

SGI Sustainable
Governance
Indicators

2014 Global Environmental Protection Report

Global Environmental Policy



Indicator

Global Environmental Policy

Question

To what extent does the government actively contribute to the design and advancement of global environmental protection regimes?

41 OECD and EU countries are sorted according to their performance on a scale from 10 (best) to 1 (lowest). This scale is tied to four qualitative evaluation levels.

- 10-9 = The government actively contributes to international efforts to design and advance global environmental protection regimes. In most cases, it demonstrates commitment to existing regimes, fosters their advancement and initiates appropriate reforms.
- 8-6 = The government contributes to international efforts to strengthen global environmental protection regimes. It demonstrates commitment to existing regimes and occasionally fosters their advancement or initiates appropriate reforms.
- 5-3 = The government demonstrates commitment to existing regimes, but neither fosters their advancement nor initiates appropriate reforms.
- 2-1 = The government does not contribute to international efforts to strengthen global environmental protection regimes.

Sweden

Score 10

Sweden has a very strong international record in terms of supporting international environmental protection regimes. Indeed, the country has a record of going beyond the requirements of international accords, such as the Kyoto Protocol, as a means of setting an example to other countries.

Citation:

Zannakis, M. (2010), *Climate Policy as a Window of Opportunity: Sweden and Global Climate Change* (Gothenburg: Department of Political Science, university of Gothenburg).

Norway

Score 9

The Norwegian government promotes itself as a lead actor in international environmental efforts, and in international climate negotiations. Norway is also involved in the United Nations Collaborative Program on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD). However, the country has also been criticized for buying itself out of burdensome domestic environmental obligations, by purchasing international CO₂ quotas instead of reducing emissions. Norway has been a leading actor in the development of carbon-capture technologies in the use of fossil fuels in energy production and she is also involved in diffusion of technology related to renewable energy.

Switzerland

Score 9 Global environmental policy is high among Switzerland's foreign-policy priorities, and the country has played a significant role in designing and advancing global environmental-protection regimes. However, as a small country, Switzerland has limited independent influence. The European Union has taken a leading role in this area, and the United States too is aiming at a more active part in international discussions. Thus, Switzerland's impact depends in large part upon efficient collaboration with the European Union.

Denmark

Score 8 When it comes to international efforts, Denmark is actively promoting environmental protection through the European Union, relevant U.N. bodies and global conferences. The European Union has become an important international actor in this area. After focusing on air pollution, sewage, waste, nature conservation and threats to human health, the focus has shifted to global warming, including the reduction of CO₂ emissions and achievement of a higher energy efficiency. The current commissioner for climate action is a Dane, who had previously been minister for climate and energy in Denmark. Her appointment as commissioner could be seen as a recognition of her previous efforts as a national minister.

There is broad understanding in Denmark of global environment protection as an international issue and it is an area where civil society is very actively putting pressures on politicians.

Citation:

Danish Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2012, EU Environmental Policy, <http://eu2012.dk/en/EU-and-the-Pres idency/About-EU/Politikomraader/ENV I/Miljoepolitik> (accessed 27 April 2013).

Finland

Score 8 International regimes are often sector-specific, and international regulatory and administrative systems, created and implemented through formal agreements, form the core of each international regime. While Finland is committed to observing many multilateral and bilateral environmental agreements concerning climate change, air pollution, and so on, Finland however is still not among the forerunners as far as the advancement of international regimes is concerned. The Arctic Environmental Protection

Strategy, adopted in 1991, is a multilateral agreement among Arctic states did come about as a result of a Finnish initiative, however; and Finland has received good or satisfying ratings in several international comparisons of environmental protection standards, such as the Global Economic Forum's Environmental Sustainability Index.

Citation:

Katrina Running, "Examining Environmental Concern in Developed, Transitioning and Developing Countries", *World Values Research* 5 (1): 1-25, 2012.

Germany

Score 8

Germany is a driving force in international climate policy, in the development of renewable energies, and in efforts to improve energy and resource efficiency. Since 1994, nature conservation has been enshrined as a national objective in Article 20a of the Basic Law. The Fukushima meltdown in 2011, the largest nuclear disaster since Chernobyl in 1986, resulted in a highly controversial change in environmental policies. In May 2011, Chancellor Angela Merkel announced that nuclear power would be phased out in Germany by the end of 2022, completely reversing her previous policy.

At the global level, the German government actively promotes strategies fostering environmental and climate-friendly development. Since 1990, Germany has reduced its greenhouse-gas emissions by almost 24%. Germany achieves high economic-performance levels with a relatively modest energy consumption by international standards. The World Climate Summit in December 2011 in Durban, South Africa, showed Germany to be one of the prime advocates and architects of a new, post-Kyoto climate order, despite ongoing difficulties in reaching compromise on the specific design of an international climate regime.

Estonia

Score 7

Estonia is engaged in a broad spectrum of activities to advance global environmental policy, but Estonia rarely, if ever, takes a proactive position in this area. Still, it has joined most important global and European agreements and displayed its commitment to these international agreements and targets. The Ministry of Environment focuses on two aspects of international cooperation: using international experience to improve the state of the environment in Estonia, and second, using Estonia's experience to provide support to other countries.

Iceland

Score 7 The Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources is responsible for the country's involvement in international environmental affairs. Iceland participates in the U.N. Environment Program (UNEP), and is active under the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 in areas of sustainable development. Iceland is also one of the eight member states in the Arctic Council, a cooperation forum directed mostly toward environmental affairs and sustainable development that includes five working groups. Two of these – Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) and Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) – are located in Akureyri, Iceland. As of the time of writing, Iceland held the presidency of the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) working group.

Whaling in Iceland remains an active economic activity, causing much controversy at home and abroad.

Iceland is currently embroiled in a dispute with the European Union over mackerel fishing. Mackerel migrate in huge numbers from international waters into Iceland's jurisdiction, and EU policymakers have accused Iceland of taking more than its fair share of the catches. As of the time of writing, Iceland faced the prospect of EU trade sanctions on the issue.

Ireland

Score 7 Ireland's contribution to global environmental protection comes mainly from its involvement at European level. The road map from Ireland assists in shaping and advancing the European and global environmental agendas. Ireland has accepted ambitious targets for renewable energy, supported by significant taxes on conventional sources of energy, so can claim to be taking global environmental issues seriously.

Luxembourg

Score 7 Luxembourg was one of the first countries to complete an ecological footprint report, published in 2010 by the High Council for Sustainable Development (Conseil Supérieur pour un Développement Durable). Measuring sustainability, the ecological footprint report indicated that Luxembourg requires twice the amount of agricultural land and water to compensate for the resources consumed through the country's high economic growth, high volume of road traffic and fuel sales to non-residents.

Fuel price alignment is however not a solution and will only transfer carbon emissions to neighboring countries. Instead, the government has to provide adequate public transportation for cross-border commuters who currently drive to work. A sustainable and convenient international public transportation system would do much to help reduce transborder emissions.

Luxembourg needs to expand its renewable energy production. Biofuel production does not provide a long-term solution, as this simply relocates an environmental problem to another country, especially emerging ones.

Luxembourg contributes approximately 1% of its GDP to official development assistance efforts and could serve as a model for sustainable development. A sustainable development aid policy that is focused on energy-saving programs would help achieve effective carbon emission reductions in beneficiary countries.

Citation:

http://www.environnement.public.lu/developpement_durable/dossiers/pnnd_2010/PNDD.pdf

<http://www.myfootprint.lu>

<http://www.greng.lu/sites/greng/files/20120910-PKAgrofuelsfinal.pdf>

Netherlands

Score 7

The Dutch government has traditionally been a strong supporter of EU leadership in the Kyoto process of global climate policy and advancing global environmental protection regimes like UN Environment Program, IMF World Economic Outlook, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and many others. It has also signed related international treaties on safety, food security, energy and international justice. The government keeps aspiring to a coherent sustainability policy or a “policy agenda for globalization.” The government sees resource and energy scarcity, transborder disease control, climate change, transborder crime and international trade agreements as the great global issues. A coherent globalization policy also means research and monitoring of the undermining impacts of one policy on another policy. In spite of this intention, Dutch reassessment of development aid appears to favor bilateral over multilateral global sustainability policy. For example, the financing of Dutch initiatives in advancing global public goods is no longer separately budgeted, but instead part of the diminishing development aid budget.

Citation:

Kabinetsreactie op het WRR-rapport: Minder pretentie, meer ambitie (2010) (www.eerstekamer.nl/id/vimdknvvxtfz/document-extern/briefmp110112)

Additional reference:

http://www.aiv-advies.nl/ContentSuite/upload/aiv/file/webversie_AIV%2084_NL.pdf

United Kingdom

Score 7

In past decades, the United Kingdom has resisted plans to extend environmental protection regimes at European level. This resulted from its industrial interests, the country's strong reliance on fossil fuels, and a geographic location that largely insulated it from the adverse effects of toxic emissions and acid rain. In the 1990s, beginning with the Major government, there was a policy shift, and the United Kingdom became one of the foremost nations pushing for environmental protection standards in the European Union. The country ratified the Kyoto Protocol, but it was skeptical about the promotion of any global environmental protection regimes, even if they were consistent with nationally pursued policies.

The present Conservative/Liberal Democrat government continues to verbally support climate protection policies. Prime Minister Cameron undertook a much-publicized trip to the Arctic Circle to signal his concern about global warming, and has continued the broadly supportive approach to EU energy initiated by the Labour government. Nationally, it has continued to pursue the Labour government's targets for cutting carbon emissions by a third by 2020.

Australia

Score 6

Under John Howard's leadership (1996 – 2007), the Australian government rejected attempts to improve global environmental protection. Since then, there has been more support for such policies, helped by the strong position of the Green Party in the Senate. However, many Australian citizens have very limited sympathy for internationally negotiated projects that would raise the cost of energy to reduce CO₂ emissions. During the 2013 election campaign, the carbon tax became a major issue, with the Coalition promising to abolish the tax. While this is a domestic issue, the strong anti-carbon tax posture of the Coalition indicates the Liberal Party and its coalition partner are, compared to the previous Labor Party government, much less enthusiastic about participating in a global environmental protection regime.

Croatia

Score 6

Croatia strongly adheres to international environmental standards. During the accession negotiations with the European Union, Croatia incorporated these standards in its national law almost completely. The country has also

supported the goals of the Kyoto Protocol and played a major role in the United Nations' decision to make 2011 the International Year of Forests. In the period under review, however, Croatia has not launched any major global initiatives.

France

Score 6

All French governments in recent decades have been committed to advancing environmental policies at the global level. Former President Chirac (1995 – 2007) made a strong plea in favor of an international agreement in a speech in South Africa. Under former President Sarkozy, France was among the leading group of countries trying to secure an agreement on climate change mitigation at the 2009 U.N. Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.

However, this openness to internationally approved, more drastic and protective policies reaches a limit when French interests are at stake. For instance, any policy which would reduce the capacity of the nuclear energy industry to grow is frowned on by France, despite the unresolved issue of nuclear waste dumps. More generally, there is a frequent contradiction between the support given to wide, abstract and long-term agreements negotiated at the international level and the reluctance to actually implement them.

Japan

Score 6

International climate policy has profited considerably from Japanese commitment to the process. The Kyoto Protocol of 1997 is perhaps the most visible evidence of this fact. After Kyoto, however, Japan assumed a much more passive role. For instance, it had no reduction obligation for the second part of the Kyoto Round. It went into the Conference of Parties (COP 18) negotiation round in Doha in November 2012 with the intention of postponing agreement until 2015, thus delaying commitments and raising the prospect of further dissonances between advanced and less-advanced economies. It did not intend to go beyond its earlier commitment of a 25% reduction by 2025 as compared to the 1990 baseline. Thus, Japan is de facto assuming a low profile in this important field of global environmental protection.

With respect to multilaterally organized protection, Japan is particularly known for its obstinacy on the issue of global whaling. This is a high-profile, emotive issue, though perhaps not the most important one worldwide. Notably, Japan supports many international schemes by contributing funds and by making advanced technologies available.

Lithuania

Score 6

Lithuanian policymakers do contribute to international efforts to strengthen global environmental-protection regimes, but this policy area is not perceived as a government priority. Lithuania has demonstrated commitment to existing regimes (especially those promulgated by the European Union or promoted by its institutions) by incorporating international or European environmental provisions into national legislation or strategic documents, and implementing them. For example, in 2012, the Lithuanian parliament approved a national policy strategy on climate-change management as a further step in implementing Lithuania's commitments in the area of climate change and energy. However, Lithuanian policymakers have not actively worked to advance global environmental strategies, and do not typically seek to initiate international policy changes. The country's institutions are most active at the regional level, for instance addressing issues related to the Baltic Sea.

Malta

Score 6

Because Malta is a small state it is not traditionally a key player in international forums on global policy. The country's last contribution, a resolution entitled, "Protection of Global Climate for Present and Future Generations of Mankind," although significant as it gave rise to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, dates back to 1988. Nonetheless, Malta has played a dynamic role in efforts to meet climate resolutions agreed to in Copenhagen in 2009. According to U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, Malta is a key player in efforts to "seal the deal." Malta is party to a large number of multilateral environment agreements. As an EU member state, Malta is bound by the obligations of the EU's extensive environmental acquis. When Malta joined the European Union, it adopted some 200 environmental laws, which are now part of the overall Maltese legal framework. Still, Malta remains an insignificant, if active, player in global environmental protection.

Citation:

<http://mra.org.mt/climate-change/climate-change-introduction/>

http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/s_gsm12196.doc.htm

"Malta's International Obligations Re Environmental Matters", Simone Borg, November 2002

The Art of Doing Much with Little (MEPA News Article)

<http://www.mepa.org.mt/news-article1>

Malta National Report Submitted by the Government of Malta to the World Summit on Sustainable Development.(2002) www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/63699/Malta_WSSD.pdf

Mexico

- Score 6** Mexico relishes having an international profile in areas that allow it to show independence from the United States. Environmental policy is included in this category. Mexico is a leading actor on environmental policy within the region, even if its policies are not entirely consistent. Mexican authorities and the public are at least much more aware of environmental issues than they were a generation ago.

Slovenia

- Score 6** More than for most other countries, geography determines the priorities of Slovenia's international environmental relationships, notably with respect to water management and the conservation of biodiversity. Slovenia's commitment to sustainable development on a regional and subregional scale is articulated through various cooperation agreements covering the Alps, the Danube and its tributaries, and the Mediterranean (including the Adriatic). The Dinaric Arc area is an emerging focus of cooperation. Bilateral cooperation between Slovenia and its neighboring countries includes water management agreements with Croatia, Hungary and Italy, and agreements with Austria on spatial planning in border regions. Slovenia has continued to maintain many informal contacts at a professional/technical level with the countries of the western Balkans. Compared to these regional activities, Slovenia's contribution to the strengthening of global environmental protection regimes has been modest.

South Korea

- Score 6** There has been little appetite shown for moving Korea from the developing country status it was accorded in the Kyoto protocol into the Annex 1 category. Korea has shown the OECD's largest increase in CO2 emissions since the 1990s.

At the same time, the Korean government is hosting two important international environmental organizations. The Global Green Growth Institute supports the efforts of developing countries to design environmental friendly policies and the Green Climate Fund was established in 2012 to fund these activities.

Austria

Score 5 Austria's approach to global environmental policy is full of contradictions. Rhetorically, Austria (the government, political parties, media) paints itself as a frontrunner in global governance, from Kyoto to Copenhagen. In practice, however, the country's efforts do not support this conclusion. Austria is still proud of its 1978 decision not to use nuclear energy, one of the first countries to do so worldwide. This has become a kind of national narrative, in which Austria is proud to be in the vanguard of enlightened environmental consciousness. Austria tends to lecture others, including its neighbors in Europe, about the need to improve ecological standards. But when has come to the practical job of reducing CO2 emissions, Austria has fallen behind its peers. The real power of special interests (such as the automobile associations, goods transporters, and industry) has thus far proven too strong to overcome.

Bulgaria

Score 5 The Bulgarian government does not engage in the active promotion of collective action on climate and other global environmental issues. While it sticks to existing regimes, it takes positions only when agendas of EU-level meetings require discussions of such topics.

Czech Republic

Score 5 Environmental policy in the Czech Republic is strongly shaped by the country's obligations to implement EU legislation. However, the country is not a driving force in setting this or other international agendas. Nor has it set an example with domestic initiatives. Václav Klaus, the Czech president from 2003 to 2013, has been among the most prominent climate-change skeptics in the world, but has been relatively isolated even in his own political camp.

Hungary

Score 5 Similar to its predecessors, the Orbán government has shown typical free-riding behavior. It has stressed its commitment to international efforts and has supported the EU's environmental policy but it has not independently initiated reforms. Moreover, global reforms have not been part of the official public discourse in Hungary.

Israel

Score 5

Until recent years, Israel was not involved intensively in advancing global environmental projects. However, in the few years, Israel has taken a larger role in environmental concerns, in part due to joining the OECD, and in part due to a rise in domestic public awareness regarding these issues.

Because of the unique and diverse nature of the Israeli climate and country's scarcity of drinking water, the country has been forced to find technological and ecological solutions for many problems. Thus, leading up to the Rio Earth Summit in 2012, Israel launched a green technology project that aimed to show off Israel's achievements in use of this non-renewable resource. The campaign presented Israel as a global leader in desalination, with 40% of its drinking water coming from this source. Israel is also a global leader in the use of recycled water; 70% of Israeli wastewater is recycled and used in agriculture after undergoing a special purification process. The global concern was expressed when Israel declared its will to share its technological developments among all developed countries and its neighboring countries, citing shared interests and a global environmental commitment.

Israel is also involved in international efforts in fighting desertification. It is an important exporter of new methods and technologies developed specifically for arid regions. However, the country has failed to demonstrate commitment to many important global issues that are not directly associated with what it sees as its own environmental interests. For instance, Israel does not follow OECD air-pollution standards, and it has not done enough to decrease greenhouse-gas emissions.

Citation:

Shamah, David, "Israel flaunts green tech, but lags behind in alternative energy," *The Times of Israel* 26.6.2012

"A worldwide campaign: Israel front liner in the Green Tech industry," *Agrisupport online website* 21.6.2012 (Hebrew)

"Israel," *OECD better life index*

Italy

Score 5

The contribution of the Italian government to international efforts in the field of global environmental protection has not been particularly active. It has in general been supportive of international concerted actions but has not played a significant leadership role. This is due also to the fact that the resources of the Ministry of Environment have been seriously curtailed. Moreover,

because of the crisis the attention of the government and the priorities of the prime minister have been diverted.

Latvia

Score 5

Latvia cannot be seen as an international agenda-setter in the area of environmental policy. The country has agreed to comply with international agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol, for example, but does not have the capacity to take the initiative on a global scale.

As an EU member state, Latvia is bound by EU legislation, and EU climate policy is a main driver for national policymaking in the field of climate change. Latvia indirectly contributes to EU initiatives, but does not advance the design of global environmental protection regimes directly.

Latvia has joined the following international conventions regarding environmental protection and preservation: the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, the CITES (Washington) Convention, the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention), the Convention on Migratory Species (Bonn Convention), the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats, the Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio de Janeiro Convention) and the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (Helsinki Convention).

Latvia has been a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) since 1995, and to its Kyoto Protocol since 2002. Under the Kyoto Protocol, Latvia and the other EU countries committed themselves to reducing greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions by 8% relative to the baseline-year level during the first commitment period, from 2008 to 2012. The 2012 Climate Change Performance Index, which evaluated emissions trends, emissions levels and climate policy, rated Latvia as having exhibited moderate performance.

Latvia has also signed bilateral cooperation agreements on the issue of environmental policy with Austria, Belarus, Denmark, Georgia, Estonia, Russia, Lithuania, Moldova, the Netherlands, Poland, Serbia, Finland and Ukraine. The country is party to the Helsinki Commission Baltic Sea Action plan of 2007, which aims to improve the Baltic Sea's ecological status by 2021.

New Zealand

Score 5

New Zealand has a mixed record with respect to its contribution to the global environmental protection regime. Major issues in recent years have been climate change and biodiversity. After initially committing to the Kyoto protocol, a change of government resulted in the decision to withdraw from the treaty – the commitment of its nearest neighbor, Australia, notwithstanding. In announcing its decision, the government claimed the treaty was outdated and insufficiently comprehensive in its response to the contribution of developing countries to the problem of global warming. It undertook to make its own separate commitment by working toward reducing emissions by between 10% and 20% by 2020.

In Yale University's Environmental Performance Index, New Zealand is rated the highest out of countries in the Eastern Asia and Pacific region, and placed fourteenth worldwide. At the same time, however, New Zealand scored below average for its fisheries (28%) air (39%) and water resources (40%). In addition, the country will not be able to fulfill its Kyoto protocol target to get greenhouse gas emissions back to 1990 levels, if not for the off-setting effects of its forestry policies.

Citation:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade: <http://www.mfat.govt.nz/Foreign-Relations/1-Global-Issues/Environment/index.php> (accessed May 12, 2013).

"NZ fails environment tests," The New Zealand Herald, 8.8.2013, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10909645

Economic Performance Index: New Zealand, <http://epi.yale.edu/community/news>

Portugal

Score 5

Portugal agrees to and participates in EU-wide policies on the environment. Portugal has also signed the Kyoto Protocol. It agrees and participates in this legislation, but the main issue concerns implementation in both the domestic and global settings.

Romania

Score 5

Since 1992 Romania has ratified over 20 international environmental treaties and it was the first country to ratify the Kyoto Protocol in 2001. It has also made efforts to transpose the European Union's Environmental Action Program (EAP) under the National Sustainable Development Strategy of Romania for 2013 – 2020 – 2030. However, it has not played a very active role in the design and promotion of global environmental protection regimes.

Slovakia

Score
value_6

Slovakia has not acted as an international agenda-setter for global environmental policy. It is rather difficult for a small country to shape the global framework. Moreover, given Slovakia's state of economic development, environmental issues are not the top priority of policymakers. However, Slovakia has taken a constructive role in developing EU environmental policy.

Turkey

Score 5

Turkey, as a member of the OECD, the G-20 and EU accession candidate, holds as a goal to work toward sustainable development targets, a main concern of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Yet the government, understandably, insists that it is treated equally (in terms of its participation in new international environment regulations and concerning the opt-outs of several countries) to remain internationally competitive. While Turkey has still not fulfilled the requirements of the EU Waste Framework Directive, it can be considered a pioneer and an inspiration for other countries with regard to Climate Investment Funds (CIF). Turkey is the first country to use CIF, which includes the Clean Technology Fund (CTF) and the Strategic Climate Fund (SCF). Under the supervision of the World Bank, CIF were designed for developing countries to combat climate change.

Citation:

Ministry of Development (2012) "Turkey's Sustainable Development Report: Claiming the Future", Ankara.

United States

Score 5

From the late 1960s to the early 1990s, the United States exercised leadership on a wide range of international environmental issues. The European Union was often a reluctant participant, although it eventually ratified all the significant international agreements during the period. The 1997 Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gases (GHGs), however, was a turning point, as the Clinton administration signed the protocol, committing the United States to a schedule of emission reductions, but abandoned an evidently doomed effort to win Senate ratification. In 2001 the Bush administration formally withdrew the U.S.'s endorsement of the protocol. Like most other countries, the United States has failed to achieve the GHG reductions it called for. In the 2000s, the EU has led most efforts to negotiate multilateral environmental agreements. Especially during the Bush

administration from 2001 – 2008, the United States has most often called for weaker provisions. The Obama administration has sharply reversed Bush's policy direction on environmental issues, especially climate change, for the executive branch. But limited support from Congress and the public have constrained U.S. positions in international negotiations. Although the United States rejoined the United Nations process on climate change at Copenhagen in 2007 and Cancun in 2010, it has taken a hard line on the developing countries, and resisted ambitious commitments for its own emission reductions – partly accounting for the failure of the negotiations to establish firm targets to succeed the 2008 –2012 Kyoto targets.

Belgium

Score 4

The Belgian government seems to have largely freed itself from the responsibility of leading climate negotiations. While the previous government at the time of writing maintained a minister in charge of climate change, federal environmental policy now sits with the secretary of state for mobility, energy, environment and institutional reforms (a member of the executive branch, under the direct responsibility of a minister). There has been no particular role for Belgium, or involvement of Belgium in the design and advancement of global environmental protection schemes since.

Canada

Score 4

The government of Canada in principle supports the design and advancement of global environmental-protection regimes. In practice, the current government has demonstrated little if any commitment to this objective, as seen for example by its repeal of the Kyoto Accord. Canada's approach to environmental policy has in the past to a large degree followed that of the United States, given the close economic relations between the two countries. However, the United States has recently taken a lead through President Obama's aggressive new plan for action on global warming. Whether this development will raise Canada's interest in this area remains to be seen.

Chile

Score 4

The government demonstrates commitment to existing regimes and international efforts. There has been at least one specific initiative regarding the protection of Antarctica, but in general terms, the government neither initiates appropriate reforms nor fosters significantly their advancement.

Cyprus

Score 4

Cyprus has ratified many international conventions and protocols related to environmental protection, and participates in numerous international organizations and meetings. However, the ministries and departments responsible for environmental issues appear largely concerned with following obligations deriving from participation in the European Union and other bodies. On these issues, Cyprus is not an agenda setter, either in the European Union or internationally, although it may take an active ad-hoc role in international meetings. On the occasion of its European Council presidency, Cyprus contributed to the shaping of policies in certain areas (particularly with respect to integrated maritime policy).

Citation:

1. Website of the ministry of Agriculture, Cyprus,
http://www.moa.gov.cy/moa/agriculture.nsf/index_en/index_en?OpenDocument
2. Events related to environmental policies during Cyprus presidency of the European Council,
http://www.cy2012.eu/en/political-calendar?from_date=2012-12-13&to_date=2012-12-13

Greece

Score 4

While environmental studies exist in Greece, the country has never developed enough expertise on environmental protection. Greek environmental policies – the inconsistencies of which have been exposed in the crisis years – have closely followed developments in international environmental policy and corresponding developments in EU environmental policy. Yet the record of environmental protection in Greece is not high, as evidenced by the frequent occasions on which the European Commission has referred the Greek authorities to the courts for violating European legislation on environmental protection. The Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs participates in international meetings on environmental protection through diplomats to whom the relevant tasks are assigned, but one cannot say that the Greek government has substantially contributed to efforts to strengthen global environmental protection regimes.

Poland

Score 4

Poland has largely implemented EU environmental standards, but has been one of the main critics of EU climate policy and its emission trading system. At the EU environmental council in March 2012, Poland was the only member state to vote against the EU roadmap for moving to a competitive

low-carbon economy in 2050. Regardless of political affiliation, large parts of the Polish political elite have feared that ambitious international or European climate protection regimes will reduce Poland's energy independence and put too heavy a burden on the Polish economy.

Spain

Score 4

One of the first decisions taken by the conservative Prime Minister Rajoy when he took office in December 2011 was to reform the older Ministry of Environment, Rural and Marine Affairs into a new Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment, marking a clear change of priorities from the previous period. Moreover, he appointed as minister Miguel Arias Cañete, who admitted to knowing absolutely nothing about the environment. Rajoy himself had made some controversial statements about climate change when he was the leader of the opposition claiming, for example, that "if nobody guarantees tomorrow's weather forecast for Seville, how could they know what will happen in 300 years." In this not particularly promising context, Spain had to hold the Presidency of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) during 2012 – a program that coordinates UN environmental activities and covers a wide range of issues. After the new agriculture minister showed a lack of interest in this international office, he finally delegated the presidency in the Secretary of State for Environment, Federico Ramos de Armas, who took charge.

This is a good illustration of the Spanish government not actively contributing to international efforts to design and advance global environmental protection regimes, although it is still committed to the existing conventions. Spain has supported in 2012 – 2013 several international projects (such as wind farms in developing countries or emissions-trading projects) aimed at helping the country comply with the Kyoto protocol and allowing Spain to reduce its CO2 emissions in order to meet its obligations.

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