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Complete update of digital environmental encyclopaedia

New links and information on newest legislation on environmental data website

The popular research portal “Daten zur Umwelt“ has undergone a comprehensive revamp. The interested public will find answers to all the critical environmental questions such as ‘How clean is the air we breathe?’; ‘How polluted are Germany’s rivers and lakes?’; ‘Does transport still have the same environmental impact that it did 10 years ago?’ Background information about relevant laws and environmental policy goals are just a click away. An abundance of diagrams and tables illustrate the decrease of greenhouse gas emissions in Germany or the negative effects of traffic noise on people. “‘Environmental Data’ (*Daten zur Umwelt*) represents the main door to environmental topics“, says Federal Environment Agency President Jochen Flasbarth. “The general public can access sound information about environmental protection in Germany here.“ The website also lists suggested reading and links to additional sources of information.

The ‘Environmental Data’ website also draws attention to legal developments in the field of environmental law, especially as concerns climate protection. It also features the federal government’s environmental policy goals. Many keywords reference relevant literature and links.

The digital environmental encyclopaedia quickly sums up the current status of the environment in Germany. One positive development, for example, is the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions achieved. Germany is well ahead of other European countries in this regard. As of 2010 greenhouse gas emissions had decreased by some 289 million tonnes over 1990 volumes, a drop of 23.1 percent; in other words, Germany remained below the Kyoto Protocol target for the fourth year in a row. A major reason for this decline is the development of renewable energies, which accounts for the prevention of 119 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions in 2010 alone.

The data on noise annoyance, however, indicates that there is urgent need for action. Model calculations by the Federal Environment Agency show that 13 million people in Germany are now at increased risk of heart disease owing to traffic noise. Yet another figure makes one sit up and take notice: only 8 percent of Germany’s flowing waters currently have “good” or “very good” ecological status as required by the European Union (EU). The most common causes are dyking,

straightening of watercourses, interrupted water flows, and nutrient inputs that come mainly from agriculture. On a positive note: almost all of the bathing waters in Germany (lakes and coastal waters) comply with the quality standards set in the EU Bathing Water Directive.

Further information, Links

The website *Daten zur Umwelt [Environmental Data]* is here:
<http://www.umweltbundesamt-daten-zur-umwelt.de>

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