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Assessment of climate change policies in the context of the European Semester

Country Report: Slovenia



Ecologic Institute

Authors team: Eike Dreblow, Matthias Duwe, Tim Wawer, Lena Donat, Elizabeth Zelljadt, Andrew Ayres

eclareon

Author: Aljaz Brunec

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Ecologic Institute

eclareon

Ecologic Institute, Berlin:

Pfalzburger Strasse 43/44
10717 Berlin
Germany
www.ecologic.eu

eclareon GmbH

Giesebrechtstraße 20
10629 Berlin
Germany
www.eclareon.eu

Contact:

Eike Dreblow,
Fellow Climate and Energy
Tel. +49 (30) 86880-165
Fax +49 (30) 86880-100
[eike.dreblow\(at\)ecologic.eu](mailto:eike.dreblow(at)ecologic.eu)

Contact:

Aljaz Brunec
Researcher, Policy Department
Tel. +49 (30) 88 66 74 000
Fax +49 (30) 88 66 74 010
[policy\(at\)eclareon.com](mailto:policy(at)eclareon.com)

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The report provides an overview of current emission trends and progress towards targets as well as policy developments that took place over the period May 2012 to January 2013.

The content of the report represents the state of knowledge in February 2013, specific updates were made adding the latest official greenhouse gas emission data by the European Environment Agency (EEA).

Please feel free to provide any comments or suggestions to the authors through the contacts listed above.

Short summary

- **Background:** Several longstanding measures render Slovenia comparatively advanced in terms of climate policies. However, little effort is currently being made as the economic crisis takes priority.
- **GHG target:** Non-ETS emissions in 2011 were below the 2013 target. According to the latest national projections Slovenia is expected to almost meet its 2020 target with existing measures while overachieving with additional measures.
- **Policy development:** Environmental taxation addresses industry and transport, renewable energy is encouraged through subsidies and feed-in tariff, recent efforts aim to increase public transport usage.

I Background on climate and energy policies

Although climate change policy has not been a priority in Slovenia recently, mainly because the financial crisis has caused the country to focus on other concerns since 2009, public debate about environmental issues is ongoing and relatively lively. Recent energy generation and infrastructure projects in particular have aroused discourse among civil society groups: a 600 MW lignite power plant in Šoštanj, the planned second block of the Krško nuclear power plant, a waste burning facility in Trbovlje, construction of a “South axis” gas pipeline to Italy, a gas power plant in the port of Koper, and debate about further use of biomass as well as wind power facilities have highlighted the importance and relevance of energy policy decisions and their impact on the environment.

The broader current energy policy discussion centres on the need for an updated (Strategic) National Energy Plan (NEP) in Slovenia, as the most recent one is from the year 2004. A “green book” on that plan was published in April 2009 and set the most recent set of overall energy goals including increasing security of energy supply and services, combating climate change, and ensuring economic competitiveness in the energy sector through affordability of energy services. A draft of a new NEP for the period 2010-2030 was open for public consultation in 2011, received stakeholder comments, and was reformulated accordingly – but development of the new NEP stopped at that point, such that the NEP is still considered to be in draft/proposal stage. Regardless of its status, its three pillars are: increasing energy efficiency, increasing use of renewable energy, and improving electricity transmission and distribution networks.

The perception of “green growth” as an economic priority is mixed: environmental and energy concerns are certainly on the country’s agenda, but there is no influential institution promoting the concept nationally – Slovenia does not have a Green Party representing such interests in parliament, for instance. Slovenian media accounts for some public exposure to concepts of green growth via programmes aimed at raising environmental awareness, such as the “Ekoutrinki” (EcoSnapshots) media project focusing on successful solutions to environmental problems broadcast weekly in prime time on Slovenia’s national television channel. The Slovenian government has not assessed data about the amount of “green jobs” in the country, and the definition of such

employment varies (OECD, 2012, p. 117-121), but the share of employment in resource-related sectors (water collection and sewage treatment, waste collection, and remediation activities) was at 1% in 2011. The share of employment in the renewable energy sector as a share of total employment in 2010 was below 0.5% (Green Jobs, 2012, p. 3-4).

2 GHG projections

Background information

In 2011, Slovenia emitted 19.5 Mt CO₂eq (UNFCCC inventory 2011), about 6% more than in 1990. Almost a third of total emissions come from energy supply. Emissions from this sector decreased in the early 1990s due to reduced economic activity driven by the transition to a market economy, but reached 1990 levels again in 2003 and have remained mostly constant since then. The share of fossil fuels on the energy supply mix remained stable during this time. The second most emitting sector is transport, from which emissions doubled since 1990 reflecting a rapid shift from public transport to private motor vehicle use. Emissions from energy use decreased by 26% between 1990 and 2011. Similarly, emissions from industrial processes decreased by almost a quarter during the economic downturn in the 1990s and more recently the global financial crisis. The agricultural sector showed only a minor decrease of emissions, mainly owing to the reduction of cattle production in the course of the transition to a market economy (UNFCCC inventory 2011, EEA 2012c, UNFCCC 2012).

Progress on GHG target

There are two sets of targets to evaluate: 1) the Kyoto Protocol targets for the period 2008-12 (which has just ended) and 2) the 2020 targets for emissions not covered by the EU ETS.

Under the Kyoto-Protocol the emission reduction target for Slovenia for the period 2008-2012 has been set to minus 8 % based on 1986 for CO₂, CH₄ and N₂O and on 1995 for F-gases. An evaluation of the latest complete set of greenhouse gas data (for the year 2011) shows that Slovenia's emissions have increased on average by 4.1% from the Kyoto base year to 2011 (EEA 2013a). Therefore, Slovenia is not likely to meet its Kyoto target through domestic emissions reductions directly, but intends to use flexible mechanisms provided under the Kyoto Protocol.

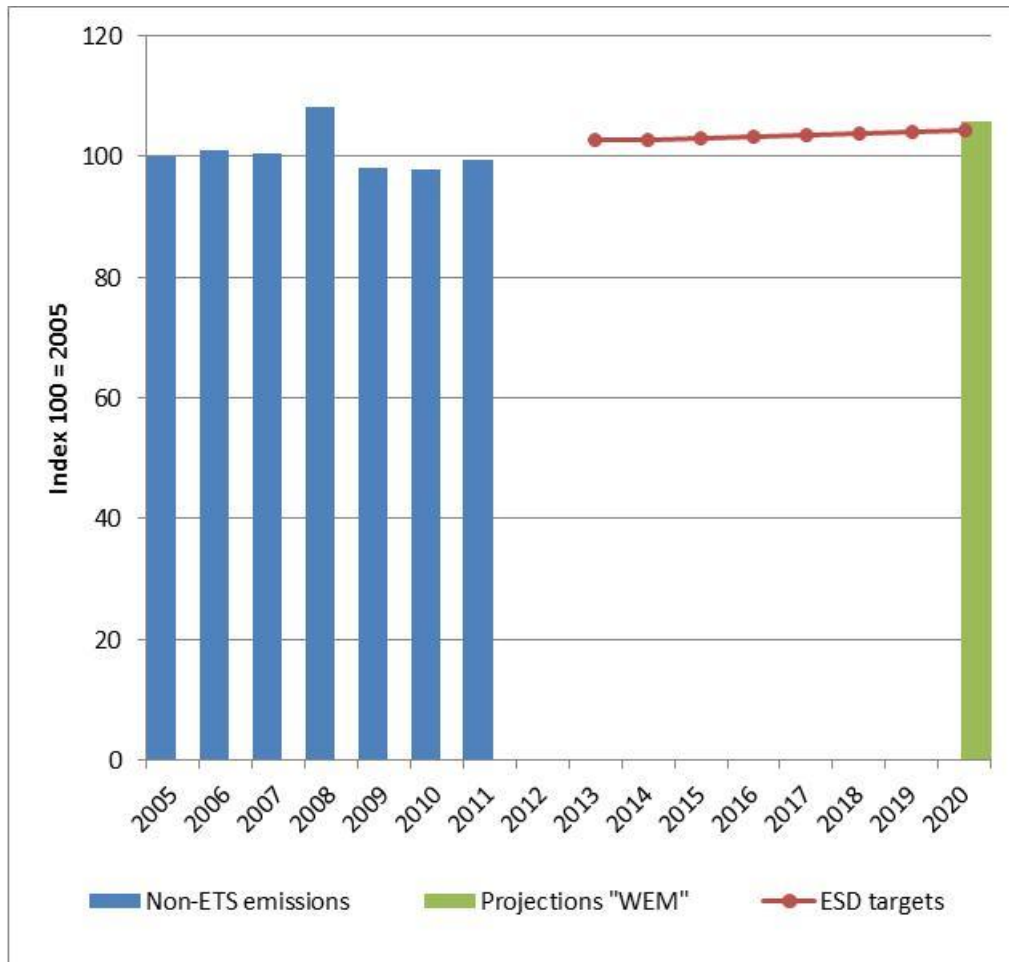
By 2020, Slovenia can increase its emissions not covered by the EU ETS by 4% compared to 2005, according to the Effort Sharing Decision (ESD) ⁽¹⁾. The latest data suggest that Slovenia is currently on track to meet the emission allocation for the year 2013 (COM 2013). Up to 2020, national projections indicate that Slovenia will almost meet its ESD 2020 target taking into consideration existing measures while under

¹ Decision No 406/2009/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the effort of Member States to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions to meet the Community's greenhouse gas emission reduction commitments up to 2020.

projections with additional measures the target is expected to be overachieved by 13% ⁽²⁾ (EEA 2013b).

Figure 1 shows Slovenia's non-ETS emissions until 2011, targets under the ESD for the period 2013-2020 and the projections with existing measures for 2020.

Figure 1: Non-ETS emission trends and projections compared to the ESD targets



Source: EEA. Projections are based on 15/04/2013 draft GHG inventory submissions under the UNFCCC and MS projections submitted

² Calculations are based on domestic emissions only, without accounting for possible use of flexibility options. The 2020 targets and 2005 non-ETS emissions are all consistent with 2013-2020 ETS scope, i.e. they take into account the extension of the ETS scope in 2013 and the unilateral inclusion of installation in 2008-2012.

Table I: GHG emission developments, ESD-targets and projections (in Mt CO₂eq)

	1990	2005	2010	2011	ESD target*		2020 Projections**	
					2013	2020	WEM	WAM
Total	18.4	20.3	19.5	19.5				
Non-ETS emissions (% from 2005)		11.6	11.4	11.5	11.9	12.0	12.2	10.5
				-1%	3%	4%	5%	-9%
Energy supply (% share of total)	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.3				
	34%	31%	32%	32%				
Energy use (w/o transport) (% share of total)	4.9	5.1	4.1	3.7				
	27%	25%	21%	19%				
Transport (% share of total)	2.7	4.4	5.3	5.7				
	15%	22%	27%	29%				
Industrial processes (% share of total)	1.3	1.4	1.0	1.0				
	7%	7%	5%	5%				
Agriculture (% share of total)	2.1	2.0	2.0	1.9				
	12%	10%	10%	10%				

Source: UNFCCC inventories 2011; EEA (2013b); COM (2013). Calculations provided by the EEA and own calculations.

* The ESD target for 2013 and for 2020 refer to different scopes of the ETS: The 2013 target is compared with 2011 data and is therefore consistent with the scope of the ETS from 2008-2012; the 2020 target is compared to 2020 projections and is therefore consistent with the scope of the ETS from 2013-2020. Non-ETS emissions in 2005 for the scope of the ETS from 2013-2020 amounted to 11.5 Mt CO₂eq.

** 2013 projections with existing measures (WEM) or with additional measures (WAM).

Legend for colour coding: green = target is being (over)achieved; orange = not on track to meet the target

Total greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and shares of GHG do not include emissions and removals from LULUCF (carbon sinks) and emissions from international aviation and international maritime transport.

National projections of GHG emissions up to 2020, summarised by the EEA, need to be prepared by the Member States in accordance with the EU Monitoring Mechanism ⁽³⁾ every two years, and the latest submission was in 2013. The projections need to be prepared reflecting a scenario that estimates emissions reductions in line with policies and measures that have already been implemented (with existing measures, WEM), and an additional scenario that reflects developments with measures and policies that are in the planning phase (with additional measures, WAM) may also be submitted.

In the following two tables, these measures - as outlined by Slovenia as basis for the projections as of April 2011 ⁽⁴⁾ - have been summarised with a focus on national measures and those EU instruments expected to reduce emissions the most ⁽⁵⁾. An update on the status of the policies and measures is included in order to assess the validity of the scenarios.

³ Decision No 280/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 February 2004 concerning a mechanism for monitoring Community greenhouse gas emissions and for implementing the Kyoto Protocol.

⁴ The respective policies and measures were not available at the time of the preparation of this country report. Thus, policies and measures as outlined in April 2011 are given here.

⁵ The implementation of the EU-ETS has not been included. Other EU Directives have only been considered if they have been outlined in the projections as one of the main instruments to reduce GHG emissions.

Table 2: Existing and additional measures as stated in the 2011 GHG projections

Existing Measures (only important national measures; w/o EU legislation)		Status of policy in January 2013
Energy	Environmental tax on CO ₂ emissions	The tax now encompasses also transport fuels.
	Promoting cogeneration	In force as part of RES-support.
	Promoting electricity generation from RES	In force through feed-in tariffs.
	Promoting use of RES for heat generation	The public calls DOLB3 and KNLB3 are still in place (Ministry of Infrastructure – Programme running from 2010-2015) as well as the public calls of the Eco Fund (renewed yearly).
Energy Efficiency	Promoting efficient energy use in industry	The public calls of Eco Fund have been renewed.
	Promoting energy efficiency in the public sector	A decree on green procurement as well as additional public calls from the Ministry of Education are being established.
	Energy labelling and minimum standards	The required legislation has been passed and is being updated according to the EU Directives.
	Promoting energy efficiency in the households and service sector	The public calls of the Eco Fund are still in place.
Transport	Reduction of emissions of CO ₂ from passengers cars	CO ₂ tax on fuels updated July 2012.
	Promoting use of biofuels	Biofuel quota obligations, tax reduction for biofuels in place.
	Promoting use of public transport	Implemented via public transport subsidies to students public transport synchronisation, division of public transportation zones.
	Increase the share of freight transport on railways	Further investments in rail transport planned.
	Decrease emissions from road transit transport	Policies under discussion.
Other non-ETS sectors	Reduce leaking of F-gases	No new specific regulatory or legislative action taken in 2012
	Increase the efficiency of cattle breeding	No new specific regulatory or legislative action taken in 2012
	Promotion of outside farming, reduction of methane emissions from manure management, rational use of nitrogen	No new specific regulatory or legislative action taken in 2012
	Reduction of share of biodegradable waste in landfills, degasification of landfills and energy exploitation or combustion of gas	Goals for the waste sector were addressed in the newest Waste Management Programme introduced in January 2013
	Sustainable forest management to increase carbon sinks	No new specific regulatory or legislative action taken in 2012

Source: Reporting of MS in accordance with Decision No 280/2004/EC about their GHG emission projections up to 2020, April 2011

3 Evaluation of National Reform Programme 2012 (NRP)

In April of each year, Member States are required to prepare their National Reform Programmes (NRPs), which outline the country's progress regarding the targets of the EU 2020 Strategy. The NRPs describe the country's national targets under the Strategy and contain a description of how the country intends to meet these targets. For climate change and energy, three headline targets exist: 1) the reduction of GHG emissions, 2) the increase of renewable energy generation, and 3) an increase in energy efficiency ⁽⁶⁾.

In the following table, the main policies and measures as outlined in the NRP of April 2012 ⁽⁷⁾ have been summarised, and their current status (implemented, amended, abolished, or expired) is given, with specifics on latest developments.

Table 3: Main policies and measures as outlined in the NRP, April 2012

Adopt GHG reduction action plan (2013–2020) aimed at achieving Slovenia's climate commitment by 2020	
Status as stated in the NRP	to be prepared in 2012
Status as per Jan 2013	still not adopted
Description of policy or measure	The latest GHG reduction plan 2013-2020 has not been adopted due to the fact that the new Climate Change Act has not been passed by the parliament yet, which is the foundation for further development in this area.
Create plan to improve air quality (measures to reduce particulate matter)	
Status as stated in the NRP	to be adopted until 2012/2013 for all regions
Status as per Jan 2013	under discussion/public comment period through February 2013
Description of policy or measure	Proposed new air quality ordinances for several regions are in public consultation process – particulate levels in several regions currently exceed existing limits set by the regulation on ambient air quality
Adopt operational municipal waste management programme	
Status as stated in the NRP	in 2012
Status as per Jan 2013	The Ministry of Agriculture and Environment introduced the newest Waste Management Programme in January 2013
Description of policy or measure	The operational program for municipal waste management is a national action plan for waste management, mainly following strategic goals of the EU waste policies.

⁶ There are specific targets for all MS by 2020 for non-ETS GHG emission reductions (see section 2) as well as for the renewable energy share in the energy mix by 2020 (see section 4, renewable energies). Specific energy efficiency targets will be defined (or revised) by the MS until the end of April 2013 in line with the methodology laid out in Article 3 (3) of the Energy Efficiency Directive (Directive 2012/27/EU).

⁷ All NRPs are available at: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/documents/related-document-type/index_en.htm

Draft operational waste management programme

Status as stated in the NRP	in 2012
Status as per Jan 2013	drafting is underway
Description of policy or measure	The operational waste-prevention programme is still being discussed by the stakeholders and the Environment Ministry.

Draft overview of environmentally harmful subsidies

Status as stated in the NRP	no timeline given
Status as per Jan 2013	being analysed by Ministry of Finance – not a policy priority
Description of policy or measure	On the basis of an analysis of environmentally harmful subsidies and a report of the working group on green tax reform, an overview will be drafted on those subsidies whose abolition could simultaneously contribute to the achievement of environmental objectives.

Expedite programmes for the energy-saving restoration of public sector buildings

Status as stated in the NRP	No timeline given
Status as per Jan 2013	Implemented
Description of policy or measure	Co-financing of energy efficiency measures by the Eco Fund focuses on public buildings (schools, hospitals etc.)

Adopt new version of National Energy Programme

Status as stated in the NRP	The revised National Energy Programme (NEP) was prepared; in 2011 the relevant public debate was concluded and a new version was expected to be drafted
Status as per Jan 2013	Stalled
Description of policy or measure	A new version of NEP was drafted, it has not been adopted by the minister, responsible for energy matters yet.

Integrate public passenger transport (implement combined ticketing)

Status as stated in the NRP	to be implemented in 2012
Status as per Jan 2013	partially implemented, more following in 2013
Description of policy or measure	The recent programme of student subsidized public transport has increased the usage of public transportation among the young population. The Ministry, responsible for transport, is launching a plan to synchronise suburban and urban public traffic timetables, as well as zoning specific regions (Ljubljana region and other major city regions).

Focus agricultural policy on promoting the production and marketing of locally produced and processed food, organic food and food from other quality schemes

Status as stated in the NRP	No timeline
Status as per Jan 2013	Ongoing
Description of policy or measure	Ministry of Agriculture's local food promotion initiative and "Traditional Slovene Breakfast" programme in schools

Complete introduction of an integrated public passenger transport

Status as stated in the NRP	During current government's term in office (2011-2014)
Status as per Jan 2013	Goals partially implemented with introduction of subsidised student public transport in 2012, efforts to synchronize urban and suburban traffic timetables ongoing
Description of policy or measure	According to Slovenia's National Reform Programme, additional legislative amendments will be adopted to integrate all subsidies and provide for the interoperability of urban and inter-urban transportation.

4 Policy development

This section covers significant developments made in key policy areas between May 2012 and January 2013. It does not attempt to describe every instrument in the given thematic area. The time-frame was chosen based upon the release of the National Reform Programmes (in the section above) in April 2012, which contain the status quo for policy on most topics.

Environmental taxation

Slovenia's implicit tax rate on energy is above the EU average, at approximately €184 per tonne of oil equivalent (Eurostat, 2013). Combined with above-average energy intensity, this places Slovenia in first place among EU MS in terms of energy tax revenue as a proportion of GDP (3.1%). Environmental taxes are also significant at 3.6% of GDP—the 3rd-highest in the EU (Eurostat, 2012).

Slovenia already makes heavy use of tax policy to achieve environmental aims, with a carbon tax in place since 1996 for the CO₂ emission resulting from combustion of fossil fuels and incineration of combustible organic substances - EU ETS participants and some cogeneration facilities are exempt. Since July 2012, the CO₂ tax also applies to the transport sector as described in the transport section below. The tax rate is differentiated by type of emitter and determined with a complex equation involving an “environmental burden unit” set by the government via decree, the burden ratio formula also defined by decree, and the type of fuel or organic substance. GHG emissions from landfills are also subject to the tax based on the type of waste and its emission ratio.

Energy Efficiency

Although the energy intensity of the Slovenian economy is above the EU average, it declined between 2005 and 2010. Meanwhile, total energy consumption increased by a moderate 5.7% by 2010 compared to the 2001-2005 average. Energy consumption stayed steady in most sectors, but consumption in the transport sector increased significantly over the course of the past decade (Eurostat, 2013).

The primary measures to promote energy efficiency in Slovenia are low-interest loans and non-refundable financial incentives, both of which are made available to commercial applicants and private citizens on an application basis through a government-affiliated administering organisation known as the Environmental Public Fund (Eco Fund). This fund has been in place since 2002, though under different names, and is renewed every year with increases in the amount of money to be disbursed. The minimum standards on

energy efficient equipment for which applicants may receive a loan or grant were raised in 2012 - these latest updates to eligibility emphasise for example the standards for equipment related to biomass combustion or building insulation.

In addition to the efficiency subsidies, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Spatial Planning continues to run two longstanding subsidy programmes promoting use of wood biomass: the DOLB for district heating systems and the KNLB for central heating. These are financial incentives for the installation of new wood-fired boilers and are in effect for the period from 2010 to 2014/15. Following the example of these existing programmes, the government has announced that new public calls are underway - especially for the public sector. Most of the money disbursed in these subsidy programmes (roughly 80%) comes from EU cofinancing. The calls work on a principle of multiple rounds: projects that tried to apply for the funding but did not receive due to depletion of the first round are given priority consideration in the next open round - the Ministry generally reopens rounds every three months. The allocation for the funding rounds varies from year to year.

Renewable Energy

Slovenia's energy system exhibits a high level of renewable energy use. In 2010, total end-use energy consumption included 19.8% from renewable sources, which puts Slovenia well on its way to meeting its 2020 target of 25%. Consumption of electricity from renewable sources was also high in 2010 at approximately 33%, albeit down from a peak of almost 37% in 2009 (Eurostat, 2013).

The aforementioned loan and grant programme managed by the Eco Fund also applies for renewable electricity projects. Successful applicants – from private citizens seeking to install photovoltaic panels on their roof to companies that operate wind farms – can receive the low-interest loans or non-refundable grants to purchase renewable energy equipment. The structure of the loan and grant schemes is updated annually, the most recent update to the Eco Fund's renewable programmes occurred in January 2013 with adjustments to what standards a project must surpass to qualify for the subsidy.

Slovenia's other main support for renewables is a feed-in tariff that has been in place for ten years: the network operator (Borzen) pays a fixed annual rate for renewably generated electricity, differentiated by technology. Wind, solar, geothermal, hydro and biomass electricity are all eligible to receive a fixed this rate, which ranges from about €0.08/kWh for hydropower to over €0.24/kWh for certain kinds of biomass generation. There is a significant tariff difference by size of facility, especially among photovoltaics where smaller installations receive a higher tariff rate per kWh ranging from €0.10 - €0.15. The costs of the feed-in tariff scheme are borne by the electricity consumers, who pay a surcharge on their power bills. The Slovenian government increased this surcharge in 2013, as a large amount of new photovoltaic installations have been built to which the tariff must be paid. While ratepayers have not voiced concerns over that additional surcharge, industrial sector and energy-intensive firms (including steel manufacturers) have said they cannot afford the increased power costs.

For space heating in households, among the energy sources consumed, wood fuels prevailed and represented 45%. Actually, wood fuels prevailed in 2011 with a 35% share in final energy consumption in households (SURS 2012b), which is a result of high fossil fuel prices, soft loan policies and the existence of other finance incentives in the past 10 years.

Energy Networks

The aforementioned draft NEP discusses smart grids and prioritises developing a more localised sustainable electricity network. It emphasises the need for more local heating distribution using biomass, but there have been no concrete measures in this area.

Transport

As can be seen in Table 1, GHG emissions from Slovenia's transport sector increased both in absolute and proportional terms from 2005 to 2010. In fact, the share of transport emissions in total emissions is very high and Slovenia (27%) ranks third in the EU, right after Luxembourg (52%) and Sweden (31%) (Eurostat 2013). Taxes and charges in transportation were equivalent to 0.4% of national GDP in 2010, placing Slovenia in the middle of MS (15th) in this regard (Eurostat 2012). New cars in Slovenia improved since 2007 and emitted on average 139.7 gCO₂/km in 2011. This is about the EU average (EEA 2012e).

The transport sector's heavy contribution to Slovenia's GHG growth hails from a significant increase in road traffic: the number of passenger cars per 1,000 inhabitants is on the rise and the use of public transportation is decreasing. This trend began after Slovenian independence and continues today, as Slovenia's central location on both an important north-south and east-west axis within Europe renders it a major thoroughfare in terms of road traffic – highway density in the country increased significantly over the past 20 years, to the detriment of rail infrastructure.

The Slovenian government is tackling this most problematic (in terms of GHG emissions) sector mainly via taxation. The CO₂ tax that applies to fuel combustion at facilities now applies to the transport sector as well, raising the cost of gasoline. The tax is imposed by being incorporated into the fuel price at the pump, along with value added and excise duty taxes. Biofuels are exempt from excise taxes. In January, 2013, the government officially raised the vehicle fuel CO₂ tax from €0.03 per litre to €0.035 per litre of gasoline.

In addition to the CO₂ tax now incorporated into fuel prices, vehicles are subject to a tax based on the size of their motor since 1999. Motor size has however little to do with fuel efficiency, and this measure is a result of an effort to stabilise public finances in light of Slovenia's debt and declining credit rating rather than meeting an explicitly environmental goal – since it indirectly incentivises the use of public transport over large-motor private vehicles, it has some climate change mitigation effects even though it is not an explicit GHG reduction measure in the transport sector.

Outside of taxation, Slovenia's Ministry of Infrastructure and Spatial Planning began subsidising public transportation for students starting in August 2012 via the state budget. Students now pay only a small fee (around 15€/20€) to buy a ticket for 10 long distance train or bus rides from their home town to the town where they are studying, and they get a monthly urban public transportation card for free. The Ministry is also attempting to synchronise the suburban and urban public traffic timetables in order to reduce traffic congestion. Particularly the measure related to students has increased the use of public transportation by the younger population.

In addition, the government has recently increased investment in railroads, but so far has seen only a slight rise in rail transit. Other government efforts include biofuel quota obligations, and incentives to purchase efficient vehicles.

Agriculture

The Ministry of Agriculture and Environment introduced the newest Waste Management Programme in January 2013. It is a political document setting out governmental goals and objectives to reduce emissions and the growing amount of waste.

The same ministry also runs an ongoing programme promoting local food production and consumption to reduce the emissions associated with transporting food resources from abroad. This initiative consists mainly of an information campaign via television advertisements and informational brochures at fairs and schools. The programme is touted as a job-creating measure, as eating locally creates demand for jobs in Slovenia's agriculture sector – moreover, organic farming is more labour-intensive than conventional farming. Part of the initiative, endorsed by other government bodies and the Chamber of Commerce, is promotion and financing of “Traditional Slovene Breakfast” in which schools prepare and serve breakfast at least once a month consisting of local produce.

While these smaller measures are successful, the country lacks an overall action strategy plan for climate change mitigation and adaptation in the agriculture sector, which existed for the years 2010 – 2011 but has not been renewed.

5 Policy progress on past CSRs

As part of the European Semester, Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) for each MS are provided by the EU Commission in June of each year for consideration and endorsement by the European Council). The recommendations are designed to address the major challenges facing each country in relation to the targets outlined in the EU 2020 Strategy. In the following table, those CSRs that are relevant for climate change and energy that were adopted in 2012 are listed, and their progress towards their implementation is assessed.

No CSRs related to climate change and energy were issued for Slovenia in 2012.

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