

Brussels' emissions demands anger some governments

Reality sets in.

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The European Union's biggest polluter Germany and several other countries reacted with anger on Wednesday to European Commission demands for deeper cuts in greenhouse emissions in 2008–2012.

Brussels ordered a seven percent cut in the number of carbon dioxide (CO₂) rights that 10 member states had proposed to give industry for phase two of the bloc's emissions trading scheme.

The scheme is Europe's main tool for meeting its Kyoto Protocol goals.

Following are member states' reactions:

- **Germany's** Economy Minister Michael Glos called Brussels' demands "totally unacceptable" and said it would unnecessarily inflate power prices in Europe's biggest economy.
- **France** appeared to pre-empt a rejection by Brussels of its phase two proposals by pulling its plan at the last minute. It then bruised the scheme's fragile credibility by questioning Brussels' methods of setting emissions targets.

"We would rather not work on the basis of a global figure but industry by industry or even product by product," Industry Minister Francois Loos told a news conference.

- In **Sweden**, a leading industry group criticised Brussels' ruling: "The decision is the complete opposite of having emissions' rights as a cost effective system," said industry group Timber, Chemicals, Mines and Steel.

Swedish Environment Minister Andreas Carlgren was cautious.

"The Commission's decision and particularly its argumentation must now be analysed before the government goes further and takes measures," he said in a statement.

- **Britain**, which became embroiled in a legal battle with Brussels over its plans for phase one of the scheme, saw its phase two plans waved through without a hitch.

"Today's decision by the European Commission represents good news for the environment and good news for Europe," Environment Secretary David Miliband said.

"Emissions trading is a key tool in the UK and across the EU to reduce carbon emissions and tackle climate change," he said.

- **Latvia** said it could cope with demands for deeper cuts in CO₂.

- **Lithuania** said it was "very upset" with the Commission's ruling. "They (the new CO2 levels) are far too tight for us to fit into, taking into consideration the closing of nuclear power station Ignalina and projected forecast Lithuania economic growth," Lithuania's environment ministry said.
- **Slovakia** said its emission right allowance set by the European Commission for 2008–2012 was insufficient, and that the process of setting the quota plans was inappropriate.

"The quota is higher by 0.4 million tonnes per year from the levels set in the previous period, which we do not consider sufficient," the Environment Ministry said in a statement.