



MILESECURE-2050 PROJECT FINAL SEMINAR

Brussels, December 15, 2015

University Foundation, rue d'Egmont 11 – 1000 Brussels

Welcome address

Pierre LACONTE – President, Foundation for the Urban Environment;
Member of the Milesecure-2050 Advisory Board;
Organiser of the University Foundation Programme “World of Cities”

The University Foundation

The University Foundation, created in 1920, is a meeting place for academics from Belgium, their colleagues from abroad, and civil society representatives. It has 1200 members and hosts a large roster of scientific activities.

It has been my pleasure to help the Milesecure Project, which is being hosted here for its final seminar.

The GHG emissions measurement issue

This final seminar coincides with the Paris Climate Conference's Final Agreement. It may be of interest briefly to recall an unresolved issue (see my Warsaw 2013 keynote address): the absence of agreed measurement standards for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the need to find something else.

GHG accounting methodology

A survey of GHG-emissions accounting methods has been done, in a (too) little-known comparative study by Baader N. and Bleidschwitz R., at the College of Europe in 2009. Unlike the measurement of GNP, for which there is a generally agreed method, there is no such agreement about the GHGs.

Who is measuring?

The measurement tools differ vastly according to the institutions in charge of measuring:

CO2 Grobbilanz/EMSIG (Climate Alliance Austria, Energy Agency of the Regions)

ECO2Region (Climate Alliance, Ecospeed)

GRIP (Tyndall Centre, UK Environment Agency)

Bilan Carbone (ADEME)

CO2 Calculator (Danish National Environmental Research Institute, Local Government Denmark, COWI)

Project 2 Degrees (ICLEI, Clinton Climate Initiative, Microsoft)

What emissions are measured and how?

- The measurement covers either all of the six different Kyoto GHGs, or only some of them, mainly carbon dioxide and methane.
- Different potential global warming estimates are obtained according to whether the second, third or fourth IPCC report is used.
- The reporting standards are different.
- The scope of measurement either only includes direct emissions or also includes indirect and life cycle emissions.
- The sectoral definitions are highly variable e.g. those for transport (aviation and shipping excluded).

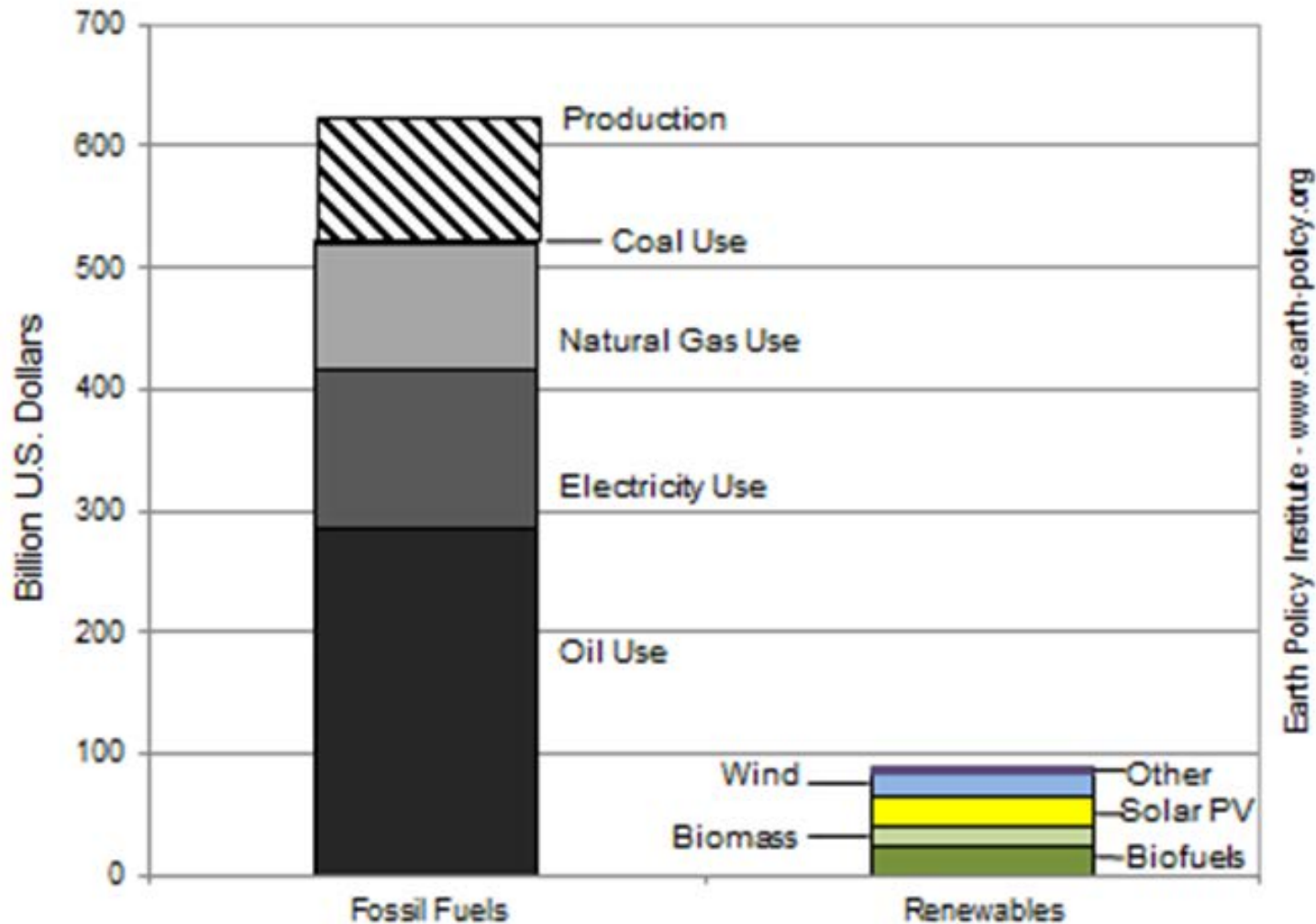
Trading of emissions

The European emissions trading system has been widely criticised because of the unreliability of its measurement, the numerous exemptions granted under pressure from interest groups, and the excessive number of free allowances and windfall opportunities.

In addition, the difficulty of controlling the validity/authenticity of the certificates and the 28 accounting systems have generated numerous frauds and discredited the system in Europe, while it has been functioning for a long time in the US to “cap and trade” sulphur emissions.

At the world level - Measuring energy production and consumption is a realistic substitute for direct measurement of GHGs, as these are by far the main sources of emissions.

Fossil Fuel and Renewable Energy Subsidies, 2011



Earth Policy Institute - www.earth-policy.org

At the EU level - The European Environment Agency has undertaken a early detailed analysis of energy subsidies (for the year 2001) - with the help of Ecologic, Berlin, a Milesecure-partner. These subsidies include:

- on-budget subsidies paid directly to producers, consumers or related bodies which appear on national balance sheets as government expenditure; and
- off-budget subsidies, including tax-exemptions and preferential treatments, which do not appear on national balance sheets as government expenditure. The transatlantic trade Treaty presently under negotiation may also increase off-budget subsidies.

It is recommended that the analysis of fossil fuel subsidies (as compared with renewables) is deepened, and that means of reducing and suppressing these subsidies are examined, with the aim of eventually replacing them by fossil fuel taxation.