

The European Commission the EU ETS win the Climaxi Greenwash Awards

by
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The European Commission and its sinking climate flagship policy, the EU ETS, wins the Climaxi Greenwash Awards

Though promoted by the European Commission as an effective climate policy, this is a myth. The reality is that for eight years, the EU's Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS) is a complete failure and a subsidy for the worst polluters.

The EU ETS has been making headlines for the past weeks due to failed attempts to raise the carbon prices. On Saturday 20th April, the EU ETS came first place at Climaxi's Greenwash competition with a big majority, taking 46% of the votes (545 votes). The Greenwash awards, organised by Belgian activist group Climaxi, is meant for organisations or companies who in spite of the green image they cultivate, promote activities which are far from sustainable.

The nomination was submitted by Carbon Trade Watch, Corporate Europe Observatory and FERN, groups part of the Time to Scrap the ETS campaign, arguing that the ETS needs to be exposed for what it is, a subsidy for the worst polluters that the EU Commission is using to avoid effective climate policies. In addition, the Commission is irresponsibly expanding the scheme to other regions and to other areas of nature.

The Greenwash awards did not run short of nominees with serious damaging credentials, such as the Flemish Institute for Biotechnology (VIB by its Flemish initials), who got 350 votes, nominated by the Field Liberation Movement. VIB is spending lots of the public money it gets to work together with big corporations such as BASF, Monsanto or Bayer, which are responsible of much of the dangerous pesticide, herbicide and genetically modified organisms (GMO) use around the world. Other nominees were Coca-Cola and WWF working together in the campaign for the protection of the polar bear with no mention of the severe impacts of the company in among others the depletion of water resources in India and many other regions of the world. The list was completed with the energy company Electrabel, which features as a green company while keeping nuclear plants and controlling high energy prices, the Limburg Society for Reconversion for its promotion of shale gas, and Deutsche Bank for supporting mining and the exploitation of the North Pole.

It is not surprising the ETS won the first prize. The Commission is indeed doing its best to promote the EU carbon market as a smooth climate tool effective in reducing emissions. And with the help of the World Bank, it is actively encouraging and helping other countries to create carbon markets modelled on the EU ETS.

That is why it is more urgent than ever to expose the EU ETS, and the greenwashing attempts of the Commission. The EU ETS is not reducing emissions. It is not moving industry to tackle the structural changes needed to reduce emissions at source in Europe. Instead, it has helped to lock in an economic system dependent on polluting extractive industries and has worked as a subsidy for the worst polluters, translating it into enormous windfall profits. And it is blocking real climate action desperately needed in the EU. At the end, the EU ETS has allowed the EU to keep business as usual while painting a green image on false solutions as carbon trading.

This is why over 140 groups are calling to scrap it (<http://scrap-the-euets.makenoise.org/>), and make room for effective climate policies. The declaration is still open for organizations, networks, groups and collectives to subscribe though the email: scrap.the.ets@gmail.com.

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