

Assessing compliance with the Lough Erne commitments

Research into how G8 members comply with their summit undertakings allows an assessment of the effectiveness of global governance institutions

By Caroline Bracht, G8 Research Group, and Mark Rakhmangulov, International Organisations Research Institute, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow

Understanding how much and how well the G8 members implement the summit commitments they make enhances the group's legitimacy as an international decision-making body in pursuit of its core values of open democracy, individual liberty and social advance.

The G8 Research Group, based at the University of Toronto, and the International Organisations Research Institute at the National Research University Higher School of Economics in Moscow have collaborated on many compliance reports since 2006.

These reports measure the extent to which G8 members have implemented their priority commitments across a range of issues raised at each summit. The reports rely on publicly available information, and are distributed to a broad stakeholder community for feedback to ensure comprehensive and accurate data collection and assessment.

The most recent compliance report, which assesses 18 of the 214 commitments made at the 2013 Lough Erne Summit, is based on relevant government actions taken from the day the commitments were made, 18 June 2013, until 13 January 2014. This period ends at the halfway mark between the Lough Erne Summit and the G7 Brussels Summit on 4-5 June 2014. Any actions taken by a G8 member since 13 January will be considered in the final compliance report, which will be released on the eve of the Brussels Summit.

For the six-and-a-half-month period after the Lough Erne Summit, the G8 achieved a

compliance average of 70 per cent. This is on par with previous years. In 2010 the interim score was 70 per cent as well and the final score rose to 73 per cent. Since 2010 the final compliance average has been increasing, with final scores of 77 per cent in 2011 and 80 per cent in 2012.

How members rank

Individual members' interim rankings are mainly in line with past performance, with some variations. The United States and the European Union are tied for first place, each receiving an overall score of almost 81 per

Compliance was highest on the commitment to cooperate in reducing global imbalances, with almost all members achieving 100 per cent

cent. The United Kingdom follows with 78 per cent, just ahead of Canada and France each with 72 per cent, followed by Italy and Germany with 64 per cent, and Russia with 61 per cent. Russia's score is slightly higher than its score of 59 per cent in 2012, but considerably lower than in 2011 and 2010, when it ranked third and first respectively. Japan ranks last among G8 members, with an interim compliance score of almost 59 per cent. This is a deviation, as Japan's score was higher than the overall average in 2012 and 2011.

The difference between the highest and lowest compliance scores is 22 percentage points, similar to the difference in the 2010 final report. This represents a considerable

decline compared with the very high level of 35 percentage points in 2012.

Average compliance by commitment is almost uniformly distributed from 50 to 100 per cent, with the sole exception of climate finance (at 45 per cent). As in previous years, only one commitment achieved a 50 per cent average. No commitments were fully complied with by all members, unlike in previous years, with four in 2012, one in 2011, and three in 2010. Of the 18 commitments assessed, 11 had scores above the overall average of 70 per cent. This set of commitments is quite diverse and includes not only areas where the G8 usually scores the highest, such as regional security and terrorism, but also macroeconomic policy, information and communication, and health. Other commitments with high compliance averages were on issues directly related to the Lough Erne Summit's priority agenda of trade, tax and transparency.

The level of compliance was highest on the commitment to cooperate in reducing global imbalances, with almost all members achieving a score of 100 per cent. However, the other macroeconomic policy commitment, on nurturing the

global recovery by supporting demand, was considerably lower, below the overall average score of 67 per cent. The three trade commitments received varying scores, with the one on facilitating institutional investment flows into bankable trade-related infrastructure projects in Africa coming in the

highest at 78 per cent. The commitment to pursue negotiations on bilateral, regional or multilateral trade deals scored highly as well (at 72 per cent), but the remaining one on liberalising trade in green goods and services received only 50 per cent.

Progress on open data

The majority of G8 members complied fully with the commitment on implementing the Open Data Charter, including by developing appropriate national action plans, producing an average level of almost 84 per cent. Two interrelated commitments achieved a high level of compliance: improving corporate transparency, at 78 per cent, and raising global standards and working towards

Leaders at the 2013 summit at Lough Erne: at 70 per cent, the G8's interim compliance average was on a par with that of previous years



REUTERS/TYFES HERMAN

common reporting standards in the extractive industries, at 72 per cent.

Climate change revealed a disappointing but consistent trend. The G8 has consistently performed poorly on its climate change commitments and this trend remained unchanged. In fact, the only commitment with an average below 50 per cent was the one on mobilising \$100 billion in climate finance per year by 2020. Only two members complied in full and four countries complied partially. Another climate change commitment was assessed at a higher score of

67 per cent, but that was still below average. All G8 members joined the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, but their level of support was mixed for developing the relevant scientific evidence base and involving the private sector.

The final scores for complying with the Lough Erne Summit commitments, which will be presented before the Brussels Summit, are significantly affected by the decision of the G7 members to suspend their participation in the preparations for the G8 summit in Sochi, Russia. With the cancellation of the Sochi Summit, attention is now focused on

the situation in Ukraine and cooperation in many G8-related forums has been suspended in the absence of an effective pre-scheduled presidency. However, independent assessment of compliance with summit-made commitments remains a powerful instrument for analysing the effectiveness of global governance institutions. Further research on the performance of the G7 members after the Brussels Summit will facilitate comparative assessments of the group's effectiveness in comparison with other multilateral institutions, including the G8. ■