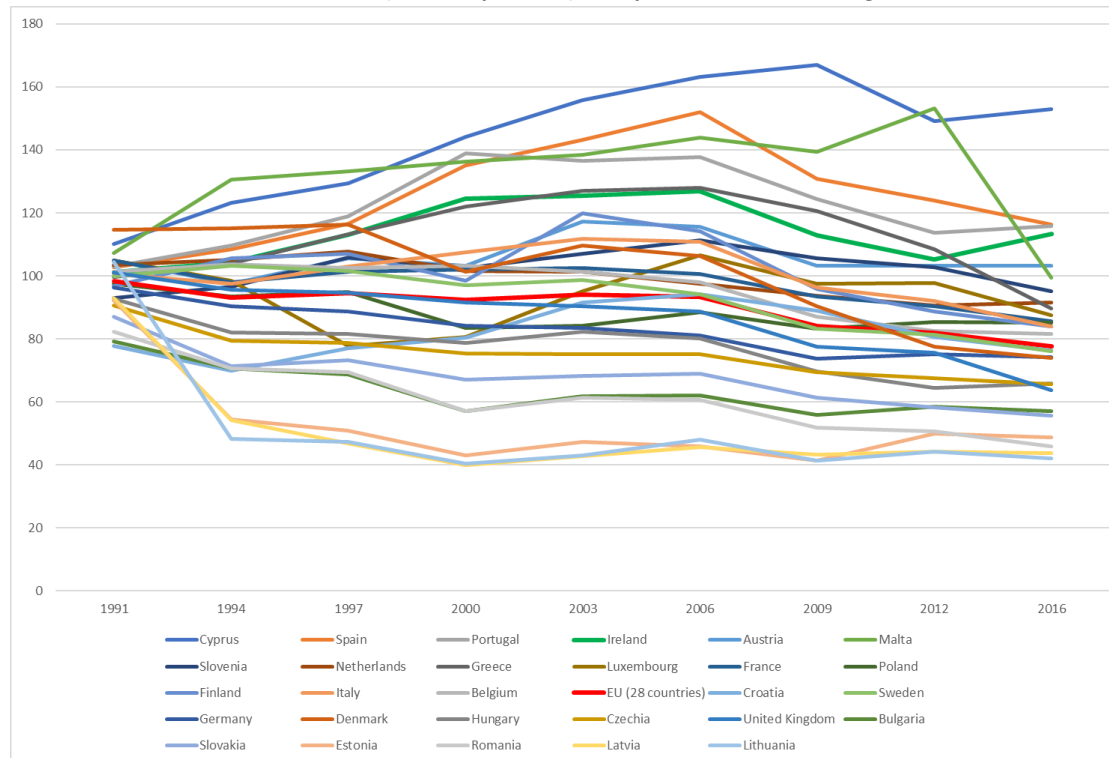


Environment and Sustainability

Chart 9.1: Greenhouse Gas Emissions (in CO2 equivalent) base year 1990, EU-28 average and Ireland, 1991 to 2017



Source: Eurostat, [sdg_13_10]

Table 9.1: Share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption, EU-28, 2004-2017

2004		2007		2012		2017	
Sweden	38.87	Sweden	44.13	Sweden	51.08	Sweden	54.5
Latvia	32.79	Latvia	29.61	Latvia	35.71	Finland	41.01
Finland	29.23	Finland	29.58	Finland	34.42	Latvia	39.01
Croatia	23.41	Austria	26.99	Austria	31.03	Denmark	35.77
Austria	22.96	Croatia	22.16	Croatia	26.75	Austria	32.56
Portugal	19.21	Portugal	21.92	Denmark	25.75	Estonia	29.21
Estonia	18.36	Romania	18.32	Estonia	25.54	Portugal	28.12
Lithuania	17.22	Denmark	17.76	Portugal	24.58	Croatia	27.28
Romania	16.19	Estonia	17.03	Romania	22.79	Lithuania	25.84
Slovenia	16.13	Lithuania	16.48	Lithuania	21.44	Romania	24.47
Denmark	14.85	Slovenia	15.61	Slovenia	20.82	Slovenia	21.55
France	9.5	EU (28 countries)	10.6	Bulgaria	16.05	Bulgaria	18.73
Bulgaria	9.45	France	10.24	Hungary	15.53	Italy	18.27
EU (28 countries)	8.53	Germany	10.02	Italy	15.44	EU (28 countries)	17.52
Spain	8.33	Italy	9.81	EU (28 countries)	14.68	Spain	17.51
Poland	6.91	Spain	9.65	Spain	14.29	Greece	16.32
Greece	6.88	Bulgaria	9.24	France	13.62	France	16.3
Czechia	6.86	Hungary	8.57	Germany	13.6	Germany	15.45
Slovakia	6.39	Greece	8.13	Greece	13.46	Czechia	14.76
Italy	6.32	Czechia	7.96	Czechia	12.83	Hungary	13.33
Germany	6.18	Slovakia	7.78	Poland	10.9	Slovakia	11.49
Hungary	4.36	Poland	6.92	Slovakia	10.43	Poland	10.9
Cyprus	3.07	Cyprus	4	Belgium	7.18	Ireland	10.65
Ireland	2.38	Ireland	3.51	Ireland	7.1	United Kingdom	10.21
Netherlands	2.05	Netherlands	3.32	Cyprus	6.77	Cyprus	9.85
Belgium	1.89	Belgium	3.1	Netherlands	4.69	Belgium	9.06
United Kingdom	1.13	Luxembourg	2.73	United Kingdom	4.24	Malta	7.17
Luxembourg	0.9	United Kingdom	1.78	Luxembourg	3.14	Netherlands	6.6
Malta	0.1	Malta	0.18	Malta	2.82	Luxembourg	6.38

Source: Eurostat, [sdg_07_40]

Environment and Sustainability

Emissions



Progress is being made across the EU-28 to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. However, contribution to this progress is not evenly shared across all Member States. Using 1990 as a baseline, between 1991 and 2016, emissions from Cyprus (+42.8), Spain (+13.7), Portugal (+12.9) and Ireland (+12.3) increased the most, with the greatest reductions experienced in Lithuania (-62.3), Latvia (-49.1), Estonia (-43.6) and Denmark (-40.8). In later years, between 2012 and 2016, Ireland shows the greatest increase (+8.2), followed by Cyprus (+3.7), Portugal (+2.1) and Hungary (+1.5), with Malta (-53.7), Greece (-18.7), the United Kingdom (-11.9) and Luxembourg (-10.2) making the greatest reductions (Chart 9.1). These figures show the level of fluctuation in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions across time in the EU-28, however those countries currently going against the trend face a considerable environmental and financial cost.

As a member of the European Union, Ireland has committed to legally binding emissions reduction targets in 2020 and 2030. We have committed to a 20% reduction on 2005 emission levels by 2020, and a 30% reduction of emissions compared to 2005 levels by 2030. Ireland will not meet the 2020 target. The EPA currently projects that Ireland will achieve a mere 1% reduction on 2005 emission levels. Our GHG emissions are nearly 3 million tonnes over the pathway required to meet our 2020 targets and we are on track to overshoot these targets significantly. The latest EPA report on our GHG emissions shows that they decreased very slightly in 2017 due to ‘circumstantial’ issues, but emissions from agriculture increased by almost 3%. Emissions from agriculture have increased annually since 2012 as a result of various agricultural policies that are entirely at odds with environmental policy since 2012, the Climate Change Framework, the Climate Action and Low

Carbon Development Act, and our national and international commitments.

The latest Emission Gap Report from the United Nations found that current national commitments for emissions reductions are insufficient to ensure global warming stays below 2°C by 2030. If countries do not commit to more ambitious emission reduction targets then global warming cannot be contained below 1.5°C as recommended by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 2018.

Renewable Energy

The average share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption in the EU-28 has increased, from 8.53% in 2004 to 17.52% in 2017. Sweden, Finland and Latvia have consistently been the best performers during this period, with Malta, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom lagging behind. Ireland has also consistently been in the bottom quartile (Table 9.1).

The *White Paper on Energy* envisages Ireland reducing emissions from energy systems by up to 95% (based on 1990 levels) by 2050, to zero by 2100. Ireland’s target is part of the overall headline target pledged by the European Union of at least a 40% reduction in domestic GHG emissions by 2030 compared to 1990. While overall the White Paper contains some very positive aspirations, it is short on detail as to how we are going to achieve these aspirations.

Policy Priorities

- Set ambitious emissions reduction targets for 2030 and ensure sufficient resources to support implementation of these targets.
- Increase the proportion of energy generated by renewables.

