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Environment

CORI JUSTICE

Policy Briefing

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Conventional economic models of development or progress have failed to incorporate the environment into their calculations. Until recently the environment has been seen as a limitless resource that could be used at will by all people without any fear of long-term damage or cost.

More recently there has been a growing, but far from universal, recognition that the environment is being seriously damaged and that the wellbeing of coming generations and of the planet itself is being put at risk.

While Ireland is making progress on meeting its recycling targets and on tackling the problem of 'acid rain', there are huge problems that remain to be addressed.

There are, for example, almost 710,00 hectares of forestry in Ireland. This has increased by 47 per cent since 1990. In 2004 these trees removed 671 kilotonnes of CO₂ from the Irish atmosphere. In the same year road vehicles created 11,675 kilotonnes.

The cost of buying carbon credits to meet our Kyoto protocol commitments over the five years, 2008-

2012 is likely to be a minimum of €540m but could rise to €900m. [These costs are calculated on the basis of projections provided by Minister for the Environment, Dick Roche, TD cf. p. 4.]

Central to any model of development which has sustainability at its core must be a realisation of the need to move away from money-measured growth, as the principal economic target and measure of success, towards sustainability in terms of real-life social, environmental and economic variables. Already there has been some progress within mainstream decision-making.

In the environmental context it is crucial that dominant economic models are challenged on (among other things) their assumptions that nature's capital (clean air, water and environment) are essentially free and inexhaustible; that scarce resources can always be substituted; and that the planet can continue absorbing human and industrial wastes which most economists tend to downplay as externalities.

A central initiative in this context should be the development of "satellite" or "shadow" national accounts. Our present national accounts miss fundamentals such as environmental sustainability. Their emphasis is on GNP/GDP as scorecards of wealth and progress.

These measures more or less ignore the environment, and completely ignore unpaid work. Only money transactions are tracked. Ironically, while environmental depletion is ignored, the environmental costs of dealing with the effects of economic growth, such as cleaning up pollution or coping with the felling of rain forests, are added to, rather than subtracted from, GNP/GDP.

CORI Justice welcomes the commitment in *Towards 2016* by the Irish Government to examine the feasibility of the application of satellite accounts in the area of environmental sustainability for Ireland. This is scheduled to occur during 2007. We look forward to this commitment being implemented immediately.

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Policy Briefing is a regular publication issued by CORI Justice. It addresses a wide range of current policy issues from the perspective of those who are poor and/or socially excluded. Comments, observations and suggestions on this briefing are welcome.

Waste: Major Progress towards Recycling Target

Recent reports by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Central Statistics Office (CSO) have presented insightful overviews of the state of Ireland's environment. On waste they show that household and commercial waste has increased by over 12 per cent in volume between 2001 and 2004. Currently Ireland produces almost 3 million tonnes of waste each year. The EPA report *Environment in Focus 2006* notes that this level marks an increase of 64 per cent since 1995.

The management of this growing volume of waste remains a challenge. In 2003, 28.4 per cent of our waste was recycled, while the remaining 71.7 per cent went to landfill. For 2004 the EPA reported a major improvement with some 33.6 per cent of waste being recycled and 66.4 per cent going to landfill. As table 1 shows there are still some problematic areas where levels of landfill remain very high. Targeted policies in the areas of plastics, textiles and organic waste are clearly needed if we are to further increase this recycling figure.

However, these recycling results bring Ireland very near to the EU target of recycling 35 per cent of waste. This target was to be achieved by 2013 and the speedy progress toward this target proves that through good policies, real changes and improvements in environmental policies can be achieved.

CORI Justice welcome this development and we echo the recent call by the EPA that "a revised target to pre-

sent new challenges and build on this success is required".

Finally, it is worth noting that the growth in the volume of waste has also been dramatic. At this rate of growth it is of no surprise that our landfill capacity will soon be reached. In that context continued efforts to encourage reductions in waste generation and additional recycling are necessary.

Material	Tonnes (000s)	% Landfilled
Paper	821.9	54.3
Glass	123.4	44.3
Plastic	295.9	81.1
Metals (Aluminium etc)	107.4	53.1
Textiles	157.5	93.3
Organic Waste	925.9	73.6
Others	305.5	63.0
Total	2,737.5	66.4

Ireland: Some Key Environmental Facts

Three recent publications offer some very interesting figures on Environmental issues and policies in Ireland. They are: *Measuring Ireland Progress 2005* (CSO); *The Statistical Yearbook of Ireland 2006* (CSO); and *Environment in Focus 2006* (EPA).

This briefing can only assess a fraction of the issues covered by these documents. However, readers may be interested in these findings and may wish to consult the publications for further details. The following are among the key figures reported in these documents.

- Smoke pollution in Dublin, Cork and Limerick has decreased significantly since the introduction of legal restrictions on the sale of non-smokeless coals. All three cities now record pollution levels well below the EU limits. Dublin achieved this in 1993, Limerick in 1998 and Cork in 2002.

- The number of private cars in Ireland per 1,000 population aged 15 and over has increased from 364 in 1995 to 495 in 2004. The EU-25 average is 555 cars per 1,000 population (15 years +).
- The volume of road traffic in Ireland has already risen to those levels predicted for 2010.
- In 1995 90.1 per cent of all inland freight was transported by road. This increased to 97.7 per cent in 2004, 21 per cent higher than the EU-25 average.
- There are almost 710,00 hectares of forestry in Ireland. This has increased by 47 per cent since 1990.
- In 2004 trees removed 671 kilotonnes of CO₂ from the Irish atmosphere while road vehicles created 11,675 kilotonnes.
- The quantity of "acid-rain" decreased by 25% between 1990 and

2004.

- Imported oil and gas now accounts for 73% of Ireland's energy supply.
- Renewable energy only provides 4-5 per cent of Ireland's electricity generation needs.
- In 2004, 40 per cent of Ireland's energy demands derived from transport, 24.5 per cent from residential households, 18.3 per cent from industry, 2.7 per cent from agriculture, and 14.5 per cent from the service sector.

Links to each of these reports are available from the CORI Justice Website. Each of the reports are available to be downloaded for free from their publishing organisations.

For more information on environmental policy issues see our website: www.cori.ie/justice

River Water Quality – Action Needed

Slowly the quality of Ireland's surface waters is improving. In total Ireland has a network of 13,200km of river channels. A recent Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) report, entitled *Environment in Focus 2006*, reported the figures presented in table 2. The table presents the figures from the earliest data, for the years 1987-1990, and the data for the two most recent assessments.

The figures for 2003-2005 recorded an improvement in water quality; this continues a trend from 2001-03 when the statistics for the first time recorded improvements.

However, it is of concern that almost 30 per cent of river channels are still classified as polluted to some extent. The EPA cites agriculture as the main source of this problem and claims it is responsible for the largest inputs of phosphorus and nitrates to waters. It also suggests that there is a need to promote better farmyard management,

Table 2: Irish River Quality, 1987-2005 (%)

	1987-90	2001-03	2003-05
Unpolluted	77.3	69.2	70.2
Slightly Polluted	12.0	17.9	18.1
Moderately Polluted	9.7	12.3	11.1
Seriously Polluted	0.9	0.6	0.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

to reduce the over-application of fertilisers and to expand the system of nutrient management planning. It is of significance that the improvements achieved came in areas that have had intensive management programmes implemented in the past three to five years. Their success underscores a need to further expand these programmes.

Groundwater quality is also of concern. Bacteriological contamination rates remain high. In 2001 the EPA found that groundwater in counties

Carlow, Cork, Kerry, Louth and Wexford were polluted or susceptible to pollution by nitrates from agricultural sources.

Given the extent of pollution it is clear that existing legislation to protect our inland watercourses from pollution is neither adequate nor effective. This will have to be improved if these problems are to be adequately addressed and if the EU water framework directive is to be fully implemented.

Local Authority Waste League Table—Galway City #1

A welcome innovation during the two years has been the production of a performance league table of local authority waste management. The table was produced by the Local Government Management Services Board (LGMSB) and its most recent edition was published in June 2006 and related to the year 2005.

Their report examined how local authorities have been dealing with the waste produced in their area and in particular it identified the proportion of waste being recycled and landfilled. Table 3 sets out the results for the 4 best and 4 worst local authorities as reported by the LGMSB.

Galway city council topped the league table by recycling 52 per cent of their waste. This compares to the very poor performances recorded by Wicklow (2 per cent of waste recycled) and Mayo (5.8 per cent of waste recycled).

CORI Justice welcomes the publication of this league table. Its continued production will ensure that local authorities are incentivised to improve their performance. We also note that it is important to monitor local authority policies which aim to reduce and reuse commodities rather than purely dispose of them.

As outlined on the page opposite, Ireland has made notable progress towards EU recycling targets. We have even further to travel to match some Scandinavian countries and the US city of San Francisco who have set targets to eliminate all landfill by 2020.

Table 3: League Table of Local Authority Waste Management

	% Landfill	% Recycling
4 Best		
Galway City Council	48.0	52.0
Longford County Council	48.7	51.3
Waterford City Council	54.0	46.0
Waterford County Council	58.7	41.3
4 Worst		
Wicklow County Council	98.0	2.0
Mayo County Council	94.2	5.8
Kilkenny County Council	82.0	9.7
Donegal County Council	88.0	12.0

Greenhouse Gases and the Kyoto Protocol

Over time, Ireland's air has become more and more polluted. Between 1990 and 2004 the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) reported that Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions grew by almost 23 per cent. Total combined Irish emissions of the three main greenhouse gases regarded as having global warming potential amounted to 68.46m tonnes of CO₂ equivalent in 2004, up from 55.6m tonnes in 1990. Despite two successive years of reductions – 2002 and 2003 – the 2004 figures mark a marginal increase.

A breakdown of the 2004 pollution figures shows that agriculture is the single largest contributor to the overall emissions, at 29 per cent of the total, followed by energy (generation and oil refining) at just over 23 per cent and transport at 18.4 per cent.

The most recent figures indicate that the current levels of emissions now exceed the limits agreed under the Kyoto protocol. The Irish government and the European Commission agreed a target of an 8 per cent reduction in European CO₂ emissions on their 1990 level by 2012. Within this agreement, Ireland agreed to limit its increase of CO₂ emissions to 13 per cent between 1990 and 2012. Table 4 reports the level of greenhouse gas emissions versus the 1990 level (set at 100 on the emissions index).

CORI Justice welcomes Ireland's ongoing commitment to this protocol, despite the refusal of some countries, including the USA, to ratify its implementation. However, these emissions are a major cause of climate change, and it is in all our interests to ensure that the limits agreed in the Kyoto protocol are met.

Major changes are required if we are to reduce our emissions towards this target. Central to this is the need for full implementation of the National Climate Change Strategy. However, the decision in 2004 to allow Ireland's 100 largest industrial companies to maintain their current levels of emissions does not assist in progressing towards these aims.

Table 4: Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emissions and the Kyoto Target

Year	Emissions Index	+ / - Kyoto Target	% from target
1990	100.00	-13.00	-11.5
1998	117.73	+4.73	+4.2
1999	120.45	+7.45	+6.6
2000	123.34	+10.34	+9.2
2001	126.30	+13.30	+11.8
2002	123.46	+10.46	+9.3
2003	121.99	+8.99	+8.0
2004	122.73	+9.73	+8.6

Carbon credits to cost €540m

Where countries are found to be producing greenhouse gas emissions in excess of their agreed Kyoto protocol levels the agreement contains a mechanism for imposing fines on these nations.

As part of Ireland's commitment to avoid these fines the Minister for the Environment, Dick Roche, announced that Ireland will avail of the EU carbon trading system to buy carbon credits. This system was established to allow countries polluting above their agreed levels to buy credits from countries who record emissions below their Kyoto targets.

The Minister announced that the Government had decided that it would buy no more than 3.6 million tonnes of carbon credits for each of the years from 2008-2012. Given the current level of greenhouse emission in Ireland, and taking account of announced policies due to be implemented during that period, it is likely that Ireland will be forced to buy this level of carbon credits each year.

When briefing the Dail Public Accounts Committee in March 2006 the organisation responsible for buying these credits, the National Treasury Management Agency, suggested that the credits are likely to cost at a minimum €30 per tonne. Over the five years, 2008-2012, this implies an exchequer cost of at least €540m.

The scale of these exchequer costs further underscores the need to significantly address the nature and extent of Ireland greenhouse gas emissions

Indeed, given that many European states will record emissions levels in excess of their Kyoto levels, it seems appropriate to anticipate that the market price of these credits will rise above €30. At €40 per tonne the estimated cost over the five years would be €720m while at €50 per tonne the cost would rise to a total of €900m.

In addition to these costs, Ireland may also face direct Kyoto fines. These would be imposed were our greenhouse gas emissions still above the Kyoto targets following inclusion of the carbon credit offsets. The scale of these exchequer costs further underscores the need to significantly address the nature and extent of Ireland greenhouse gas emissions.

Ireland's Energy Requirements

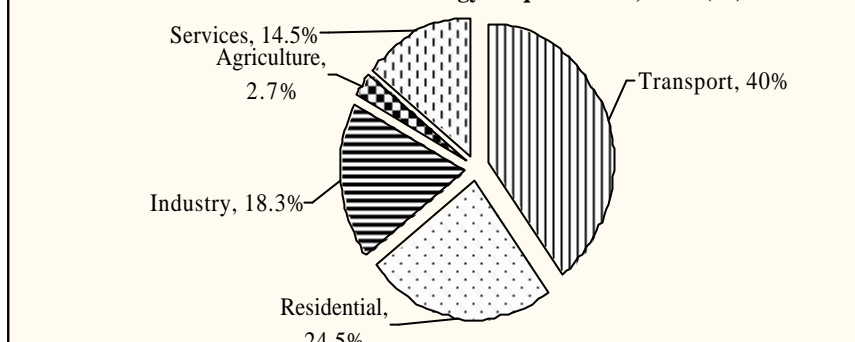
During the last decade of economic growth and prosperity, there have been significant changes in the nature and reasons for Ireland's energy requirements. Since 1995 there has been a 40 per cent growth in our energy requirements, a demand primarily met through additional consumption of oil and natural gas. In 2004, the year for which the latest figures are available, Sustainable Energy Ireland have reported that 75% of Irish energy requirements are for oil and gas (see table 5). These figures underscore Ireland's dependence on imported fossil fuel and consequently point towards our economic and environmental vulnerability.

The chart opposite also details the sources or reasons for Ireland's energy demands. Over the last decade the transport industry has increased its share from 30 to 40 per cent. A factor reflecting the significant growth in car ownership and the continued expansion of road based freight transport.

Table 5: The Nature of Ireland's Energy Requirements, 2004 (%)

Coal	12.9
Peat	3.8
Oil	55.8
Natural Gas	24.3
Renewables	2.2
Electricity Imports	0.9
Total	100.0

The Reasons for Ireland's Energy Requirements, 2004 (%)



Environmental Taxes

The finite nature of our environment demands that we take account of environmental costs along with other factor costs. Measures to protect the environment have necessarily involved intervention in the market, because market forces do not themselves provide for environmental protection. Up to now this "intervention" has been by legislated regulatory measures.

In the long run, however, a more comprehensive approach is required. In recent years the sheer increase in the volume of economic activities has often negated regulatory gains. A key step would be to include in prices – and thereby internalise – the environmental costs occasioned by economic activity. It is difficult to devise any methodology capable of tracing and attributing with any accuracy all the costs/damage wrought upon the environment by a particular activity. Thus in many cases the internalisation can

be achieved only in an arbitrary way, i.e. by taxes/charges based on broad national assessment.

The success of the plastic bag tax in reducing consumption of bags by 95 per cent in its first year, while simultaneously raising €1m for environmental projects, highlights the benefits of these types of taxes. CORI Justice welcomed the Budget 2003 commitment by government to impose carbon taxes. Given the support for this measure from leading government ministers, the all-party Oireachtas Committee on the Environment and the 2004 Enterprise Strategy Report we were disappointed that the Government chose to renege on its promise to introduce this scheme.

The excuse used by the Department of Finance against the scheme's introduction was that the revenue collected would be small and not worthwhile collecting. This conclusion is ironic given the advice by the Department

itself, the ESRI and the Enterprise Strategy group among others that the appropriate approach was to introduce this tax at a small level initially and to increase it over time.

Given Ireland's pollution record there can be little doubt that over the next few years more environmental taxes will be necessary. This may involve reversing the 2004 carbon tax decision or it may involve adopting an alternative strategy. Elsewhere in this *Policy Briefing* we consider reforms to the current system of motor vehicle taxes such that those cars that pollute most pay most. A second measure would be to levy a small tax on Kerosene, the fuel used by airplanes. This fuel is currently untaxed and the idea of such a tax has been gaining increasing support at a European level. Like the taxation system in general, environmental taxes should operate with a focus on fairness and also reflect the established "polluter-pays" principal.

UK Climate Change Report Highlights Global Threat

Over the past number of years many questions have been raised with regard to the appropriateness and reliability of the scientific evidence on climate change. In particular, there have been a number of politicians and academics who have dismissed the available evidence and suggested that the identified effects of global warming are part of the Earth's natural cycle.

In response to this uncertainty the British Government commissioned an independent report to critically examine the available evidence. Nicholas Stern, a former chief economist of the World Bank and the current head of the British Government Economic Service, researched and wrote the report.

Among the key findings of the report are the following:

- Carbon emissions have already pushed up global temperatures by half a degree Celsius
- If no action is taken on emissions, there is more than a 75% chance of global temperatures rising between two and three degrees Celsius over the next 50 years
- Rising sea levels could leave 200 million people permanently displaced
- Up to 40% of species could face extinction
- There will be more examples of extreme weather patterns

- Extreme weather could reduce global gross domestic product (GDP) by up to 1%
- A two to three degrees Celsius rise in temperatures could reduce global GDP by 3%
- In the worst case scenario global consumption per head would fall 20%
- To stabilise at manageable levels, emissions would need to stabilise in the next 20 years and fall between 1% and 3% after that. This would cost 1% of GDP

A full version of the report can be downloaded from the website: www.sternreview.org.uk

Climate change: Implications for Ireland

A 2003 report prepared for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by the Department of Geography at the NUI, Maynooth, presented an assessment of the magnitude and likely impacts of climate change in Ireland over the course of the current century.

Entitled *Climate Change: scenarios & impacts for Ireland* the report first sets out the international implications of climate change as found by the Third Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Produced by several hundred leading scientists in various areas of climate studies this report is considered the most authoritative assessment of global climate change to date.

The specific findings of the report for Irish climate change suggest that:

- Current mean January temperatures in Ireland are predicted to increase by 1.5°C by mid-century with a further increase of 0.5–1.0°C by 2075.
- By 2055, the extreme south and south-west coasts will have a mean January temperature of 7.5–8.0°C. By then, winter conditions in Northern Ireland and in the north

Midlands will be similar to those currently experienced along the south coast.

- Since temperature is a primary meteorological parameter, secondary parameters such as frost frequency and growing season length and thermal efficiency can be expected to undergo considerable changes over this time interval.
- July mean temperatures will increase by 2.5°C by 2055 and a further increase of 1.0°C by 2075 can be expected. Mean maximum July temperatures in the order of 22.5°C will prevail generally with areas in the central Midlands experiencing mean maxima of up to 24.5°C.
- Overall increases of 11 per cent in precipitation are predicted for the winter months of December–February. The greatest increases are suggested for the north-west, where increases of approximately 20 per cent are suggested by mid-century. Little change is indicated for the east coast and in the eastern part of the midlands.
- Marked decreases in rainfall during the summer and early autumn

months across eastern and central Ireland are predicted. Nationally, these are of the order of 25 per cent with decreases of over 40 per cent in some parts of the east.

Finally the report proceeds to identify the specific implications of these findings for agriculture, water resources, forestry, sea-levels and eco-systems in Ireland. Overall the reports findings suggest that there are considerable implications of climate change for Ireland and it underscores the necessity to adequately address this issue in the immediate future.

The full reference for the report is: Sweeney, J., T. Brereton, C. Byrne, R. Charlton, C. Emblow, R. Fealy, N. Holden, M. Jones, A. Donnelly, S. Moore, P. Purser, K. Byrne, E. Farrell, E. Mayes, D. Minchin, J. Wilson and Jh. Wilson (2003). *Climate change: scenarios & impacts for Ireland*. Dublin, Environmental Protection Agency.

For more information on environmental policy issues see our website: www.corie.ie/justice

Main Policy Recommendations on Environment

CORE POLICY OBJECTIVE

To ensure that all development is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable

- Deliver on the *Towards 2016* commitment to examine the feasibility of the application of satellite accounts in the area of environmental sustainability.
- Restructure the tax system in favour of environmentally benign development and high levels of employment and useful work.
- Introduce demand-reduction policies in areas such as energy and transport, and tackle the implications of such reduction.
- Fully introduce the National Climate Change Strategy, including the introduction of new taxes on oil, gas, coal and other fossil fuels.
- Publish the renewed National Sustainable Development Strategy before mid-2007

On waste

- Develop a policy for resource management, and achieve waste-

reduction targets by implementing relevant sections of the Waste Management Act, 1996.

- Provide households with incentives to recycle rather than landfill their waste.
- Allocate substantial resources to further develop recycling facilities.
- Put in place appropriate mechanisms to address the issue of the cost of waste disposal for those on low incomes.

On pollution

- Put mechanisms in place to ensure that the Kyoto targets of an 8 per cent CO₂ reduction by 2012, agreed by the Irish Government and the European Commission, are met.
- Continue to pursue strategies to achieve the reduction of activities at Sellafield.

On water

- Review the Water Pollution Acts and increase the level of statutory fines with a scale from €6,348 to a maximum of €150,000.
- Implement a nutrient-management plan on a national basis as one effective measure to protect against agricultural pollution of water-courses.

- Review water-pricing policies and introduce a water charge, which is equitable and is levied on high-consumption water-users, to ensure conservation of our water supplies.

On genetic engineering (GE)

- Introduce a five-year moratorium on the deliberate release of GE organisms.
- Facilitate a full-scale public debate on both the benefits and risks involved in GE, based on comprehensive scientific knowledge and a full airing of the economic, social and ethical implications of biotechnology.

- Fund appropriate research in parallel with such a consultative process.
- Introduce legislation that protects the consumer and the environment, rather than the interests of multinational corporations.

On the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

- Review the interface between the EPA and An Bord Pleanála to ensure that the environmental impact and sustainability of industrial developments are thoroughly assessed in an integrated way.

Progress on Shadow National Accounts for Ireland

Conventional economic models of development or progress fail to meet the needs of millions of people on this planet today. This failure is evident even within better-off countries such as Ireland. These conventional economic models also compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs. As this becomes more evident, there is a growing demand worldwide to find new models that will conserve the planet and its resources and empower people to meet their own needs and the needs of others.

Central to any model of development which has sustainability at its core must be a realisation of the need to move away from money-measured growth, as the principal economic target and measure of success, towards sustainability in terms of real-life social, environmental and economic variables. Already within mainstream decision-making, this realisation has begun to have some impact. In the environmental context it is crucial that dominant economic models are challenged on (among other things) their assumptions that nature's capital (clean air, water and environment) are essentially free and inexhaustible; that scarce resources can always be substituted; and that the planet can continue absorbing human and industrial wastes which most economists tend to downplay as externalities.

A central initiative in this context should be the development of "satellite" or "shadow" national accounts. Our present national accounts miss fundamentals such as environmental sustainability. Their emphasis is on GNP/GDP as scorecards of wealth and progress. These measures more or less ignore the environment, and completely ignore unpaid work. Only money transactions are tracked. Ironically, while environmental depletion is ignored, the environmental costs of dealing with the effects of economic growth, such as cleaning up pollution or coping with the felling of rain forests, are added to, rather than subtracted from, GNP/GDP.

Some governments have picked up on these issues, especially in the environmental area. They have begun to develop "satellite" or "shadow" national accounts, which include items not traditionally measured. CORI Justice welcomes the commitment in *Towards 2016* by the Irish Government to examine the feasibility of the application of satellite accounts in the area of environmental sustainability for Ireland. This is scheduled to occur during 2007.

2010 Acid Rain Target

In 1999 the Gothenburg Protocol set out a series of environmental targets to be reached by 2010. Among those targets is a reduction in acid rain causing emissions (formally known as acid rain precursor emissions). It established that Irish emissions should fall to a level equivalent to 306,000 tonnes of gas emitted by 2010.

Table 6: Acid Rain Precursor emissions, 2001-2004

	Emissions Level	% above target
2001	450,500	+47%
2002	407,300	+33%
2003	374,100	+22%
2004	368,800	+20%

As table 6 shows, since 2001 Ireland has been continually reducing emissions levels. In 2001 acid rain causing emissions were running at almost 50% ahead of the Gothenburg target. The latest data provided by the Environmental Protection Agency, for 2004, indicated that levels are now 20 per cent above the 2010 target. CORI Justice welcomes the significant improvements in this area and encourage the Government to continue to focus on achieving this target.

Other CORI Justice Publications

The following documents are available for purchase from the CORI Justice Office:

- **Developing a Fairer Ireland (CORI Justice annual socio-economic review - 2006)**
- **Policy Briefing on Rural Development**
- **Policy Briefing on Budget Choices**
- **A Fairer Tax System for a Fairer Ireland**
- **Policy Briefing on Sustainability**
- **Analysis and critique of social aspects of the national social partnership agreement Towards 2016**
- **Policy Briefing on Taxation**

You may download these documents, and many more, for free on our website.

Reforming Motor Taxation

At a time of increasing fuel prices, infrastructural capacity difficulties and pollution levels in excess of Kyoto limits CORI Justice believes that the time is right to radically reform the structure of motor tax. Our September 2006 pre-budget *Policy Briefing*, entitled *Budget Choices*, addressed this issue and outlined reforms in the area of Motor Taxation.

Reflecting the principle of 'the polluter pays', CORI Justice believe that motor taxes should be substantially raised on all private cars at or in excess of an engine capacity of 2,000 c.c. Rates for these vehicles should double, such that for example the annual tax on a car with a 2,200 c.c. engine capacity would rise from €755 per annum to €1510. Simultaneously taxes on cars with low engine capacities (below 2,000 c.c.) and on electric/hybrid cars should be considerably reduced.

Through following this approach the Department of Finance could implement this reform such that it would be revenue neutral for the exchequer. In the longer term this policy initiative would encourage the purchase of more environmentally friendly cars and contribute to future reductions in pollution levels. We hope that this reform is introduced in Budget 2007.

We're on the web
www.cori.ie/justice

Social Policy in Ireland

Principles, Practice and Problems

Edited by Seán Healy, Brigid Reynolds and Micheál L. Collins

In *Social Policy in Ireland*, 28 of the leading social policy commentators in Ireland contribute to 22 chapters ranging across the social policy spectrum. Some chapters look at issues of principle, others analyse practice while others focus on specific policy problems. Together the contributors provide a detailed analysis of a wide range of issues, articulate viable alternatives and identify pathways to move towards such alternatives. They also address the frameworks, models and paradigms which underpin policy analysis and policy-making in Ireland.

This publication marks the 25th anniversary of the establishment of CORI Justice.