As Europe talks tough on climate, data show emissions rose

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In this July 24, 2016 file photo drivers are stuck in a traffic jam on highway A 1 near to Bad Oldesloe in Germany. A new report shows that greenhouse gas emissions in the European Union rose in 2015, the first increase since 2010. The European Environment Agency says emissions grew by 0.5 percent compared with 2014, mainly due to increase from transportation and a colder winter. The report released Thursday, June 1, 2017 comes as the EU is trying to emphasize its commitment to combating climate change. (Markus Scholz/dpa via AP,file)

A new report showed greenhouse gas emissions in the European Union

rose in 2015, the first increase since 2010, even as European officials on Thursday urged the United States to remain part of a global climate pact.

Emissions grew by 0.5 percent compared with 2014, mainly due to increases from transportation and a colder winter, the European Environment Agency said.

Greenhouse gases are a major contributor to man-made climate change and most countries around the world have pledged to reduce emissions under the 2015 Paris Agreement.

The report was released as the EU is trying to emphasize its commitment to combating global warming, with senior European officials appealing to President Donald Trump not to quit the Paris accord. Trump was scheduled to announce his decision Thursday afternoon in Washington.

"Higher emissions were caused mainly by increasing road transport, both passenger and freight, and slightly colder winter conditions in Europe, compared to 2014, leading to higher demand for heating," the European Environment Agency said.

It noted that improvements in fuel efficiency failed to offset the growth in traffic.

"Road transport emissions—about 20 percent of total EU greenhouse gas emissions—increased for the second year in a row in 2015, by 1.6 percent," the agency said.

It noted, however, that the EU has achieved a long-term reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 to 2015 of 22.1 percent despite economic growth of 50 percent.

This decoupling of economic growth from emissions during the 25-year

period occurred due to a mix of green policies, such as encouraging the use of renewable energy and improving fuel efficiency, and changes in European economies that have seen a shift away from heavily polluting industries toward service jobs.

Milder winters have also contributed to a decline in heating fuel use, the agency said.