

Fact checking the BBC

I was surprised to receive an email from the BBC after my interview on Monday of last week. It asked me to prove that German carbon dioxide emissions were twice as large as the UK's, a claim I made in my interview. I was surprised because I would expect the BBC to know the main sources of carbon dioxide emissions worldwide as practically every BBC news show and comment show has to have a climate change item on it these days. I sent him back couple of sources that a simple google search yielded. I had of course checked my recollections of the numbers before doing the interview so I knew they were correct. He expressed no interest in my allegations about China which accounts for around 27 times as much CO2 output as the UK.

He returned to the issue having consulted someone else to point out that if you looked at consumption patterns rather than at where fuel was burned and things made the UK would have a worse figure and Germany as a leading exporter of carbon dioxide drenched products would have a bit better figure by transferring some of their CO2 to the importing country. Germany would of course still be the larger emitter. I explained that I was talking about COP 26 and the global Treaty framework. The whole basis of the international conferences is to get countries to pledge to cut the CO2 that is generated on their territory, as that is more subject to their control. Surely the expression Germany's CO2 output means just that, the CO2 they produce.

He agreed that the figures used were correct but felt he needed to write an additional essay about how perhaps we should use consumption based figures instead of the agreed international output based figures. I objected to this being done in the name of a fact check on what I had said when it was obvious I had cited accurate normal figures. Nonetheless the BBC fact check then posted a long essay which did begin by quoting another source to show my figures were accurate before going into a long apology for Germany and a representation of figures to cast Germany in a better light. Why? Why does Germany have to be protected when her business model includes digging out plenty of brown coal and burning it, and producing millions of fossil fuel burning vehicles. In contrast the UK has all but phased out coal from the mix. Why no mention of Germany's rows over extending open cast coal mining, her refusal to eliminate coal this decade, and no mention of China, the world's largest carbon dioxide producer?