

# THE UPSIDE OF THE PANDEMIC: LESS POLLUTION IN CHINA AND ITALY



NASA and European Space Agency (ESA) pollution monitoring satellites have detected significant decreases in nitrogen (NO<sub>2</sub>) and carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) over China, Germany, Italy and Spain related to the economic slowdown following the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19).

In late 2019, a new coronavirus was confirmed, and later identified as COVID-19. By January 23, 2020, Chinese authorities had stopped transportation and local business activities in Wuhan, the epicenter of the outbreak, but as evidence shows, **it had the secondary effect of decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and less pollution.**

Venice, Italy, reports that the water of the canals (its greatest tourist attraction) looks clearer and even fish and geese swim in it. The event was largely explained by the decrease of people on the streets and the closure of the city from foreign tourism, of which they have been complaining for years.

In Spain, carbon dioxide emissions decreased 18.5% and the fall is expected to be greater as the coronavirus lockdown continues since the government already announced a 10-day state of a health emergency.

Germany, which closed its borders for 30 days, also recorded a 6.3% decrease in carbon dioxide.

**“Of course the reduction of economic activity and the effects of the coronavirus on the population’s customs will translate into a greater decrease in [greenhouse gas] emissions,”** said the Federal Environment Agency President Dirk Messner, praising a report on the current environmental situation.

Although the coronavirus outbreak has already claimed many lives, the effects in the fight against climate change seem to be positive, for now.

Date: 2020-03-23

Article link:

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