

THE CHALLENGE OF ECO-INNOVATION IN EUROPE

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The Eco-Innovation Observatory , a platform for collecting and analyzing information on eco-innovation from the entire European Union and the main world economic regions, has recently published the document [The Eco-Innovation Challenge. Pathways to a resource-efficient Europe.](#)

This is the first annual report on the state of eco-innovation in Europe, focusing the analysis on the efficiency in the use of materials (fossil fuels, minerals, metals and biomass). Although material productivity is improving, in the EU there is no absolute decoupling between economic growth and material use.



(DMC = Domestic Material Consumption).

Eco-Innovation Observatory calculations based on Eurostat data. [The Eco-Innovation Challenge. Pathways to a resource-efficient Europe](#)

There are three main arguments that the report presents to focus the analysis on the consumption of materials:

- **From an environmental perspective**, due to the hyper-consumption of materials: currently, the global level of consumption places natural resources in serious danger of over-exploitation and even collapse. Between 1980 and 2007, the extraction and use of natural resources has increased by 62% (only in 2007 more than 60,000 million tons of renewable and non-renewable resources were extracted and used).
- **From a political perspective**, for security in access to certain materials: The European Union is the world region with the most net imports of resources per person. Regarding energy, in 2007 Europe imported 47% of the natural gas it consumed, 59% of coal and 83% of oil (it is expected that for the next 20-30 years 70% of European energy will have to be imported). Likewise, also in 2007 the dependence on copper was 50%, 65% for zinc, and close to 100% for other metals used in high technology.
- **From a business perspective**, due to the savings derived from material efficiency: given the general increase in the prices of certain raw materials expected for the coming years, companies should focus on improving efficiency material for further savings in production costs.



[The Eco-Innovation Challenge. Pathways to a resource-efficient Europe](#)

Presenting the challenge of eco-innovation as the improvement of material efficiency without thereby implying an absolute increase in the consumption of resources (an approach related to the rebound effect of eco-innovation), the report advances a series of future scenarios around the trends in the consumption of materials as a first proposal of objectives to be achieved by the EU in the 2050 horizon.



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In addition, the report presents for the first time a comparison of the state of eco-innovation

between EU member states through the EU-27 Eco-Innovation Scoreboard (although the results are presented as provisional in the absence of methodological reviews of the indicator developed, for which we will have to wait until next year).

[The Eco-Innovation Challenge. Pathways to a resource-efficient Europe](#)

On the portal [Eco-Innovation Observatory](#) you can find more information on the subject: consult reports specific by country, database of good practices, etc.

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