



July 2021

It Happens Only to Others

Save the Climate

It is well known, and the IPCC has said so, the countries that will suffer the most from global warming are the most poverty-stricken countries. Yet, precisely because they are poor, they are the ones that emit the least CO₂. This is all very unpleasant for them, but we make ourselves feel better by promising to help them via technical international mechanisms that will be discussed at length during the next COPs. Meanwhile, we think that in our rich countries, global warming cannot be so serious, at least for the time being.

However, nature has no feelings. Climate change is, indeed, impacting poor countries severely, with for example, increasing aridity in African countries such that agriculture is unable to feed the populations. But rich countries can also be hit hard. Recent disasters are a demonstration of this: the wildfires in Australia, Siberia and Sweden, to name only the most gigantic, the deadly heat hitting not only the West of the United States but also Canada, the floods with their dramatic consequences in Germany, Belgium, China, India...

No, the disastrous consequences do not affect only the poor countries and no, they are not for the day after tomorrow, they are happening today.

How can we then comprehend that some countries refuse to commit to taking steps towards drastically limiting global warming?

How can we comprehend that some of the countries that claim to be seriously committed to mitigating climate change are closing CO₂-emission free nuclear reactors and, to compensate for the missing electricity production, leave coal-fired power plants in operation (or even build them) while these emit not only CO₂ but also many other polluting compounds?

How can we comprehend that developed countries, the CO₂ emitters, are hem and hawing, entering in sterile political discussions about the means to be deployed, instead of focusing solely on emissions reductions and fossil fuel phase-out?