



Summary of 2006:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/6197135.stm>

http://www.edie.net/news/news_story.asp?id=12428

Geopressure - <http://www.2oc.co.uk/index.htm>

<http://www.greenseniors.org/>

Rail Europe - <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/main.jhtml?xml=/travel/2007/01/15/nosplit/etskitrain14.xml>

At-a-glance: EU energy plans

BBC News Online – Posted 10 Jan 2007

The European Commission has put forward far-reaching proposals to tackle climate change and boost security and competition in the EU's energy market.

The commission is aiming for a new "industrial revolution" leading to a low-carbon economy. It is based on three pillars:

A true internal energy market

Separating energy production from energy distribution by boosting competition and curbing the power of Europe's energy giants

Strengthening independent regulatory control of the energy sector

Accelerating the shift to low-carbon energy

At least 20% of all EU energy should come from renewable sources by 2020 and 10% of vehicle fuel from biofuels, and these targets should be made binding for the first time

The EU should also increase by at least 50% its annual spending on energy research for the next seven years

Energy efficiency

The commission reiterates the objective of boosting the efficiency of energy use by 20% by 2020

The commission proposes that the use of fuel-efficient vehicles is accelerated; tougher standards and better labelling on appliances; improved energy performance of the EU's existing buildings and improved efficiency of heat and electricity generation, transmission and distribution

The commission also proposes a new international agreement on energy efficiency, based on a 30% cut in greenhouse gas emissions by all developed nations by 2020.

Source: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/6249265.stm>

Nimbys can't be allowed to put a block on wind farms

The Guardian -Published 5th January 2007

This is crunch time. If Britain is to have any chance of meeting its target to generate 10% of its energy from renewable sources by 2010, then a great leap forward is needed right now. So far only 4.2% of energy is from renewables and three years is not long to more than double it. Wind power is the clean energy closest to profitability, yet many projects - on or offshore - are being held up or rejected by local authorities. Forty per cent of all applications were refused in the past two years, most by Tory councils or the SNP.

It is a hard target, running up a down escalator. As 1% of energy a year instead of cutting back, so are needed to stick to that 10% pledge. The caught up in the planning quicksands is the largest offshore wind farm, a £2bn Shell 271- Thames estuary - due to deliver 1,000 megawatts, of all greater London's homes. It has government council (Tory) has blocked planning permission for underneath existing pylons to service it. Local substation as a way of objecting to the wind farm, out to sea and beyond their jurisdiction. They have Kent coast against Nazi invasion.



the nation burns up an extra every year more renewables biggest and best project London Array - the world's turbine project in the enough to power a quarter approval but the local Swale a substation to be built Tories are using the although it will be 12 miles compared it to defending the

Wind farms now trapped in planning hell by local Nimbys amount to nearly the whole extra capacity needed to meet the 2010 target. Devon is a good case: the county has set itself a target of generating 150MW but so far has only approved 7MW of wind, as small local councils keep obstructing every proposal. Wales has set itself a target of generating 800MW by 2010, but local council refusals mean only 217MW are operating. Take Perth and Kinross (Lib Dem and SNP coalition): in terms of megawatts, a third of all wind energy refused in the last two years was by this

one authority. Scottish Borders (Conservative) is responsible for 18% of refused wind farms. In Scotland, the SNP has been the main block.

Wind-farm objectors are getting strong support from the pro-nuclear lobbies and from an anti-wind outfit misleadingly called the Renewable Energy Foundation, founded by Noel Edmonds. It has been interesting to observe how an apparently non-ideological issue is turning strongly partisan. Rightwing commentators are rampantly anti-wind farms, with the same fever as they are pro-hunting. For media would-be squires who voice old Tory passions, the wind farm has entered their hate list alongside such outrages to personal freedom as the seatbelt and the smoking ban. For some reason, most also harbour an emotional support for the nuclear industry.

Source: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/story/0,,1983357,00.html?gusrc=rss&feed=1>

'Irreversible' global warming claims its first victims of the New Year

The Independent –Published 6th January 2007

The CJ Wild Bird Foods company near Shrewsbury has announced that the demand for its products has all but disappeared, because the mild winter had maintained an alternative supply of berries for finches, tits and other species. Some species, such as the dunlin and purple sandpiper, are disappearing from Britain as they can find enough warmth in Scandinavia. The company, which said fears of bird flu has also discouraged the public from setting up bird feeders, has laid off 22 workers.

The warmer environment is also contributing to the gradual disappearance of the vast Lake Qinghai, a holy site for Tibetans in the remote western province of Qinghai. Despite a Chinese government pledge of £442m to stop the lake shrinking, it will have vanished in two centuries, according to a report by the China Geological Survey Bureau (CGSB). Glaciers on the nearby Qinghai-Tibet plateau have also shrunk by 131.4 sq km annually in the past 30 years. "What that means is that an area of glacier equivalent to twice the size of the Beijing downtown area disappears every year," said the CGSB. A further 13,000 sq km of glacier - nearly 28 per cent of the total glacier area - will disappear by 2050 if no protective measures are taken.

These disparate indicators of the effects of a changing climate surfaced at the end of a week in which Sir John Houghton, director general of the UK's Met Office, told a farming conference in Oxford that climate change was now irreversible. The Secretary of State for the Environment, David Miliband, said yesterday that Britons would have to change every aspect of their lives if they are to tackle climate change. In an interview with the children's newspaper First News, Mr Miliband admitted that people had been "short-sighted" in tackling environmental problems.

Source: <http://news.independent.co.uk/environment/article2129963.ece>

Airlines Could Cash in on E.U. Emissions Trading

Edie News – Posted 4th January 2007

The aviation sector stands to make a profit of £2.7bn or £3.5bn if carbon credits are given out for free and generous emission allowances allocated, according to reports published by the ippr and the WWF. Airlines are likely to pass the full cost of the credits onto passengers, leading to slight ticket price increases insufficient to restrain the sector's growth, the two organisations said.

Aviation is the fastest growing contributor to climate change but has so far been excluded from the ETS, which only covers emissions from the biggest energy users and producers.

The ippr urged the EU to include all flights to and from Europe in the scheme rather than internal EU flights only, which account for 40% of total emissions, and for the scheme to be extended to all greenhouse gases rather than just carbon dioxide. It was echoed by the WWF on these calls. Covering all greenhouse gases is particularly important in the case of emissions from aircraft, which impact the climate differently from ground sources due to the height they are released at. Including all greenhouse gases in the scheme would increase its effectiveness fivefold according to the ippr.

Source: http://www.greenbiz.com/news/news_third.cfm?NewsID=34389

Short Takes

Climate Impacts

World faces hottest year ever, as El Niño combines with global warming

The Independent –Published 1st January 2007

A combination of global warming and the El Niño weather system is set to make 2007 the warmest year on record with far-reaching consequences for the planet, one of Britain's leading climate experts has warned. As the new year was ushered in with stormy conditions across the UK, the forecast for the next 12 months is of extreme global weather patterns which could bring drought to Indonesia and leave California under a deluge.

The warning, from Professor Phil Jones, director of the Climatic Research Unit at the University of East Anglia, was one of four sobering predictions from senior scientists and forecasters that 2007 will be a crucial year for determining the response to global warming and its effect on humanity. Professor Jones said the long-term trend of global warming - already blamed for bringing drought to the Horn of Africa and melting the Arctic ice shelf - is set to be exacerbated by the arrival of El Niño, the phenomenon caused by above-average sea temperatures in the Pacific.

Combined, they are set to bring extreme conditions across the globe and make 2007 warmer than 1998, the hottest year on record. It is likely temperatures will also exceed 2006, which was declared in December the hottest in Britain since 1659 and the sixth warmest in global records. Professor Jones said: "El Niño makes the world warmer and we already have a warming trend that is increasing global temperatures by one to two tenths of a degrees celsius per decade. Together, they should make 2007 warmer than last year and it may even make the next 12 months the warmest year on record."

Source: <http://news.independent.co.uk/environment/article2116873.ece>

China warns of climate-change consequences

Mail & Guardian –Published 3rd January 2007

Climate change will harm China's ecology and economy in the coming decades, possibly causing large drops in agricultural output, said a government report made public on Wednesday. The report, issued by six government departments including the State Meteorological Bureau, the China Academy of Sciences and the Ministry of Technology, comes several days after state media said 2006 was hotter than average with more natural disasters than normal.

"Climate change will increase the instability of agricultural production," the report said, according to the official Xinhua News Agency on Wednesday. "If no measures are taken, in the latter half of the century production of wheat, corn and rice in China will drop by as much as 37%." It said that average temperatures in China would rise by two or three degrees Celsius in the next 50 to 80 years, and that this would cause "the speed of change to accelerate". Dong Wenjie, director of the Beijing Climate Centre, said the high temperatures were caused by global warming, while the annual meteorological report released by the China Meteorological Administration said 2006 had been a disastrous year for loss of life and property damage. Typhoons, floods and droughts killed 2 704 people and caused economic losses of 212-billion yuan (\$27,2-billion) in 2006, second only to 1998 when an extremely severe flood swept the country, the report said.

Source: http://www.mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid=294834&area=/breaking_news/breaking_news_international_news/

Aust hardest hit by climate change

ABC(Aus) News Online – Posted 3rd January 2007

That is the view of the Bureau of Meteorology, which today published its climate statement for 2006 - a summary of last year's weather conditions. It reveals an unprecedented series of extreme weather events which the experts say is a sign of things to come. The report describes last year's weather conditions as "highly unusual and unprecedented in many areas.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200701/s1821155.htm>

Climate Experts Worry as 2006 Is Hottest Year on Record in U.S.

Washington Post – Published 10th January 10 2007

Last year was the warmest in the continental United States in the past 112 years -- capping a nine-year warming streak "unprecedented in the historical record" that was driven in part by the burning of fossil fuels, the government reported yesterday. According to the government's National Climatic Data Center, the record-breaking warmth -- which caused daffodils and cherry trees to bloom throughout the East on New Year's Day -- was the result of both unusual regional weather patterns and the long-term effects of the buildup of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Source: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/09/AR2007010901949.html>

Global warming threatens Tibetan glaciers

ABC(Aus) Online – Posted 4th January 2007

Chinese geologists have warned that glaciers in Tibet and the neighbouring province of Qinghai are shrinking rapidly. They say the loss of ice threatens the economies of China and other countries whose rivers are fed by the glaciers. The high plateau of Tibet and Qinghai province has tens of thousands of glaciers, storing vast quantities of water. As they melt each summer, they feed rivers that give life to cities as far away as Bangladesh and Vietnam. But winter snow is failing to make up for summer melting and a layer of ice as big as central Beijing is lost each year. Now the Chinese geological survey has warned that global warming is speeding up the loss. By 2050, 30 per cent of the plateau's ice could be gone, meaning dangerously dry summers downstream.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200701/s1822349.htm>

Renewables

Animal Fats Touted as Future Fuel Source

ABC News – Posted 2nd January 2007

Jerry Bagby is typical of the oil men who are prospecting for a fortune in the Midwestern biofuels boom. He's convinced there's oil in these hills and he's found a well that no one else is using. Bagby and a longtime friend have cobbled together \$5 million to build a new biodiesel plant on the lonely croplands outside this southeast Missouri town. They're betting they can hit paydirt by exploiting a generally overlooked natural resource that's abundant in these parts chicken fat.

Bagby and his partner Harold Williams plan to refine the gooey substance, mix it with soybean oil and produce about 3 million gallons of biodiesel annually. Today, only a tiny fraction of U.S. biodiesel is made from chicken fat, but that seems likely to change. The rising cost of soybean oil which accounts for roughly 90 percent of all biodiesel fuel stock is pushing the industry to exploit cheap and plentiful animal fats. The nation's biggest meat corporations have taken notice. Tyson Foods announced in November it has established a renewable energy division that will be up and running during 2007. Competitors Perdue Farms Inc. and Smithfield Foods Inc. are making similar moves. Source: <http://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory?id=2765495&CMP=OTC-RSSFeeds0312>

Tesco fleet to run on biodiesel

ITV News Online – Posted 18th December 2006

Tesco is to run most of its distribution fleet on biodiesel from January, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 70,000 tonnes a year. The B50 blend is 50 per cent ordinary diesel mixed with biofuel - renewable fuels made from agricultural crops and blended with standard diesel or petrol to deliver a reduction in emissions. Biofuel blends are being stocked on Tesco forecourts for the purpose. Its 754 stores and 716 smaller Express outlets are stocked by the chain's 2,000 lorries - 75 per cent of these will now run on biodiesel.

Source: <http://www.itv.com/news/7a29fd9565d061ef43dd6590bc83baca.html>

Green heat for Olympic pools

The Times – Published 4th January 2007

The 2012 Olympic pools are to be heated using renewable energy, in moves to “reduce the carbon footprint of the Olympic Park as far as possible”. Mini hydroelectric schemes, solar panels, wind turbines and woodchip-fuelled boilers will appear at the park in Stratford as developers work to stage a green Olympics. Some of the buildings will have thermal-mass walls. David Higgins, head of the Olympic Delivery Authority, is expected this month to double to 20 per cent the authority's commitment on the proportion of energy that should come from renewable sources. It is claimed that many of the initiatives will be cost-neutral and that other expenses have already been accounted for.

Source: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2-2530324,00.html>

Climate Science

Amazon rainforest relies on African dust

SciDev.Net - Posted 10th January 2007

A single spot in the Sahara desert is responsible for over half the Amazon basin's annual supply of minerals, researchers say. In a study published in Environmental Research Letters, scientists show that dust winds arising from the Bodélé depression — northeast of Lake Chad — are the main mineral source fertilising the Amazon rainforest in Latin America.

Using recent advances in satellite instrumentation, researchers produced the first quantitative estimate of the dust emission: 56 per cent of the Amazon's total annual mineral supply. It was known that West African dust winds played an essential role in the Amazon mineral supply. But the rate of emission from the Bodélé depression has not been measured until now. According to the study, the soil of the Amazon rainforest is shallow, poor in nutrients and almost without soluble minerals. The health and productivity of the Amazon basin depends on nearly 50 million tons of mineral-containing dust transported annually across the Atlantic ocean from the Sahara.

Source: <http://www.scidev.net/news/index.cfm?fuseaction=readnews&itemid=3327&language=1>

UK News

Mayor plans fresh challenge to Belvedere incinerator

Lets Recycling – Posted 5th January 2007

The mayor of London and Bexley council intend to continue their challenge to the development of the Belvedere incinerator in South East London, it emerged last night. Despite failing to win a judicial review into the decision to grant planning permission to the 585,000 tonne facility last month (see letsrecycle.com story), Ken Livingstone's office insisted that the plant was still not in the best interests of London as a whole.

The Belvedere incinerator will be inefficient and it will fail to capture the heat that is generated.

Source: <http://www.letsrecycle.com/news/news.jsp?story=6406>

UK Government Must Spend More on Renewable Energy

Planet Ark – Posted 8th January 2007

The British government must put more money into renewable energy if it is to stand any chance of meeting its target of getting 20 percent of its energy from those sources by 2020, industry associations said on Friday. The goal was set out in last year's review of the country's future energy needs and how to supply them and is expected to be enshrined in the Energy White Paper expected in March. But the British Wind Energy Association and the Renewable Energy Association in their submissions on proposed reform of the Renewables Obligation -- the instrument used to force electricity companies to switch to clean energy sources -- warned that the sector was in danger. "Trying to get a 20 percent target in 2020 using the same amount of money as a 15 percent goal is like trying to extract a quart from a pint pot," BWEA chief executive Maria McCaffery said. "It just doesn't add up."

Source: <http://www.planetark.org/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/39713/story.htm>

Cameron's 'buy British food' call

BBC News Online - Thursday, 4 January 2007

Mr Cameron says there has been a rise in "food patriotism". Clearer labelling is needed to help people to buy genuinely British food, Conservative leader David Cameron says. At present foreign produce processed in the UK can be labelled as British, he told the Oxford Farming Conference. He said "food patriotism" was on the rise and backed a "buy British" policy for the £1.8bn of food bought each year for schools, hospitals and the Army.

Meanwhile Environment Secretary David Miliband urged farmers to grow more crops that can be used as biofuels.

Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/6226703.stm

Hospitals get cash to fight global warming

Yahoo News – Posted 4th January 2007

The government announced on Thursday a 100 million pound fund to help the National Health Service in the battle to beat the global warming crisis. The fund is intended to help hospitals and other health sector buildings cut carbon dioxide emissions, increase energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption, said Health Minister Andy Burnham. "Saving energy also means cost savings in the long term that (health) trusts can spend on improving patient care," The money will go towards more energy efficient appliances, buildings insulation and combined heat and power plants.

Source: <http://uk.news.yahoo.com/04012007/325/hospitals-cash-fight-global-warming.html>

Summit aims for 'greener' housing

BBC News Online – Posted 9th January 2007

Housing Minister Yvette Cooper is meeting building industry leaders to discuss how to ensure new homes are made energy efficient and affordable. Talks are taking place between the government, home building companies, and environmental groups. The Home Builders Federation said the talks were an ambitious attempt to improve environmental standards. Last month Communities Secretary Ruth Kelly unveiled proposals to make all new homes "zero carbon" in 10 years. Builders, suppliers, utility companies and regulators are discussing the potential barriers to achieving the government target. Organiser, the Home Builders Federation, hopes key groups will agree to a set of pledges thrashed out during the day to begin the process of meeting the goals.

Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/6242281.stm

ExxonMobil paid to mislead public

USA Today – Posted 5th January 2007

ExxonMobil gave \$16 million to 43 ideological groups between 1998 and 2005 in an effort to mislead the public by discrediting the science behind global warming, the Union of Concerned Scientists asserted Wednesday. The report by the advocacy group mirrors similar claims by Britain's leading scientific academy. Last September, The Royal Society wrote the oil company asking it to halt support for groups that "misrepresented the science of climate change."

Source: http://www.usatoday.com/money/industries/energy/2007-01-03-global-warming_x.htm?csp=34

Biological Impacts

How fish species suffer as a result of warmer waters

EurekAlert – Posted 4th January 2007

Ongoing global climate change causes changes in the species composition of marine ecosystems, especially in shallow coastal oceans. This applies also to fish populations. Previous studies demonstrating a link between global warming and declining fish stocks were based entirely on statistical data. However, in order to estimate future changes, it is essential to develop a deeper understanding of the effect of water temperature on the biology of organisms under question. A new investigation, just published in the scientific journal Science, reveals that a warming induced deficiency in oxygen uptake and supply to tissues is the key factor limiting the stock size of a fish species under heat stress.

Source: <http://www.earthwire.org/redirect.cfm?did=2000152883&aid=0&cid=2100015&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.eurekalert.org%2Fpub%5Frees%2F2007-01%2Fawif-hfs010407.php>

Drought will halt wildebeest trek

The Observer – Published 14th January 2007

One of the planet's greatest wildlife shows - the annual migration of more than a million wildebeest across east Africa's plains - is facing obliteration. Scientists have warned that climatic uncertainty now threatens to turn the grasslands through which these great beasts trek each year into an uninhabitable desert. And the drought is blamed squarely on human activities: global warming triggered by carbon dioxide emissions from cars, planes and other factors.

Source: <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/world/story/0,,1989918,00.html?gusrc=rss&feed=12>

Climate change brings malaria back to Italy

The Guardian – Published 6th January 2007

Sandwiched between temperate Europe and African heat, Italy is on the front line of climate change and is witnessing a rise in tropical diseases such as malaria and tick-borne encephalitis, a new report says. Italy was declared free of malaria in 1970, but it is making a comeback, said the Italian environmental organisation Legambiente. Tick-borne encephalitis, a virus which attacks the nerve system, is also on the way back. While only 18 cases had been reported before 1993, 100 have been since, mostly around Venice.

Source: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/italy/story/0,,1983891,00.html?gusrc=rss&feed=12>

EU Policy

France's Chirac Says Wants EU Carbon Tax Post-2012

ENN – Posted 5th January 2007

President Jacques Chirac unveiled on Thursday plans for an international conference next month to promote a French proposal to tax imports from countries that refuse to join the successor to the U.N. Kyoto environment pact. French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin proposed in November a carbon tax on imports of industrial products from such nations, but gave no details.

Source: <http://www.enn.com/today.html?id=11975&ref=rss>

German Renewable Energy Usage at Record High in 2006

Planet Ark –Posted 5th January 2007

Renewable energy usage will rise further in Germany this year after reaching its highest ever level in 2006, the BEE renewable energy association said on Thursday.

Renewable energy sources accounted for 7.7 percent of total energy consumption in Europe's biggest economy last year, up from the 2005 level of 6.8 percent, the group said.

That equates to supplies of about 200 billion kilowatt hours, or the power, heating and fuel consumption of 10 million households, the BEE said. "We expect growth to continue in 2007, with a particularly strong increase in renewable electricity," Milan Nitzschke, head of the BEE, told Reuters. In 2006, consumption of electricity alone from renewable sources, including solar and wind power, rose about 11 percent to 71.5 billion kilowatt hours, accounting for 11.6 percent of Germany's power market

Source: <http://www.planetark.org/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/39703/story.htm>

EU to impose tougher carbon emission limits

The Independent -Published 12th January 2007

Brussels is preparing a fresh assault on 4x4 vehicles in the shape of legislation to force through huge cuts in carbon emissions.

The move follows the motor industry's failure to meet a set of voluntary targets and threatens to heap heavy additional costs on car manufacturers and their customers.

The European Commission is to publish proposals this month for a mandatory emissions limit on car manufacturers of 120 grams per kilometre from 2012. At present, less than 5 per cent of cars sold in Britain meet the stringent new threshold and some, such as the top-of the range Toyota Land Cruiser and Porsche Cayenne, produce three times that amount.

Source: <http://news.independent.co.uk/business/news/article2145173.ece>

Melting glaciers will destroy Alpine resorts within 45 years, says report

The Observer – Published 14 January 2007

A remarkable report on climate change that will be handed to European governments this week will say that the effect of rising temperatures will mean an end to snow across large areas of the Alps. The report, by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, will predict the disappearance of 75 per cent of Alpine glaciers within 45 years, a surge in avalanches and floods and the closure of all but the highest ski resorts. The 130-page document, which is the first to assess the economic impact of global warming on European leisure, comes as resorts are struggling to get their skiing seasons off the ground. Today's Snowshoe Festival in 45 French resorts has been downgraded to 'a ramble' and, according to trade unions, 40,000 French seasonal workers have still not begun work. Shardul Agrawala, author of 'Climate Change in the European Alps', said the report shows the impact of global warming is already very real.

Source: <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/world/story/0,,1989999,00.html?gusrc=rss&feed=12>

Faith

Evangelicals, scientists join forces to combat global warming

Boston Globe - Published 14th January 2007

Leading scientists and evangelical Christian leaders have agreed to put aside passionate differences over the origin of life and work together to curb alarming levels of global warming that threaten the survival of life on Earth.

Representatives met recently in Georgia and agreed on the need for urgent action to drive down growing environmental degradation.

Source: http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2007/01/14/evangelicals_scientists_join_forces_to_combat_global_warming/