

WHAT IS THE COST OF INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION IN SPAIN?

Posted on 08/03/2012 by Naider



According to the European Environment Agency, the **economic cost of air pollution** caused by the main industrial facilities in Europe in 2009 ranges between 102,000 and 169,000 million euros (10,000 facilities accounted for). The report [Revealing the costs of air pollution from industrial facilities in Europe](#) states that, assuming the benefits provided by the industrial sector, there are hidden costs of pollution that must be analysed.

[On the EEA website](#) You can also access a table with the 622 most polluting facilities in Europe, responsible for more than three quarters of the total cost resulting from the study (between 76,653 and 125,898 million euros). From among them, the data for Spain can be extracted and, in fact, the estimated cost for each specific installation can be observed. For example, the Carboneras thermal power plant (Almería) is responsible for a cost due to air pollution of between 270 and 439 million euros per year, while the Petronor refinery in Muskiz (Bizkaia) generates a cost of between 152 and 281 million euros per year.



[Data on Spanish industrial facilities taken from the Table hosted on the EEA website](#)

In Spain, the contamination of these 44 facilities generates an associated cost of between 3,694 and 5,816 million euros. The study differentiates between the cost associated with CO₂, the cost associated with regional pollutants (NH₃, NO_x, PM₁₀, SO₂) and the cost associated with heavy metals and volatile organic compounds, since the methodology for calculating their impact on the environment and human health is different for each case.

Worldwide, and expanding the sectors analyzed, in the report [Expected the Unexpected: Building business value in a changing world \(KPMG\)](#) it is estimated that in 2008 the 3,000 most important companies by market value generated an economic-environmental cost of 2.15 trillion dollars, equivalent to 50 percent of its earnings (EBITDA). There are sectors in which said cost far exceeds the benefits generated, and in many others the environmental cost accounts for more than 50% of revenue.



The EEA report is an example of how to attribute the environmental cost directly to the agent that generates the impact, saving the [a diffuse responsibility for pollution](#). The KPMG report puts concrete figures on the negative externalities generated by certain economic sectors. The different methodologies that support these studies still need to be refined, but it is clear that economic growth, profit accounts or the increase in GDP, as they are currently measured, are nothing more than a mere mirage.

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