

EMISSIONS REDUCTION TARGETS IN WESTERN EUROPE:

How have countries performed?

In December 1997 members of the United Nations signed the Kyoto Protocol (KP) in order to reduce Green House Gas (GHG) emissions. By 2002, most developed KP signees had agreed to reduce their emissions over two periods. Period one was 2008-2012, with period two being the most important (2013-2020). Here we'll examine the effectiveness of the Kyoto Protocol targets and whether 24 countries in Western Europe have been, "up to par."

NOT-SO-FUN FACT:
The USA never ratified the Kyoto Protocol, even though they signed for it in 1997.

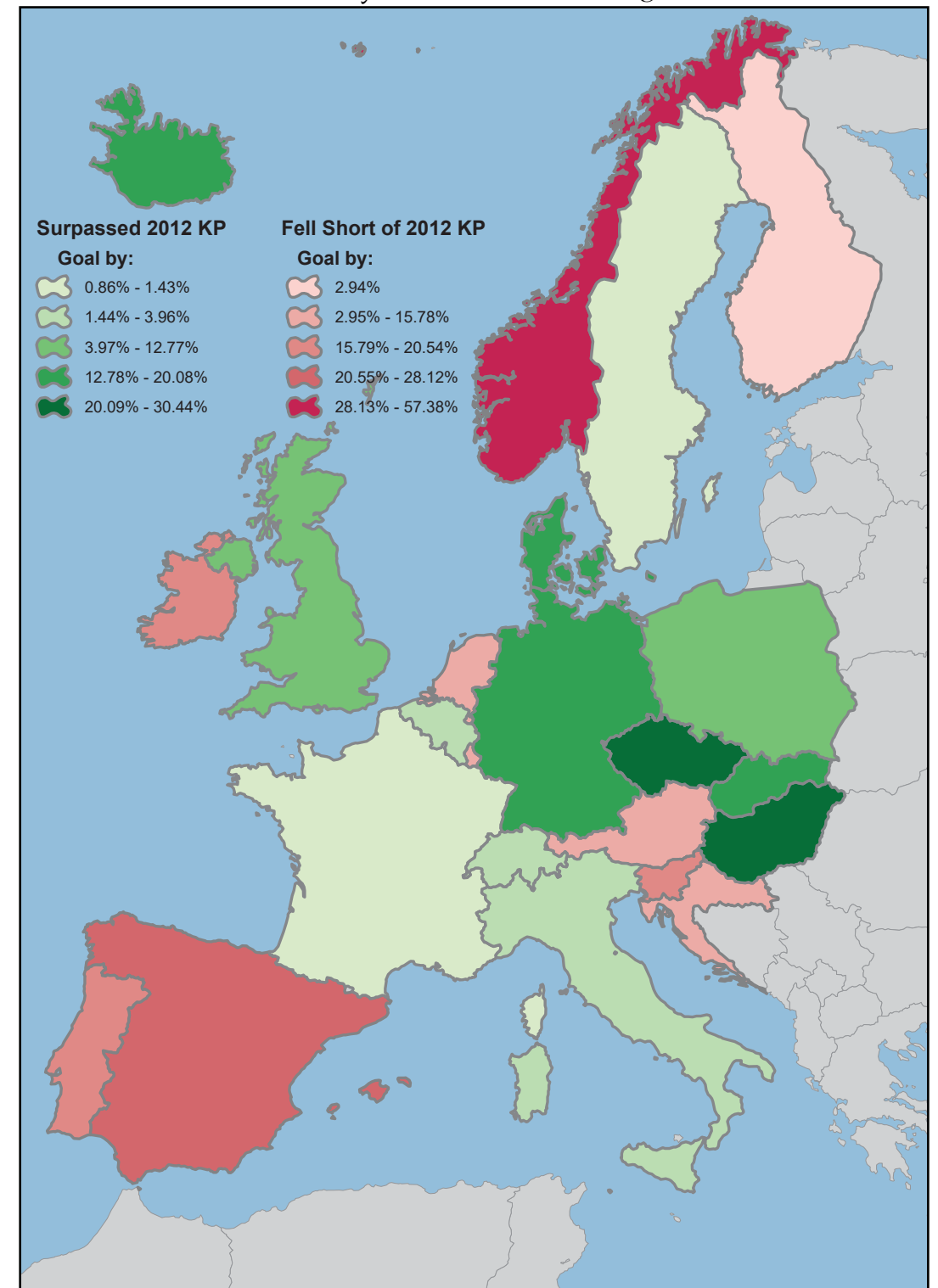
Change in CO₂ Emissions per capita since 1990:



-27.1% -14.7%

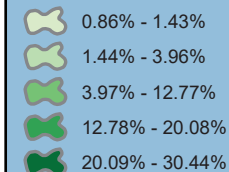
Maybe the USA should have ratified the Kyoto Protocol?

Below we can see whether countries met their 2012 goals or not. The darker the green, the greater they surpassed their 2012 goal by. The darker the hue of pink/fuschia, the shorter they fell of their 2012 goal.



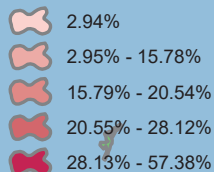
Surpassed 2012 KP

Goal by:

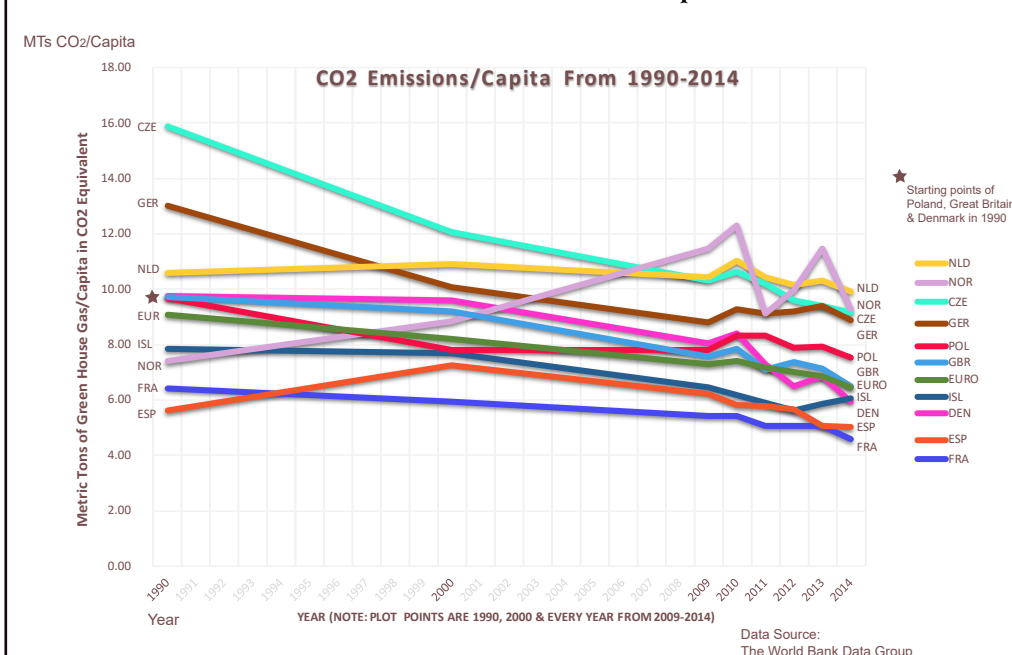


Fell Short of 2012 KP

Goal by:



Now, let's take a visual look at how CO₂ emissions per capital have changed over time in some notable countries in Western Europe.



Notable Dates

- 1992 - UNFCCC (UN Framework Convention on Climate Change)
- 1997 - Kyoto Protocol (KP) signed by majority of UN Nations
- 2002 - Majority of world's developed nations (including Western Europe) ratify KP and reduce GHG emissions
- 2009 - Financial Crisis bottoms out, some economies begin to recover (Iceland & Spain's crises continue)
- 2012 - First KP period ends, second KP period begins, countries' KP goals for 2020 now in sight
- 2014 - End of WB data available on CO₂ equivalent emissions

DOES THIS MEAN THE REST OF THE WORLD SHOULD FOLLOW EUROPE and SET GOALS?

Well, it's not so simple...

Since 1990, Earth's population has increased by 36.4% (5.28B to 7.2B), which means if CO₂ emissions have increased since then by 18.4% per capita, we've got to make changes, right now, and it starts with the USA following Europe's lead - and then some.