

EU's total responsibility for global emissions has increased

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"The Kyoto Protocol has not met the expectations. Currently, global emissions are at a more than 50% higher level than during the Protocol's reference year, 1990. In the light of current trends and the annual increase in emissions being around 2.5% on average, global emissions have been assumed to double by 2030. Moreover, in 2030 the EU's share of global emissions will be around 4 %, whereas now it is around 9 %," says Eija-Riitta Korhola, Finnish MEP during the years 1999–2014. Her doctoral thesis was presented in the University of Helsinki on 15 November.

According to Eija-Riitta Korhola, the EU has emphasised that it has shown leadership with its [climate](#) commitments and it is, indeed, on the right path with regard to the agreed reduction targets.

"The image of the EU's success is altered, however, if we take into account not only production- but also consumption-based emissions; that is, increased import from outside the EU. When analysing international trade volumes, we have to conclude that the EU's total responsibility for [global emissions](#) has increased. The imported emissions outweigh the achievements in domestic reductions. A fundamental flaw in climate politics is that the measure of success lies in production, not consumption. In practice, we have outsourced our emissions," she says.

The EU has persistently emphasised that sooner or later the other emitters will follow EU's example.

"There is no evidence for this expectation: the big emitters have long since chosen a different strategy as they consider EU strategy to be expensive and inefficient. The major emitters favour decarbonising the economy and technological investments instead of emission ceilings."

According to Korhola, if the EU wishes to attain a climate agreement in Paris, it should approach others and stop waiting for others to jump onto the Kyoto bandwagon - otherwise the biggest obstacle for the global agreement is the EU itself.

"Instead of emission ceilings the climate agreement could be based on the "emission floor", scheme which favours clean production without setting a limit for the best performing, least emitting production," Korhola says.

More information: Korhola, Eija-Riitta Anneli. "Climate Change as a Political Process: The Rise and Fall of the Kyoto Protocol." Doctoral dissertation. University of Helsinki, Faculty of Biological and Environmental Sciences. urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-51-0234-8

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