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## Economic Growth and a Low Carbon Economy—Does the Earth Suffer from an “Easter Island Syndrome” ?

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### ABSTRACT

The history of the Eastern Islands in the Pacific with an increasing over-utilization of natural resources reminds us of the mistakes modern societies are making and the question is obvious whether the Earth is suffering from an Eastern Islands Syndrome, in other words whether the egoism inherent in humans long-term might have fatal consequences for our species homo sapiens. Climate research identified two important phenomena, which should remind us of the Easter Islands: feedbacks and tipping points, i.e. self-accelerating phenomena of global warming and reaching irreversible points of climate change. Only a quick worldwide return to a low carbon economy is able to stabilize global warming on a bearable level. Both, Annex-I countries and Non-Annex-I countries have to contribute to reaching this goal taking their historical, current and future responsibilities into account. A post Kyoto regime based on cumulative per-capita CO<sub>2</sub>-emission rights and a international emission trading could provide for incentives to achieve a low carbon economy, especially for newly industrialized countries.

### KEYWORDS

Climate Change, Feedbacks, Tipping Points, Per Capita Cumulative Emission Rights, Emission Trading

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