

Which countries produce most CO 2?

Those who campaign most strongly to reduce CO 2 and other greenhouse gases always want to the UK to do more but are usually quiet about the countries that produce most and are increasing their output. The UK has halved its output per head of CO 2 since 1990 but is given no credit for this by its green critics, who will never be appeased.

Using the figures set out in the EU 2022 Report on each country, the world's big five producers of CO 2 are China, the USA, the EU, India and Russia. Three of these led by China are still increasing their output. They account for almost two thirds of world emissions.

Total CO 2 output 2021

China 12,466 m tonnes

USA 4,752 m tonnes

EU 2,774 m tonnes

India 2,648 m tonnes

Russia 1,942 m tonnes.

World 37.8 bn

In the next grouping down there are Japan, Iran, South Korea and Saudi Arabia, all above 500 m tonnes.

If we look at per capita CO 2 output the UAE at 20 tonnes per person a year and Saudi at 16.6 are high, reflecting their output of oil. China, the Netherlands, Poland, Germany and Japan are all around 8 tonnes per head, the USA is at 14 and South Korea at 12. The UK is now down at 4.95.

Any analysis of these figures based on the wish to get the total down would mainly direct attention to the big five as they are so dominant. China in particular is a major part of the problem. China's growth in CO 2 each year typically exceeds the UK total output.! If you also wish to take into account fairness issues attention should turn to CO 2 per head, where taking the larger countries with high figures down to the UK level would enable the world to hit the green targets.

I appreciate some readers do not wish to see CO 2 reduction pursued as a main policy. I am accepting the fact that all the main world governments do wish to limit greenhouse gases and have baked this into their global and national policies. They should study the figures more to see which countries produce most , and they should question the advice more to avoid adopting products and policies which fail to cut world CO 2 in the way they hope. Only when China, India and Russia curb their output will the world have a chance to go to net zero. Why don't the campaigners concentrate more on that challenge?