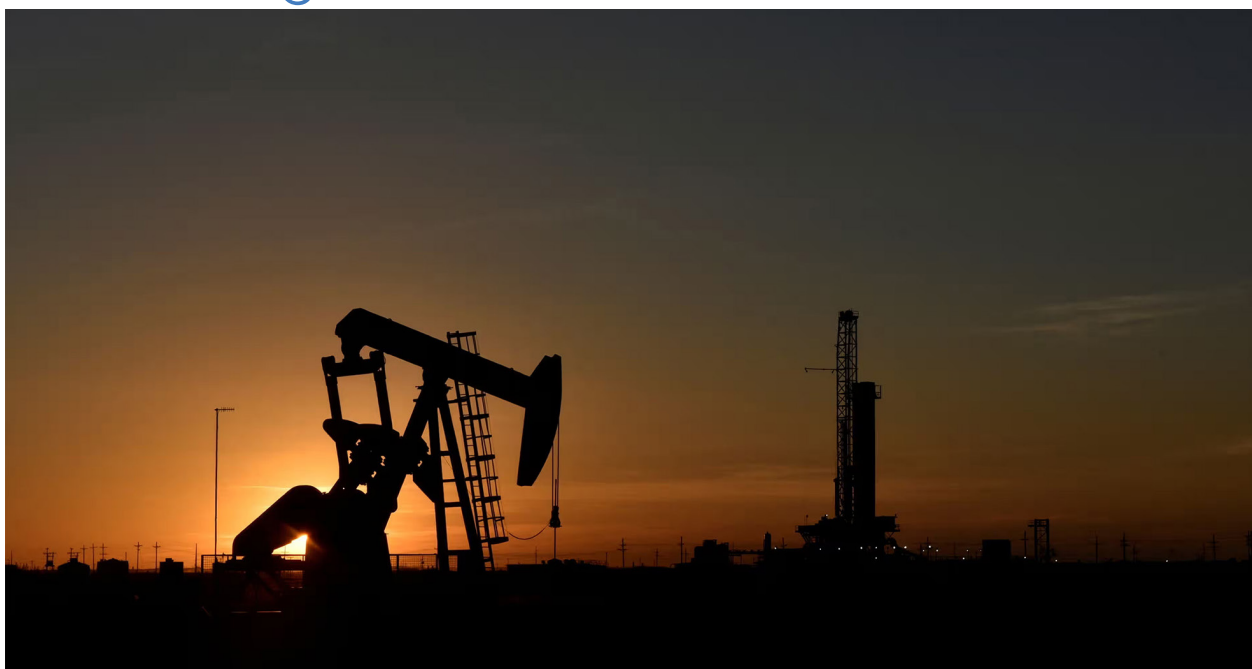


“Leading drivers of the climate crisis”



The historical record encompasses 122 entities linked to 72% of all the fossil fuel and cement CO2 emissions since the start of the industrial revolution. Photo: Nick Oxford/Reuters.

April media coverage of climate change or global warming in newspapers around the globe rose 6% from March 2024. Meanwhile, coverage in April 2024 dropped 7% from April 2023 levels. Of particular note, in April international wire services increased 9% from the previous month, as radio coverage also went up 4% from the previous month. Figure 1

shows trends in newspaper media coverage at the global scale - organized into seven geographical regions around the world - from January 2004 through April 2024.

At the regional level, April 2024 coverage increased in North America (+2%), Asia (+6%), the European Union (EU) (+10%), Africa (+11%), and

2004–2024 World Newspaper Coverage of Climate Change or Global Warming

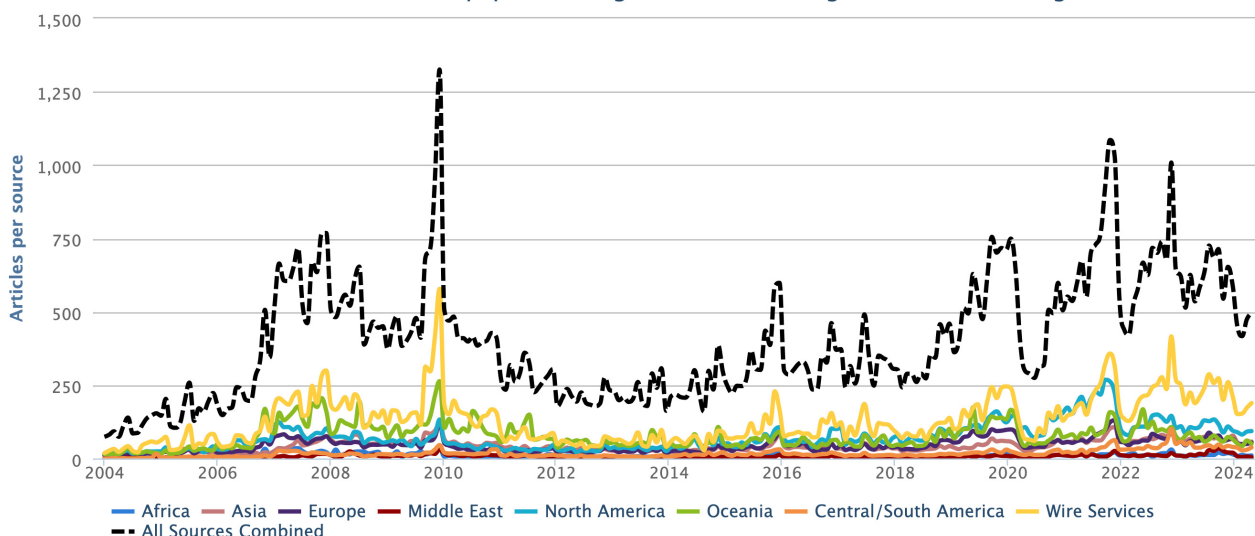


Figure 1. Newspaper media coverage of climate change or global warming in print sources in seven different regions around the world, from January 2004 through April 2024.

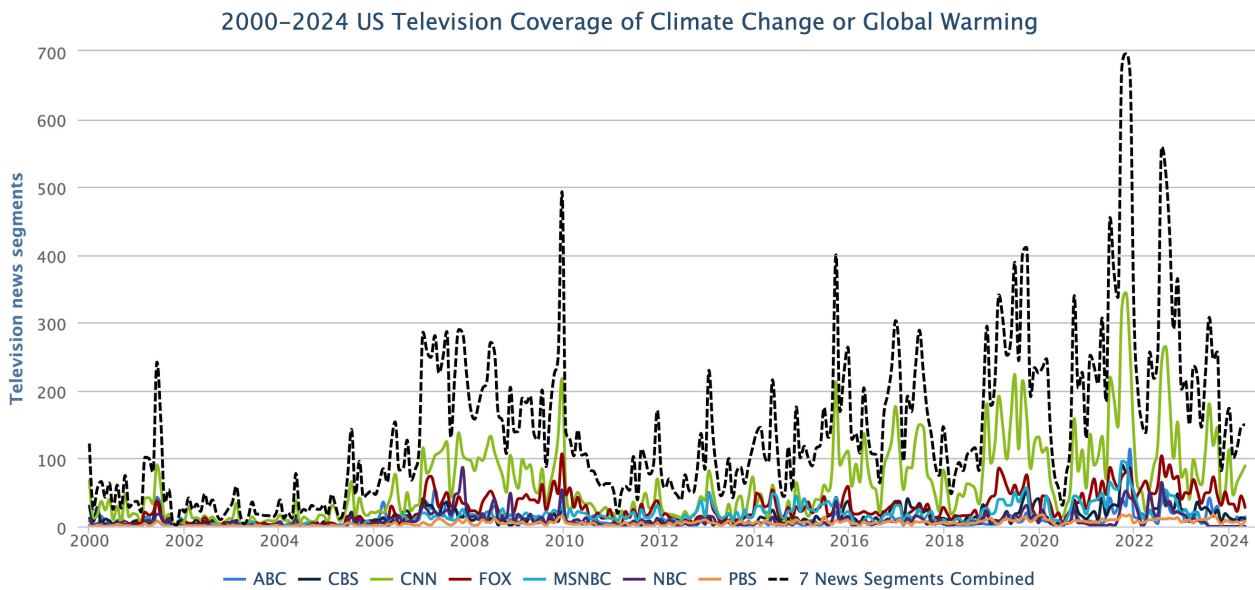


Figure 2. US television coverage of climate change or global warming from January 2000 through April 2024.

Latin America (+26%) compared to the previous month of March. Meanwhile, coverage decreased in Oceania (-19%), and the Middle East (-36%).

At the country level, coverage for example in United States (US) print newspapers - *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post* - dropped 2% from the previous month while coverage in US television - *ABC*, *CBS*, *CNN*, *Fox News*, *MSNBC*, *NBC*, and *PBS* - increased 3% from March 2024 [see Figure 2].

Our Media and Climate Change Observatory (MeCCO) team continues to provide international and regional assessments of trends in coverage, along with country-level appraisals each month. Visit our [website](#) for open-source datasets and downloadable visuals.

Moving to the content of April 2024 coverage, there were many media stories relating to **ecological** and **meteorological** dimensions of climate change or global warming. At the beginning of the month, flooding in the Middle East - with connections to a changing climate - pervaded international media attention. For example, [CNN correspondents Nadeen Ebrahim, Mary Gilbert and Brandon Miller reported](#), "Chaos ensued in the United Arab Emirates after the country witnessed the heaviest rainfall in 75 years, with some areas recording more

than 250 mm (around 10 inches) of precipitation in fewer than 24 hours, the state's media office said in a statement Wednesday. The rainfall, which flooded streets, uprooted palm trees and shattered building facades, has never been seen in the Middle Eastern nation since records began in 1949. In the popular tourist destination Dubai, flights were canceled, traffic came to a halt and schools closed. One-hundred millimeters (nearly 4 inches) of rain fell over the course of just 12 hours on Tuesday, according to weather observations at the airport - around what Dubai usually records in an entire year, according to United Nations data. The rain fell so heavily and so quickly that some motorists were forced to abandon their vehicles as the floodwater rose and roads turned into rivers. Extreme rainfall events like this are becoming more common as the atmosphere warms due to human-driven climate change. A warmer atmosphere is able to soak up more moisture like a towel and then ring it out in the form of flooding rainfall. The weather conditions were associated with a larger storm system traversing the Arabian Peninsula and moving across the Gulf of Oman. This same system is also bringing unusually wet weather to nearby Oman and southeastern Iran. In Oman, at least 18 were killed in flash floods triggered by heavy rain, the country's National Committee for Emergency Management said. Casualties included schoolchildren, according to Oman's state news agency".

Elsewhere, *New York Times* journalists Zia ur-Rehman and Christina Goldbaum noted, “A deluge of unseasonably heavy rains has lashed Pakistan and Afghanistan in recent days, killing more than 130 people across both countries, with the authorities forecasting more flooding and rainfall, and some experts pointing to climate change as the cause. In Afghanistan, at least 70 people have been killed in flash floods and other weather-related incidents, while more than 2,600 homes have been destroyed or damaged, according to Mullah Janan Sayeq, a spokesman for the Ministry of Disaster Management. At least 62 people have died in the storms in neighboring Pakistan, which has been hammered by rainfall at nearly twice the average rate for this time of year, according to Pakistani officials. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, the Pakistani region bordering Afghanistan, appears to be the hardest hit. Flash floods and landslides caused by torrential rains have damaged homes and destroyed infrastructure. Photos and videos from the province show roads turned into raging rivers, and homes and bridges being swept away”.

As the month of April continued, a heat wave in Southeast Asia - with connections to climate change - made news. For example, *Guardian* correspondent Rebecca Ratcliffe reported, “Millions of people across South and Southeast Asia are facing sweltering temperatures, with unusually hot weather forcing schools to close and threatening public health. Thousands of schools across the Philippines, including in the capital region Metro Manila, have suspended in-person classes. Half of the country’s 82 provinces are experiencing drought, and nearly 31 others are facing dry spells or dry conditions, according to the UN, which has called for greater support to help the country prepare for similar weather events in the future. The country’s

“The World Meteorological Organization warned in a report this week that Asia remained “the **world’s most disaster-hit region** from weather, climate and water-related hazards in 2023”.



A man cools off in street tap water during the heatwave in West Bengal, India. Photo: Jit Chattopadhyay/SOPA Images/REX/Shutterstock.

upcoming harvest will probably be below average, the UN said. April and May are usually the hottest months in the Philippines and other countries in south-east Asia, but temperatures this year have been worsened by the El Niño event, which brings hotter, drier conditions to the region. Thai authorities said 30 people had been killed by heatstroke so far this year, and warned people to avoid outdoor activities. Demand for electricity soared to a new high on Monday night of 35,830 megawatts, as people turned to air conditioning for relief, local media reported...The World Meteorological Organization warned in a report this week that Asia remained “the world’s most disaster-hit region from weather, climate and water-related hazards in 2023”. Floods and storms caused the highest number of reported casualties and economic losses, it said, while the impact of heatwaves became more severe. Last year, severe heatwaves in India in April and June caused about 110 reported deaths due to heatstroke. “A major and prolonged heatwave affected much of South-east Asia in April and

May, extending as far west as Bangladesh and Eastern India, and north to southern China, with record-breaking temperatures,” WMO said. Human-caused climate breakdown is supercharging extreme weather across the world, driving more frequent and more deadly disasters from heatwaves to floods to wildfires. At least a dozen of the most serious events of the last decade would have been all but impossible without human-caused global heating”. Meanwhile, [New York Times correspondent Saif Hasnat and Mike Ives noted](#), “Asia’s heat wave isn’t happening in a meteorological vacuum. Last year was Earth’s warmest by far in a century and a half. And the region is in the middle of an El Niño cycle, a climate phenomenon that tends to create warm, dry conditions in Asia. Asia’s summer monsoon will bring relief, but it’s still weeks away. In Thailand on Monday, the national forecast called for “hot to very hot weather.” It put the chances of rain in Bangkok, the capital, at zero percent”. Reporting [from The Daily Star in Bangladesh also documented](#), “At least 23 days of this month were heatwave days, which equals the record set in 2019 for the entire year...Recently published BMD report “Changing Climate of Bangladesh” observed that the minimum and maximum temperatures increased in the country but the maximum temperatures increased more rapidly”.

Several other [meteorological](#) themed media stories were published on climate change or global warming. For example, experts blame warming waterspouts of water in Dubai. [El País journalist Manuel Planelles wrote](#), “On April 14 and 15, impressive rains hit the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and northern Oman. In Dubai, where rainfall was concentrated on April 15, all previous records for daily rainfall in the last 75 years were surpassed, when records began, according to the Government of this country (...) “Cloud seeding did not have a significant

“On April 14 and 15, impressive rains hit the United Arab Emirates and northern Oman. In Dubai, where rainfall was concentrated on April 15, all previous records for daily rainfall in the last 75 years were surpassed, when records began”.



Screenshot from [video](#) on El País. Credit EPV.

influence on the event,” concludes a report prepared by a group of scientists from World Weather Attribution (WWA). In this case, the WWA considers that warming has contributed to making these rains stronger”.

Over in Europe, [La Vanguardia journalist Antonio Cerrillo noted](#), “The year 2023 was the first or second warmest year in Europe as a whole since records have been recorded (depending on whether Greenland data is taken into account). The average temperature in the Old Continent last year was 1°C higher than the 1991-2020 average, according to the report on the climate in Europe from the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the EU Copernicus program. But the most relevant thing is that, while the entire planet records a temperature rise of 1.4°C compared to the time pre-industrial, in Europe the rise is 2.6°C. Why that difference? Since the 1980s, Europe has been warming twice as much as the world average. It is the continent that most rapidly experiences this process. This is mainly due to the greater proportion of European land in the Arctic, the fastest warming region on Earth (3°C since the 1970s)”.

Some media coverage in the month of April 2024 featured related and ongoing **cultural**-themed stories relating to climate change or global warming. To illustrate, connections between climate change and public health were documented in several news stories. For example, [BBC journalists Esme Stallard and Owen Pinnell reported](#), “A father has started legal action against UK oil giant BP over the death of his 21-year-old son. Hussein Julood alleges the burning off of gas at a BP-run oil field in Iraq – a practice known as flaring – caused his son Ali’s leukemia. A *BBC World Service* investigation in 2022 found Ali’s village, which lies within the field, had high levels of cancer-causing pollutants known to come from flaring. BP said “we understand the concerns” and are supporting change. The case is believed to be the first time an individual has started legal action against a major oil firm over its flaring practices...

The deadly impact of the oil giants’ toxic air pollution on children and the planet is revealed in this *BBC News Arabic* investigation from the front line of climate change in Iraq”.

Next, several **political** and **economic**-themed media stories about climate change or global warming comprised a subset of April 2024 coverage. In another instance, there were stories across Europe about a court ruling in Switzerland that human rights were violated by failing to adequately address climate change. For example, [BBC correspondent Georgina Rannard reported](#), “A group of older Swiss women have won the first ever climate case

“A father has started legal action against UK oil giant BP over the death of his 21-year-old son. Hussein Julood alleges the burning off of gas at a BP-run oil field in Iraq – a practice known as flaring – caused his son Ali’s leukemia. A *BBC World Service* investigation in 2022 found Ali’s village, which lies within the field, had high levels of cancer-causing pollutants known to come from flaring.”



Ali's house lies within the boundaries of Rumaila oil field. Credit: BBC.

victory in the European Court of Human Rights. The women, mostly in their 70s, said that their age and gender made them particularly vulnerable to the effects of heatwaves linked to climate change. The court said Switzerland’s efforts to meet its emission reduction targets had been woefully inadequate”. Elsewhere, [Wall Street Journal reporter Yusuf Khan noted](#), “The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) on Tuesday ruled in favor of a group of elderly Swiss women who argued that their government isn’t doing enough to fight climate change, putting them at risk of death from heat waves. In what is being seen as a landmark case in the fight against climate change, the ECHR ruled 16

votes to one in favor of the women's' claims that Swiss authorities aren't taking sufficient action to mitigate the effects of climate change, under the European Convention on Human Rights. In particular, the court found that the convention "encompasses a right to effective protection by the State authorities from the serious adverse effects of climate change on lives, health, well-being and quality of life." Given this, it said current efforts by the Swiss government were lacking, including a failure to quantify national greenhouse-gas-emission limitations. More than 2,000 women from across Switzerland brought the claim. The ruling sets an important precedent for governments in their bid to protect citizens against the effects of climate change. Lawyers are suggesting it could influence legislation in other European countries. It is the first time the powerful court has ruled on global warming". As a third example, *El País* journalist Manuel Planelles reported, "Around 2,000 women banded together to take their government to court because they claimed its lack of action puts them at risk of dying, for example, during a heat wave. It is the first time that this court has ruled on the lack of action by state authorities against global warming. The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) does not include any right to a healthy environment as such. But the ECHR has issued several rulings in this environmental matter, understanding that the exercise of certain rights of the convention may be undermined by the existence of damage to the environment and exposure to environmental risks. This is the route used by the complainants, who have received the support of environmental organizations, to reach this international court".

Last, April 2024 media stories featured several *scientific* themes in stories during the month. To begin, news broke from a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) report that carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide gases reached record levels in the atmosphere. For example, *Guardian* correspondent Oliver Milman wrote, "The levels of the three most important heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere reached new record highs

"The levels of the three most important heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere reached new record highs again last year, US scientists have confirmed, underlining the escalating challenge posed by the climate crisis."



A woman protects herself from the sun in São Paulo, Brazil. Photo: Sebastião Moreira/EPA.

again last year, US scientists have confirmed, underlining the escalating challenge posed by the climate crisis. The global concentration of carbon dioxide, the most important and prevalent of the greenhouse gases emitted by human activity, rose to an average of 419 parts per million in the atmosphere in 2023 while methane, a powerful if shorter-lasting greenhouse gas, rose to an average of 1922 parts per billion. Levels of nitrous oxide, the third most significant human-caused warming emission, climbed slightly to 336 parts per billion. Through the burning of fossil fuels, animal agriculture and deforestation, the world's CO₂ levels are now more than 50% higher than they were before the era of mass industrialization. Methane, which comes from sources including oil and gas drilling and livestock, has surged even more dramatically in recent years, NOAA said, and now has atmospheric concentrations 160% larger than in pre-industrial times. NOAA said the onward march of greenhouse gas levels was due to the continued use of fossil fuels, as

well as the impact of wildfires, which spew carbon-laden smoke into the air. Nitrous oxide, meanwhile, has risen due to the widespread use of nitrogen fertilizer and the intensification of agriculture”.

Then in mid-April a new study linking lost global income and global warming earned news attention. For example, [Associated Press](#) journalist [Seth Borenstein](#) wrote, “Climate change will reduce future global income by about 19% in the next 25 years compared to a fictional world that’s not warming, with the poorest areas and those least responsible for heating the atmosphere taking the biggest monetary hit, a new study said. Climate change’s economic bite in how much people make is already locked in at about \$38 trillion a year by 2049, according to Wednesday’s study in the journal *Nature* by researchers at Germany’s Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research. By 2100 the financial cost could hit twice what previous studies estimate. “Our analysis shows that climate change will cause massive economic damages within the next 25 years in almost all countries around the world, also in highly-developed ones such as Germany and the U.S., with a projected median income reduction of 11% each and France with 13%,” said study co-author Leonie Wenz, a climate scientist and economist. These damages are compared to a baseline of no climate change and are then applied against overall expected global growth in gross domestic product, said study lead author Max Kotz, a climate scientist. So while it’s 19% globally less than it could have been with no climate change, in most places, income will still grow, just not as much because of warmer temperatures”.

Then in late April, a study from Carbon Majors Database about culpability and climate change generated several news accounts. For example, [Guardian](#) journalist [Jonathan Watts](#) reported, “A mere 57 oil, gas, coal and cement producers

“Climate change will reduce future global income by about 19% in the next 25 years compared to a fictional world that’s not warming, with the poorest areas and those least responsible for heating the atmosphere taking the biggest monetary hit”.



People watch the sunset at a park on an unseasonably warm day, Feb. 25, 2024, in Kansas City, MO. Photo: Charlie Riedel/AP.

are directly linked to 80% of the world’s global fossil CO₂ emissions since the 2016 Paris climate agreement, a study has shown. This powerful cohort of state-controlled corporations and shareholder-owned multinationals are the leading drivers of the climate crisis, according to the Carbon Majors Database, which is compiled by world-renowned researchers. Although governments pledged in Paris to cut greenhouse gases, the analysis reveals that most mega-producers increased their output of fossil fuels and related emissions in the seven years after that climate agreement, compared with the seven years before. In the database of 122 of the world’s biggest historical climate polluters, the researchers found that 65% of state entities and 55% of private-sector companies had scaled up production. During this period, the biggest investor-owned contributor to emissions was ExxonMobil of the United States, which was linked to 3.6 gigatons of CO₂ over seven years, or 1.4% of the global total. Close behind were Shell, BP, Chevron and

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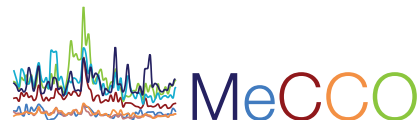


Figure 3. Examples of newspaper front pages with climate change stories in April 2024.

TotalEnergies, each of which was associated with at least 1% of global emissions. The most striking trend, however, was the surging growth of emissions related to state and state-owned producers, particularly in the Asian coal sector. This expansion, which has continued since, runs contrary to a stark warning by the International Energy Agency that no new oil and gas fields can be opened if the world is to stay within safe limits

of global heating. Climate scientists say global temperatures are rapidly approaching the lower Paris target of 1.5C above the pre-industrial era, with potentially dire consequences for people and the rest of nature”.

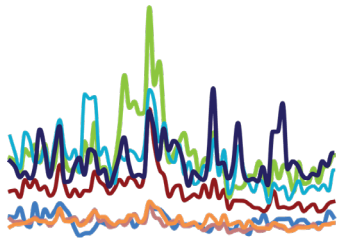
~ report prepared by Max Boykoff, Rogelio Fernández-Reyes, Ami Nacu-Schmidt and Olivia Pearman



Thank you for your ongoing interest in the work we do through MeCCO. We remain committed to our work monitoring media coverage of these intersecting dimensions and themes associated with climate change.

Our ongoing work is dependent on financial support so please consider contributing:

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MeCCO

Media and Climate Change Observatory

MONTHLY SUMMARIES

ISSUE 88, APRIL 2024



MeCCO monitors 131 sources (across newspapers, radio and TV) in 59 countries in seven different regions around the world. MeCCO assembles the data by accessing archives through through Factiva, Infomedia, ProQuest, Nifty and NexisUni databases for our work across our various institutions. These sources are selected through a decision processes involving weighting of three main factors:



**Geographical
Diversity**

favoring a greater geographical range



Circulation

favoring higher circulating publications



**Reliable Access to
Archives Over Time**

**favoring those accessible consistently
for longer periods of time**

Media and Climate Change Observatory, University of Colorado Boulder

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