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Environment Council

EU ministers for environment want to buy thei way out of domestic emission reductions

The demand for more flexibility is linked to concerns in the Member States about the cost of implementing the package of climate and energy laws proposed by the European commission on 23 January.

Several countries like the UK, Spain and Austria asked for a greater use of carbon credits from Kyoto's CDM and JI flexible mechanisms to help meeting their reduction targets. However, the commission proposes to limit countries' use of Kyoto credits to 3% of their 2005 emission levels which is actually already a significant part.

Discussions on the baseline year for the emissions cap in the ETS third phase (2013 to 2020) were raised by the new member states which are opposed to 2005 being used as this beaseline year. They would prefer the year 1990.

Another point of the debate was focused on the energy-intensive industries since those companies pretend that strong reduction measures in their sector would put them at a competitive disadvantage and trigger "carbon-leakage", i.e. relocation of their factories outside the EU. However, evidence shows that in sectors like cement or steel there's only a very low level of imports into the EU.

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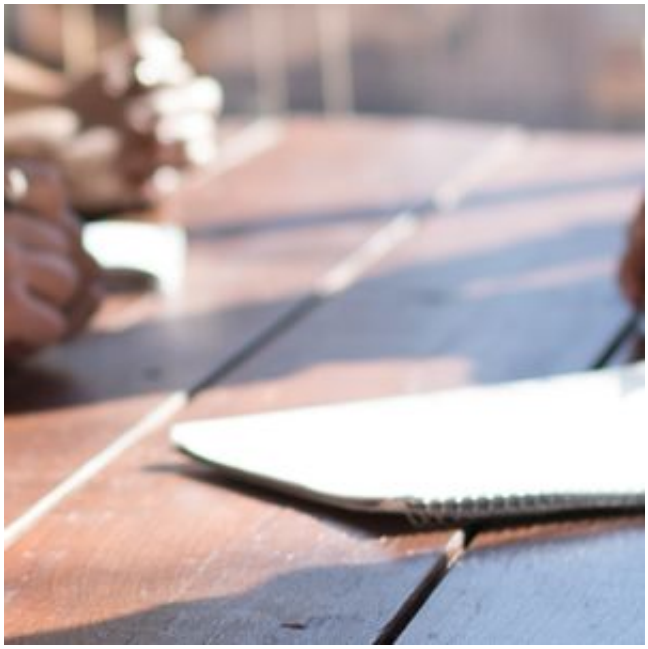
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