

# “Should the fight against climate change include taking international action (such as exclusion from international institutions, sanctions, etc.) against sovereign countries, which allow environmental abuse through direct action or negligence?”

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Dealing with climate change is probably the greatest challenge facing the international community in this decade. According to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the major industrialized nations have to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by up to 40% in the coming decades if global warming is to be limited to below 2°C. It is repeatedly emphasized that the climate crisis is a global problem and can therefore only be solved through joint international action. Although the Paris Agreement signed in 2015 is a binding treaty under international law, most countries are still doing too little to achieve the climate targets set out in the agreement.

So far, however, there are hardly any opportunities to take diplomatic action against countries that fail to meet their climate targets (or act in a way that is harmful to the climate). The withdrawal of the USA from the Paris Agreement in 2019, for example, has shown that in international climate policy, the implementation of climate protection measures must be enforced with sanctions if necessary. Another example is the deforestation of the Brazilian rainforest by President Bolsonaro. The international community must have effective means to respond to such environmental degradation

And there are already sanctions in place. Austria, for example, will presumably have to pay over 4 billion euros in penalties to the EU for not meeting its climate targets. Environmental damage and climate change have a global dimension and do not stop at national borders. If one country fails to meet its climate targets, this has consequences for the entire global community.

On the other hand, many poor and developing countries depend on the extraction and export of limited resources (e.g. oil). This is often associated with negative environmental effects.

However, these countries derive an important part of their economic growth from this sector. Imposing too strict climate protection regulations on them would mean restricting their development and denying them important development options.

After all, the climate crisis is a challenge that can only be solved through international cooperation. The transition to a sustainable world must be shaped within a political world order based on multilateral agreements, community and cooperation. Sanctions or the exclusion from international negotiations would only have the opposite effect and make joint efforts even more difficult. Once states are lost as cooperation partners through exclusion from negotiations, it will be all the more difficult to bring them back on board.

## Further

# QUESTIONS

**1** How can climate action and sanctions be effectively enforced in international climate policy? Especially considering that only the large industrialized nations are in a position to do so, while at the same time being among the largest emitters of greenhouse gases?

**2** In recent decades, many of the major industrialized nations have outsourced their climate- and environmentally-damaging industries to poorer regions of the world. Can climate damage therefore be clearly attributed to one particular country?

**3** Should political instruments such as emissions trading be used instead of diplomatic or economic sanctions?

**4** Should rich industrialized nations invest in climate protection projects in developing countries? Or invest in climate protection in their own countries?

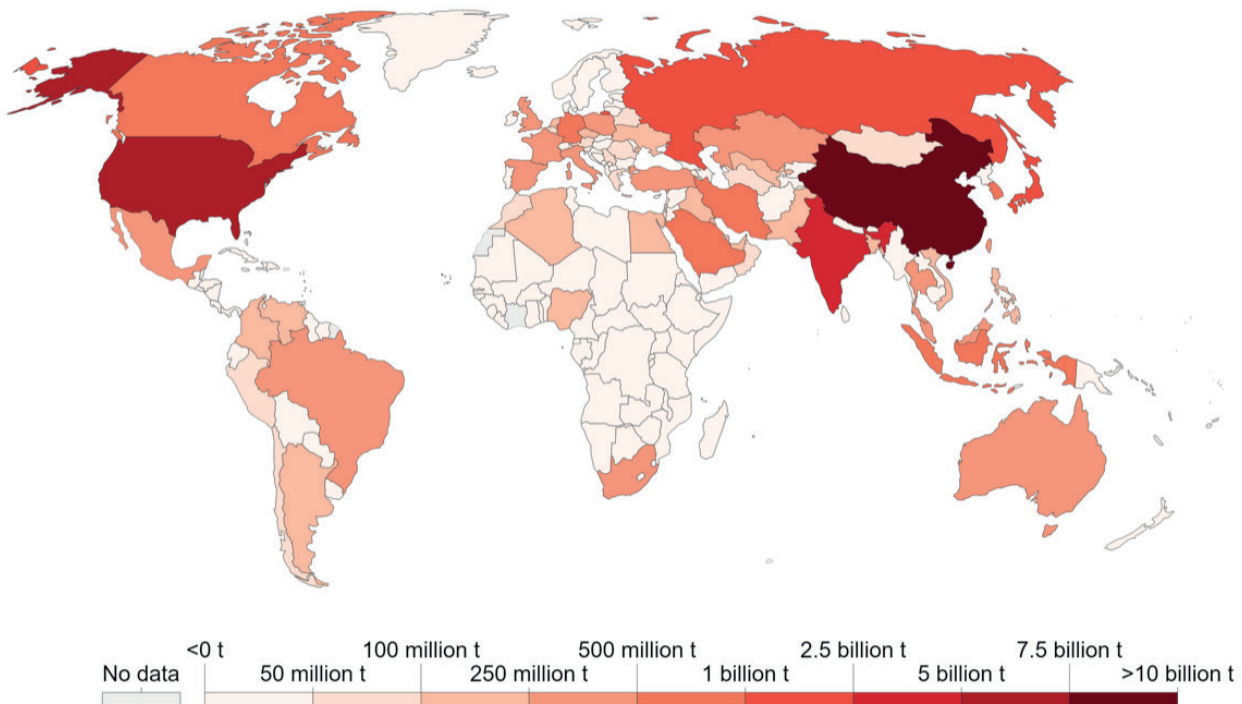
## Further reading:

- Lessenich, Stephan. Neben uns die Sintflut. Die Externalisierungsgesellschaft und ihr Preis. Hanser Berlin. München. 2016
- Rätz, Werner et al. (Hrsg.). Ausgewachsen. Ökologische Gerechtigkeit, soziale Rechte, gutes Leben. VSA Verlag. Hamburg. 2011.
- <https://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/umwelt/klimawandel/38551/zukunft-der-klimapolitik>
- <https://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/umwelt/klimawandel/38535/akteure>
- <https://www.oxfam.de/system/files/oxfam-katastrophen-klimawandel2015-factsheet.pdf>

## Annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, 2019

Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from the burning of fossil fuels for energy and cement production. Land use change is not included.

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in Data



Source: Global Carbon Project; Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Centre (CDIAC)

Note: CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are measured on a production basis, meaning they do not correct for emissions embedded in traded goods.

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