

EU carbon emissions 'plummeted in 2009'

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Steam rises from the cooling towers at the Ferrybridge power station near Leeds, in the north of England. Greenhouse-gas emissions by the 27 members of the European Union fell by 7.1 percent in 2009 over 2008, the European Environment Agency says.

Greenhouse-gas emissions by the 27 members of the European Union fell by 7.1 percent in 2009 over 2008, driven by economic recession but also a switch to renewable energy, the European Environment Agency (EAA) said on Tuesday.

Emissions of the 15 countries that signed up to the [Kyoto Protocol](#) before EU enlargement fell by 6.9 percent in 2009 over the previous year, it said in a press release.

Their target under Kyoto is an overall reduction of eight percent for the 2008-2012 period compared with the benchmark year of 1990.

By the end of 2009, their emissions were 12.7 percent below those of 1990.

For the EU 27 -- which includes former Soviet-bloc countries that shuttered energy-inefficient plants after the transition to market economics -- the fall over 1990 is 17.4 percent, the equivalent of 974 million tonnes of carbon dioxide.

The Copenhagen-based EAA said the 2009 recession "affected all economic sectors" in the EU 27, leading to a slump in particular in demand for coal, the dirtiest of the main fossil fuels.

By sector, the biggest emissions reductions occurred in manufacturing industries, construction and electricity and heat supply.

At the same time, consumption of renewables rose by 5.8 percent.

"Although much of the decrease in [greenhouse gases](#) is due to the recession, we are starting to see the results of many EU and member states' proactive policies in renewable energy," the EAA's executive director, Jacqueline McGlade, said.

As for the EU's 2010 emissions, data from Europe's [Emissions Trading System \(ETS\)](#), a carbon market covering more than 12,000 [power plants](#) and factories, point to a three percent increase over last year compared to 2009.

"This rebound in emissions partly reflects the economic recovery," the EAA said, contending however that the figure "is still far below pre-recession levels."

On Monday, the [International Energy Agency \(IEA\)](#) said carbon dioxide emitted by energy use hit a record high in 2010, badly affecting hopes of

limiting global warming to two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit).

After dipping in 2009, emissions from energy climbed to a record 30.6 gigatonnes (Gt), a five-percent jump from the previous record year in 2008, the agency said.

Non-OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries accounted for 60 percent of the 2010 energy emissions total and for 75 percent of the year-on-year increase, the IEA said.

World climate talks, resuming in Bonn next Monday, remain deadlocked on how to achieve the 2.0 C (3.6 F) target and on the future of the Kyoto Protocol, the cornerstone of the UN's Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

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