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RESEARCH

Compliance of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol in the first commitment period

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Abstract

This article provides an ex post analysis of the compliance of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol in the first commitment period (1990–1999). The analysis is based on data for national emissions of greenhouse gases (CO₂, CH₄, N₂O, HFC, PFC and SF₆) at the end of 2000, and the Kyoto Protocol targets for the first commitment period (1990–1999) and thereafter. The analysis shows that the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol have not met their commitments after the first commitment period. The analysis also shows that the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol have not met their commitments after the first commitment period.

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change and forestry (LULUCF) further removed 0.4 GtCO₂e yr⁻¹ from the net result excluding LULUCF. The hypothetical participation of the US and Canada would have reduced this overachievement by a net 1 GtCO₂e yr⁻¹. None of these factors – some of which may be deemed illegitimate – would therefore on its own have led to global non-compliance, even without use of the 0.3 GtCO₂e of annual emissions reductions generated by the Clean Development Mechanism. The impact of domestic policies and ‘carbon leakage’ – neither of which is quantitatively assessed here – should not be neglected either.

Policy relevance

Given the ongoing evolution of the international climate regime and the adoption of the Paris Agreement in December 2015, we believe that there is a need to evaluate the results of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. To our knowledge there has been no overarching quantitative ex post assessment of the Kyoto Protocol based on the final emissions data for 2008–2012, which became available in late 2015. This article attempts to fill this gap, focusing on the domestic and international compliance of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol in the first commitment period.

KEYWORDS: Carbon accounting carbon emissions trading compliance GHG emissions Kyoto Protocol

Correction Statement

This article has been corrected to ensure that it does not impact the academic record.

Notes

- See [1] for a detailed discussion of the impact of the Kyoto Protocol on the global climate.
- For example, the United States has reduced its GHG emissions by 14% since 2005, while China has increased its target by 40%.

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