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## **This is the state of the environment in Germany – Federal Environment Agency breaks it down Data on the Environment 2009 published**

**For the past quarter of a century the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) has issued regular reports on the developments in the state of the environment in Germany. In its most recent publication, *Data on the Environment 2009*, the Agency shows mixed results. “Germany has made great progress. On one hand it has improved the state of the environment in the new *Laender* considerably since 1990; on the other hand, our country faces new challenges”, said Jochen Flasbarth, President of UBA. Since the wall came down air quality in eastern Germany has become cleaner. In Saxony-Anhalt, for example, sulfur dioxide pollution is now only 0.5-1 percent of what it was prior to 1989 and lies well under existing imposed caps. Pollutant content in river waters has also dropped considerably: the average suspended mercury concentration in the Elbe River sank from 21.1 milligrams/kilogram (mg/kg) in 1990 to 2.3 mg/kg in 2007. Despite many positive developments action has yet to be taken to protect the environment, as Flasbarth continued to say, “In the areas of energy efficiency and resources management in particular, as well as in mitigation of nitrogen pollution, even more must be done.”**

The following are examples of positive developments:

Greenhouse gas emissions were reduced by 22.4 percent from 1990 to 2007. Germany has thereby reached its stated reduction goal of an average 21 percent in the 2008-2012 period, ahead of schedule and even undercutting it. This success was re-affirmed in 2008. By 2020 emissions levels must be reduced by 40 percent over 1990 concentrations.

The share of renewable energies in primary energy consumption was 7 percent in 2008, and 15 percent in gross electricity consumption. The expansion goals set by the Federal government for 2010 have thereby been met and exceeded. In 2020 the share of renewables in primary energy consumption is set to be 10 percent, and at least 30 percent of gross electricity consumption. Good news is that the industry accounted for 278,000 jobs in 2008 (160,500 in 2004) and achieved a total turnover of about 29 billion euros. 109 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions were saved through the use of renewables.

The productivity of energy use in the German economy rose by 40.7 percent from 1990 to 2008. However, this pace of development is not enough to reach the goal of doubling productivity in the 1990-2020 period.

The picture is similar for raw material productivity, which rose by 36.1 percent from 1994 to 2007. This is a positive development, although the economy must make continued efforts to double raw material productivity by 2020 as compared to 1994. It should also not be overlooked that the positive trend of recent years is owed in part to an increasing shift of the primary industrial sector abroad and a concurrent spike in imports of finished products. It pays to protect the environment: in 2006 there were 1.8 million employed, or 4.5 percent of total employed, in the environmental protection industry. Environmental technologies are expected to account for 14 percent of gross domestic product by 2020. The Federal Environment Agency sees need for action in the following areas:

In 2007, the land area used for settlement and transport purposes amounted to 46,789 square kilometres (km<sup>2</sup>) compared to 40,305 km<sup>2</sup> in 1992. In the same year, land consumption for settlement and transport purposes was 96 hectares. The sector affected most by this increase was primarily agricultural land. Some 46% of Germany's settlement and transport area is sealed, which is 6% of the country's land surface. By 2020 this growth in settlement and transport land area is to be reduced to 30 hectares per day. Germany is still very far from reaching this goal.

The shift of freight transport from roads to rail and inland waterways has not yet succeeded. The share of roads, rail and ships in freight transport in 2007 was at 71, 18 and 10 percent, respectively. The Federal government goal of raising the share of rail performance in freight transport to 25 percent by 2015, and inland waterway transport to 14 percent by the same year, will miss the mark at current rates of development.

From 1991 to 2005 the nitrogen surplus from agriculture decreased by 20 percent from 130 to 104 kilograms per hectare of agricultural land. The goal of reducing the nitrogen surplus to 80 kilograms per hectare by 2010 will most likely not be reached.

The *Data on the Environment* publication fulfils in part the Federal Environment Agency's duty to report on the state of the environment in Germany as mandated by the federal government. The *Data* provide information on all domains of environmental protection work, on clean air policy, quality of water, waste management, and management of resources.

*Data on the Environment 2009* (CD-ROM, brochure and flyer) can be ordered free of charge from the Federal Environment Agency, c/o GVP, PF 33 03 61, 53183 Bonn, via e-mail to [uba@broschuerenversand.de](mailto:uba@broschuerenversand.de) or online at [http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/uba-info-medien-e/mysql\\_medien.php?anfrage=Kennummer&Suchwort=3875](http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/uba-info-medien-e/mysql_medien.php?anfrage=Kennummer&Suchwort=3875).

The Internet provides regularly updated data on the environment at: [www.umweltbundesamt.de/daten-zur-umwelt](http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/daten-zur-umwelt).

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