

Russian Think Tank Alleges Climate Data Tampered With

By Sean Higgins

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The Institute of Economic Analysis, a Moscow-based independent economic think tank, alleged in a paper released Tuesday that climate change data involving Russia appears to have been tampered with. The claim was made based on an analysis of newly available data from the U.K.-based Hadley Center for Climate Change, which is affiliated with the Climate Research Unit at the University of East Anglia. The latter is at the center of the recent "climategate" controversy.

The IEA unfortunately does not offer English-language versions of its reports on its Web site. However, [Andrei Illarionov](#), IEA founder and editor of the report, is also a senior fellow at the free market Cato Institute and talked to IBD about the report's conclusion.

"The Hadley Center as well as the CRU ... about a week ago, put up on a Web site the data they used for calculating global temperatures," said Illarionov. "It looks like that, based on this information, the (climate researchers) selected particular (meteorological) stations on the Russian territory and rejected using some other stations. (The report) is an analysis of what stations have been used, what stations have not been used and based on this analysis it looks like the real actual temperature dynamics ... in Russia, that is the increase in warming, have been artificially increased by 0.64 degrees Celsius."

According to an [analysis of the report](#) in the Russian daily business newspaper Kommersant, the stations cover most of Russia but the Hadley Center used only 25% of the stations in its reports, typically ones closer to large population centers. The data from the unused stations reportedly did not show any substantial warming trends.

Russia accounts for a major share of the world's total land mass, so erroneous data there could have a significant impact on global temperature readings.

Samuel Charap, associate director for Russia and Eurasia, National Security and International Policy at the liberal Center for American Progress, urged people to be skeptical regarding the report's findings.

"Illarionov is a notorious climate change skeptic," Charap said. "He is a serious economist, but he has some very strong opinions."

It's unclear how the report will affect Russia policy. Illarionov is a former adviser to former President Vladimir Putin — now prime minister — but is an opposition figure now, Charap says.

Then again it is not as if Russia was in much of a mood to deal on climate change anyway. It had already [threatened to walk away](#) from the Copenhagen talks if it didn't get its way. Those [talks are in general disarray](#) in any event.

UPDATE: Illarionov has posted an English-language [summary of the IEA report](#) on the Cato's blog.

UPDATE 2: For more in-depth coverage of this issue, go [here](#).