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Embargoed Until: Tuesday, June 26 at 9:30 AM EDT

World Energy Rankings Suggest Countries Need Energy Efficiency to Meet Paris Goals

Italy and Germany place first, US loses ground, Mexico improves

Washington, DC (June 26, 2018): Some countries do strikingly better than others in saving energy, but all can better use efficiency to meet their Paris Agreement climate goals, according to ***The 2018 International Energy Efficiency Scorecard*** published today by the nonprofit American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE). No country came close to a perfect score, and the average remained the same as in 2016 — 51 out of a possible 100 points. Overall, Germany and Italy tie for first place this year with 75.5 points, closely followed by France (73.5), the United Kingdom (73), and Japan (67).

This fourth biennial scorecard ranks 25 of the world's largest energy users on 36 efficiency metrics and highlights best practices countries can use to boost energy savings. For the first time, it includes the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Ukraine.

“Our results show that all countries would benefit from adopting additional energy efficiency policies,” said Steve Nadel, ACEEE’s executive director. “These policies will reduce dependence on energy imports, create jobs, cut pollution, and save people and businesses money. They will also help countries remain globally competitive and meet climate goals,” Nadel said, noting that global energy demand is projected to grow 30% by 2040.

Within sectors, Germany scored best for national efforts, including cross-cutting targets and programs. Spain nabbed the top spot for buildings-related efforts, while Japan led on industry and France on transportation.

In a troubling development, the United States slid from 8th place in 2016 to 10th in 2018 by scoring six fewer points.

“This trend is likely to persist if the current administration continues to dismantle key regulations,” said Shruti Vaidyanathan, ACEEE’s senior advisor for research. “At imminent risk are joint fuel economy and greenhouse gas standards for light-duty vehicles for model years 2021 onwards, a program that put the United States at the forefront of vehicle efficiency efforts.” US Environmental Protection Agency actions are also threatening heavy-duty vehicle standards, and future improvements to existing appliance standards have ground to a halt. In addition, the United States’ withdrawal from the Paris Agreement suggests more rollbacks to come. The administration’s focus on energy production rather than efficiency has meant that progress on federal energy efficiency policies has largely stalled.

On a positive note, the most improved country this year is Mexico, which moved up from 19th place in 2016 to 12th this year by scoring 17 more points. Mexico's recent adoption of an overarching energy efficiency program — the National Program for the Sustainable Use of Energy — has spurred significant investment in efficiency programs and standards. Additionally, Mexico sits just below the United States and Canada in the rankings this year, suggesting that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) may be playing a role in harmonizing efforts among the three member countries.

At the bottom of this year's rankings are Saudi Arabia and the UAE, with scores of 16.5 and 18 points, respectively. However scores for these countries in part reflect poor data availability. South Africa fills out the bottom three with a score of 23.5, nearly 10 points lower than in 2016.

Energy efficiency will need to account for almost half of all the greenhouse gas emission reductions necessary through 2040 to limit the global increase in temperature to 2 degrees Celsius, [according to the International Energy Agency](#). To meet their climate targets and reap the multiple benefits of energy efficiency, countries should build efficiency into their economic and energy-related plans and learn from one another by emulating the best policies and practices of leading countries.

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The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy acts as a catalyst to advance energy efficiency policies, programs, technologies, investments, and behaviors. For information about ACEEE and its programs, publications, and conferences, visit <http://aceee.org>.