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EU emissions

EU15 makes some progress towards Kyoto emissions targets

The EU15 (the 15 'old' EU member states) is making some progress towards meeting its greenhouse gas emissions reduction commitment under the Kyoto Protocol but unfortunately most of the effort will be realised by external offsetting. A new report from the European Environment Agency (EEA) has shown the progress towards emissions targets in the different EU countries: some countries (such as Denmark, Italy and Spain) are off target but other countries have made greater progress than expected.

Under the Kyoto Protocol, the EU committed to reduce its emissions 8% by 2012 (compared to 1990 levels). The EU15 has realised reductions of 2.7% to date. Based on the current measures being implemented, the EEA expects this to rise to 3.6% by 2010.

Most of the effort towards achieving the target is likely to be accounted for by the purchase of external offsets for emissions through the 'flexibility mechanisms' of the Kyoto Protocol (CDM and JI) and by creative accounting for reforestation and forest management in the EU. The EEA expects external offsets for sectors not covered by the EU's Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) to account for at least 3%. Given the high proportion of external offsetting (CDM/JI) already included in the ETS, all of the projected reductions for current policiesby 2010 (3.6%) could also be achieved by external offsetting. The actual emissions reductions achieved within the EU 15 for 2010 might turn out to be minimal or none.

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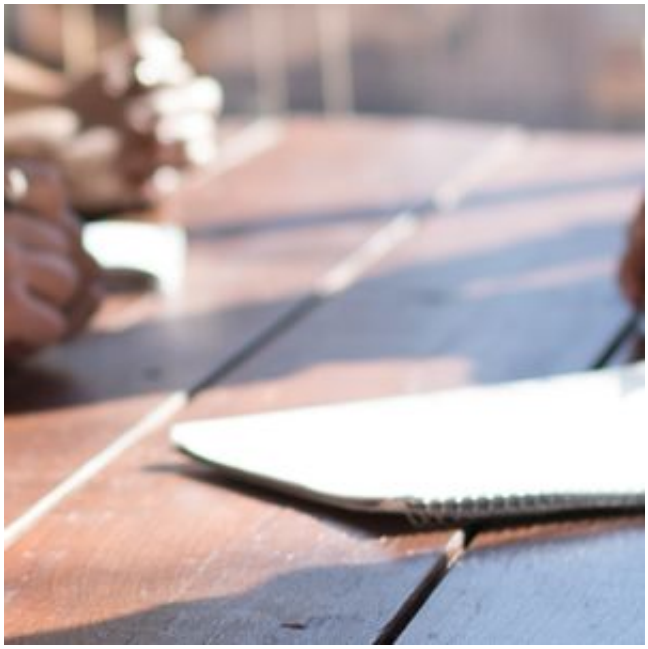

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