

Climate Change : Climate Politics

German Climate Policy Ranks First Among G8 Countries “The One-Eyed Among the Blind”

Among the Group of Eight (G8) and the five largest developing countries, the United States is the least-active in preventing climate change, according to a recent Germanwatch ranking. Germany leads in climate protection, closely followed by the United Kingdom and France. Meanwhile some rapidly developing countries like Mexico and Brazil are scoring better than industrialized countries.

Climate Change Performance Index
Group of Eight (G8)+5-Countries

Rank	Country	Score
1.	Germany	7.02
2.	United Kingdom	6.99
3.	France	6.57
4.	Mexico	6.42
5.	Brazil	6.29
6.	India	6.18
7.	Japan	5.80

Climate Change Performance Index

Germanwatch's ranking of climate protection in G8+5-countries (Graphic: Germanwatch)

The ranking is a special edition of Germanwatch's annual Climate Change Performance Index that compares the climate protection performance of 53 countries. Among them, the G8+5 countries, which account for 73 percent of the worldwide energy-related CO2 emissions.

The Germanwatch index is based on actual emissions (per capita and absolute), emissions trends and an assessment of the respective climate change policies enacted in the various countries. Germany managed to pass the UK because of its latest initiatives to further global climate protection policies via its presidency of the European Union and G8.

Given their relatively small per capita emissions, emerging countries like Brazil and India rank quite high on the index, with Mexico at the top of the group thanks to its constructive role in recent G8+5 climate negotiations.

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While the index compares the climate change performance of the G8+5, it does not say whether their actions are sufficient. Germanwatch Director Klaus Milke cautions readers not to misinterpret the results as a signal that everything is on track for the countries that rank high. “The ones who lead rather resemble the one-eyed among the blind. All countries still have a long way to go to prevent dangerous climate

change,” he says.

Germany's top ranking just a snap-shot

Milke says Germany's top ranking could well only be a snap-shot if the country does not succeed in translating its diplomatic zeal into concrete national climate protection legislation reflecting the government's aims to reduce CO2-emissions by 40 percent by 2020.

The low score of the United States is due to the country's high absolute output of carbon dioxide, negative emissions trends, and shortcomings in national climate policy. The index, however, did not take U.S. President Bush's latest climate initiative into account. Just a few days prior to the G8 Summit in Germany, Bush announced a new round of international negotiations over the next 18 months to tackle global warming.

The Germanwatch index is based on data from the International Energy Agency. A group of 56 international climate change experts assessed the countries' climate policies.

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