below and at www.climate-compass.net.

Register NOW for the CLIMATE COMPASS Training for Promoters!

The Training for Promoters is free of charge. For a limited number of participants we can offer to cover accommodation costs upon request.

For registration and questions please contact the project manager Ms Ulrike Janssen, phone +49-69-71 71 39-21, u.janssen@climatealliance.org.

PUBLICATIONS

5.1. Energy Sustainability Reports

Just released - HELIO International's 3rd series of energy sustainability reports.

Using a set of 8 indicators each report assesses a country's progress towards or away from sustainability. The report series covers 19 countries and the European Union. The accompanying global report, *The Ultimate Challenge: Energy for Global Ecocodevelopment* presents the global trends that emerge from the country analyses.

The following countries are reported on: Bangladesh - Benin - Brazil - Cameroon - China - Democratic Republic of Congo - France - Haiti - India - Iran - Mali - Mexico - New Zealand - Russia - South Africa - Tanzania (soon to be on-line) - Tunisia - USA. European Union is also included.

The reports can be downloaded from the HELIO website at: <http://www.helio-international.org/reports/2006.cfm>.

Numerous reports are available in English and French, including the Global Report.

For more information please contact helio@helio-international.org.

ANNOUNCEMENT

6.1. Invitation for comments – JI project in New Zealand

DNV Certification is currently making a determination of the Burwood Landfill Gas to Queen Elizabeth II Park Project, Christchurch, New Zealand. The project, proposed as Joint Implementation (JI) project is hosted by New Zealand, is a waste handling and disposal and energy sector project. The project activity involves the installation of equipment able to capture, treat and transport methane gas collected from a landfill to a nearby swimming pool facility. Here the methane gas will substitute LPG, which is used for heating the swimming pool and sports facility and hence reducing the GHG emissions.

We herewith invite comments from Parties, stakeholders and observers in accordance with the JI rules and modalities. Comments may be provided during a period of 30 days until 5th Jun. 2006 on the DNV Climate Change webpage <http://www.dnv.com/certification/climatechange/Projects/ProjectDetails.asp?ProjectId=541>.

After that the project is closed for comments, but the project documentation is still available for review.

6.2. Internship at Friends of the Earth Europe: Climate Change campaign 2006-2007

Friends of the Earth Europe is looking for an intern/stagiaire to assist in our climate & energy campaign between June 2006 to March 2007.

The intern/stagiaire will work in the office of Friends of the Earth in Brussels, organise and run a pan-European "summer campaign" focussed on street actions involving citizens all across Europe, ahead of the next UN climate negotiations.

Tasks include the action logistics, the preparation of outreach material and an exhibition, but also an action tour to various European countries between July and September 2006, for which the intern must be fully available. After this "summer campaign" the intern will work on action and policy briefings for our member groups and assist in policy and media work on EU climate and energy policy developments.

The intern/stagiaire would: have an interest in influencing environmental policy through action oriented campaigning and media work; have analytical and writing skills; have excellent organisational skills; be fluent in English; have a driving license; be ready to travel especially between mid-July and mid-September; love unexpected situations.

The internship ideally starts in June 2006 and lasts for 9-10 months. This is a paid internship, i.e. we can contribute to costs of living in Brussels of about 800 EUR per month for the first six months and a junior contract for the remaining months.

