

EU greenhouse gas emissions kept decreasing in 2018, largest reductions in energy sector



The [official data](#) submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) confirm that the EU Member States, together with the United Kingdom (UK), cut their greenhouse gas emissions by 2.1 % in 2018 compared to 2017. The EEA report '[Trends and drivers of EU greenhouse gas emissions](#)' analyses the development in these data from 1990 to 2018.

Total greenhouse gas emissions in the EU stood at 4 392 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) in 2018, which is 23.2 % lower than in 1990. Over the same period, average emissions per EU citizen decreased from 12.2 tonnes CO₂e to 8.9 tonnes CO₂e. The EU reduction without the UK was 20.7 %.

per EU citizen in **1990**

per EU citizen in **2018**

Two thirds of the 2018 emission reduction took place in the heat and power sector, where emissions from coal burning decreased by almost 50 million tonnes and the use of renewables in electricity generation continued to grow. After four consecutive years of increases, emissions from road transport remained stable in 2018, compared with 2017.

The EEA analysis shows that the carbon intensity of the EU economy has more than halved over the past three decades. For each Euro generated in the economy, the EU emitted 277 grams of CO₂ in 2018, compared with 582 g CO₂ per Euro in 1990. Emissions have decreased in almost all economic sectors, especially in energy supply, industry and the residential sector. In the transport sector, emissions have increased due to higher demand and despite climate policies and efforts to improve vehicles efficiency.

“The EEA data show that cutting greenhouse gas emissions does not need to harm the economy. To the contrary, Europe’s recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic calls for ambitious and sustainable investments that can rebuild our economy and contribute to a fair transition towards a climate-neutral Europe by 2050, thus creating the competitive jobs for the future. Strong mitigation to avoid the worst effects of climate change remains an absolute priority”, said Hans Bruyninckx, EEA Executive Director.

Several factors have contributed to the emission reductions in the EU, the EEA report notes. These include EU and country-specific policies, the increase in the use of renewable energy, switching from coal to gas, improvements in energy efficiency, structural changes in European economies

from industry towards services, temporary effects of economic recessions, and on average milder winters since 1990.

Note to editors

The analysis in this report does not yet take into account the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The first EEA estimates of 2020 greenhouse emissions in the EU will be available in the autumn of 2021.

The United Kingdom withdrew from the EU on 1 February 2020 but will apply EU law until the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020. Key provisions of Regulation (EU) No 525/2013 (Climate Monitoring Mechanism) apply to the United Kingdom in respect of greenhouse gases emitted during 2019 and 2020.