

# SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

## POLICY

### Canada's election

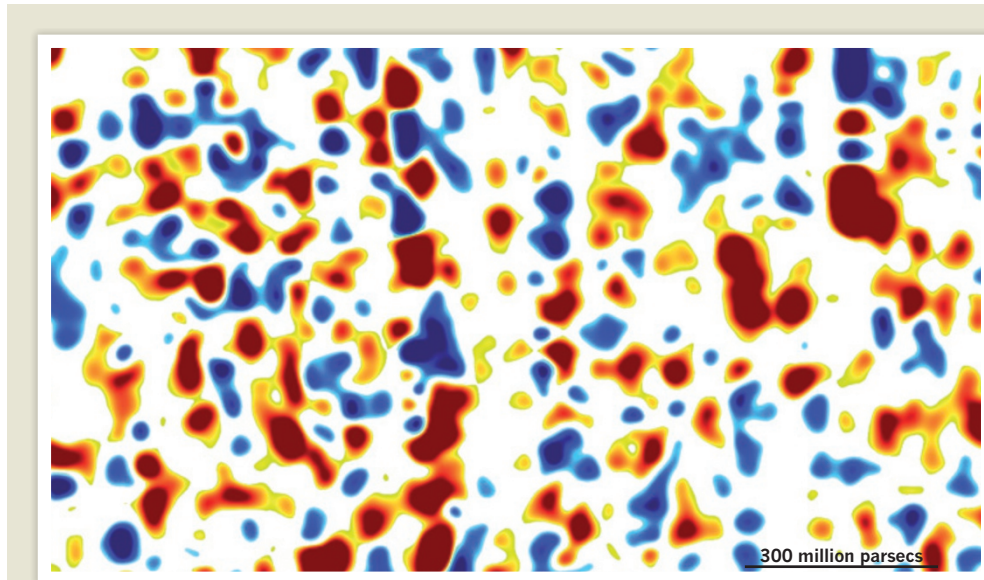
National elections in Canada on 2 May brought bad news for environmentalists, even though the Green Party won its first-ever parliamentary seat. After five years of minority rule, the Conservative Party won an outright majority; the party is generally hostile to efforts to address climate change, and is enthusiastic about extracting oil from western Canada's tar sands. See [go.nature.com/wlyicg](http://go.nature.com/wlyicg) for more.

### Scientist glut?

Amid concerns over the increasing demand for grants and the length of time it takes to train a scientist, the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) has asked a panel of external advisers to report on what a future biomedical-research workforce should look like. It will tackle questions such as how many scientists the United States needs, and how the country should train them. The group, named on 27 April, will make its recommendations to NIH director Francis Collins' advisory committee, possibly by summer 2012. See [go.nature.com/rfowsx](http://go.nature.com/rfowsx) for more.

### Biodiversity plan

On 3 May, the European Commission published a new plan to improve Europe's biodiversity over the next decade. The strategy includes targets on sustainable agriculture, safeguarding fish stocks, controlling invasive species and protecting and restoring ecosystems. It falls roughly into line with agreements made at a biodiversity summit in Nagoya, Japan, last October (see *Nature* 468, 14; 2010) and targets agreed in March



## Mapping the distant Universe

The first three-dimensional map of the distant Universe, showing clumps of hydrogen gas between 3 billion and 3.7 billion parsecs away, was released on 1 May at a meeting of the American Physical Society in Anaheim, California. The map — the fruits of the Baryonic Oscillation Spectroscopic Survey experiment — was made by measuring

14,000 quasars, the luminous nuclei of early galaxies. Their light is absorbed at particular wavelengths as it passes through the hydrogen. Ripples in this gas (a two-dimensional slice is pictured, with density of gas increasing from blue to red) could shed light on how dark energy drove the expansion of the early Universe. See [go.nature.com/fromkf](http://go.nature.com/fromkf) for more.

2010 by the Council of the European Union to halt biodiversity loss by 2020.

## BUSINESS

### Hepatitis advance

Two new drugs against the hepatitis C virus (HCV) have won unanimous votes of confidence from advisers to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). On 27 April, the FDA's Antiviral Drugs Advisory Committee recommended approving boceprevir, developed by Merck, headquartered in Whitehouse Station, New Jersey. The next day, the same committee gave its support to telaprevir, developed by Vertex Pharmaceuticals in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Both drugs block HCV's protease enzyme. If approved by the FDA, they would be the first therapeutics on the market to directly target HCV, which is currently treated with general antivirals and immune-boosting proteins. See [go.nature.com/qjoqfn](http://go.nature.com/qjoqfn) for more.

### Health-care buyout

US health-care giant Johnson & Johnson will take over medical-device manufacturer Synthes in a deal worth 19 billion Swiss francs (US\$21.8 billion), the companies announced on 27 April. Synthes, headquartered in Solothern, Switzerland, makes implants, biomaterials and instruments for orthopaedic surgery.

### Pharma takeover

Teva Pharmaceuticals, the world's largest generic drug maker, headquartered near Tel Aviv, Israel, announced on 2 May a US\$6.8-billion deal to buy Cephalon, which makes the narcolepsy treatment modafinil. Cephalon, based in Frazer, Pennsylvania, had been fighting off a hostile \$5.7-billion takeover bid from Canadian firm Valeant Pharmaceuticals of Mississauga, Ontario.

### Stem-cell joy

Shares in several stem-cell firms rallied in the wake of a US appeals court decision to overturn an injunction that would freeze federal funding for research on human embryonic stem cells. After

A. SLOSAR/BOSS LYMAN-ALPHA COSMOLOGY WORKING GROUP

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the 29 April ruling, StemCells, Advanced Cell Technology, Pluristem Therapeutics, Aastrom Biosciences and Geron all saw gains. See page 15 for more on the decision.

PEOPLE

**Russian space chief**

Russia's prime minister, Vladimir Putin, has fired the chief of the nation's space agency, Anatoly Perminov. Perminov, who has headed Roscosmos since March 2004, will be replaced by deputy defence minister Vladimir Popovkin. A change had been widely rumoured after December 2010, when three satellites for Russia's global navigation network, GLONASS, crashed into the Pacific Ocean on launch.

**Lab saboteur**

The US Office of Research Integrity last week issued a finding of research misconduct against former University of Michigan postdoctoral fellow Vipul Bhriugu. Last year Bhriugu was caught on video (pictured) sabotaging the work of a student in his lab (see *Nature* 467, 516–518; 2010). At the time he was ordered to pay more than US\$30,000 by a Michigan court for destroying property. The federal government now says his acts constituted research misconduct because



they resulted in falsified data. Bhriugu, now in India, has been barred from receiving US federal funding for three years. See [go.nature.com/lexd9a](http://go.nature.com/lexd9a) for more.

**Research head quits**

Roger Beachy has resigned as director of the US National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to spend more time with his family. Beachy, an eminent plant biotechnologist who retains a position at Washington University in St Louis, has led NIFA since its inception in 2009. See page 19 for more.

EVENTS

**Tornado damage**

Powerful storms and tornadoes that devastated the southern United States last week, killing around 350 people, also knocked out power to the Browns Ferry nuclear plant near Athens, Alabama. But the plant's three reactor units, which have a combined capacity of around 3.3 gigawatts, shut down safely

after diesel generators kicked in. See [go.nature.com/bwbadj](http://go.nature.com/bwbadj) for more.

**Fukushima safety**

A scientific adviser to Japan's government resigned from his post on 29 April, complaining that the safety limit set for radiation in schools around the Fukushima nuclear plant was an ad hoc measure and not in line with international standards. Toshiso Kosako, a radiation-safety expert at the University of Tokyo, said the government's safety limit — 20 millisieverts a year — was too high. Local parents and lobby groups have demanded that the government set stricter limits.

RESEARCH

**Greenland ice**

Ice sheets in Greenland may be more stable than previously thought, results from the North Greenland Eemian Ice Drilling (NEEM) project suggest. In the Eemian interglacial period (130,000–115,000 years ago), temperatures were as much as 5°C warmer than today and sea levels rose by up to 7–8 metres. But new ice cores suggest that melting of the Greenland ice sheet at that time caused global sea levels to rise by only 1 or 2 metres; the remainder may have been made up by ice loss from Antarctica. The findings were presented on 28 April at a symposium at the University

COMING UP

9–13 MAY

The European Materials Research Society teams up with its US counterpart to hold the first bilateral conference on energy, in Nice, France. [go.nature.com/tgxfsi](http://go.nature.com/tgxfsi)

12 MAY

Ministers from eight Arctic nations discuss how to manage the region at the Arctic Council's biennial meeting in Greenland. [go.nature.com/zeeks2](http://go.nature.com/zeeks2)

10–13 MAY

The workings and governance of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are up for review at the panel's 33rd general assembly, in Abu Dhabi. [go.nature.com/utykml](http://go.nature.com/utykml)

of Wisconsin in Madison. See [go.nature.com/nqewa6](http://go.nature.com/nqewa6) for more.

**EU biology links**

Three ambitious biological sciences infrastructure projects, costing €700 million (US\$1 billion), were given the go-ahead in Europe on 3 May. One network will update and link facilities in 26 European countries that maintain collections of key research microbes. Another project will link facilities in ecosystem science, and a third will connect facilities and create data repositories for researchers in systems biology. The new projects, starting in 2014–15, are part of an updated wish list of science facilities drawn up by Europe's leading researchers, the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures. See [go.nature.com/dtuwn](http://go.nature.com/dtuwn) for more.

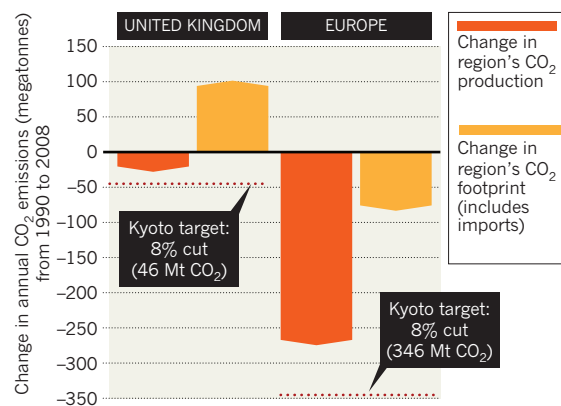
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TREND WATCH

Developed nations are responsible for more carbon dioxide emissions than they produce, because they import goods made in other countries. A study of emissions from 113 countries for 1990 to 2008 (G. P. Peters *et al. Proc. Natl Acad. Sci. USA* doi:10.1073/pnas.1006388108; 2011) shows that developed countries (as classed under the Kyoto Protocol) increased their CO<sub>2</sub> footprint by 7% — even though they reported 2% production cuts. The chart shows the effect for the United Kingdom and Europe.

HOW TRADE AFFECTS CARBON FOOTPRINTS

Rich regions have achieved cuts in carbon emissions since 1990, but largely by importing more goods from elsewhere.



SOURCE: G. PETERS/CICERO