

Guide to Climate Politics

Chancellor Angela Merkel – Germany

Angela Merkel's Germany combines a huge renewable energy industry with an inability to quit coal, and a strong domestic target with a desire to find loopholes for polluters.

Targets

Like all EU nations, Germany is committed to an EU-wide CO₂ reduction of only 20% by 2020 on 1990 levels. This is half the at least 40% required. Germany has, however, committed to a national reduction of 40%. Unfortunately, much of this reduction comes from the collapse of industry in East Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall, rather than real ambition on the part of the German government.

Finance

As with most EU leaders, Angela Merkel has given only vague indications of what Germany is willing to pay to developing countries to combat climate change.

Forests

Angela Merkel supports a two-thirds reduction in deforestation by 2020 – more than EU in aggregate but less than is needed. The German position has not excluded forest protection being used to excuse continued domestic pollution, but it does favour safeguarding the rights of indigenous peoples.

Legal Architecture

Angela Merkel wants to keep the legally binding nature of the Kyoto Protocol for any follow-up protocol. She also wants to keep the current compliance scheme, although this can and should be strengthened.

Domestic Action

Germany has implemented policies on renewable energy that have built the biggest renewable energy industry in Europe. It is expected that the policies currently in place in Germany will see this industry continue to develop, and to drive the growth of renewable globally. This sees Angela Merkel score 4 out of a possible 10 points for domestic action.

More points cannot be awarded because:

- 28 planned new coal-fired power plants are not being stopped by Merkel's government.
- Merkel's new government cancelled the nuclear phase-out in Germany, leading to more nuclear waste for which there is no solution. Answering to one environmental problem with another one leads nowhere.
- She voted against stronger legislation for cars in Europe.

Final Rating: 45 / 100

President Nicolas Sarkozy – France

Nicolas Sarkozy has consistently talked up France's environmental credentials. Sadly, the truth is that France has done little to move negotiations forward and has made little progress at home. President Sarkozy has even been unwilling to follow UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown's lead and commit to attending the Copenhagen Climate Summit. Unless he takes a few more risks, Sarkozy's climate policy will be remembered as 'all talk and no action'.

Targets

Like all EU nations, France is committed to an EU-wide CO₂ reduction of only 20% by 2020 on 1990 levels. This is less than half the at least 40% required. Under Sarkozy, France has pushed for a high share of offsets to be permissible, making this target less convincing.

Finance

On finance for developing countries, Sarkozy has elected to hide the carrot and keep the stick. France is still refusing to commit to giving developing countries concrete financial and technical support to fight the climate crisis. Instead, Sarkozy has threatened developing countries with import tariffs at European borders if they do not reduce their emissions growth.

France has made one constructive proposal in this area – suggesting a levy on maritime and air-freight. So far these sectors have been exempted from all efforts to control their emissions; the French proposal would address this, while possibly providing funding for developing countries.

Forests

Under Sarkozy, France has played a major role in weakening the European position on forest protection. Specifically it has:

- Refused to allow Europe to propose a specific amount of funding to support an international fund to protect the forests.
- Lobbied hard to keep the door open to the rapid inclusion (before 2020) of REDD credits on the carbon market.
- Offered little support for the inclusion of criteria protecting biodiversity, native populations and local communities in forest related parts of the negotiations.

Those positions are totally contradictory with the grandiloquent positions of Nicolas Sarkozy and his government about the necessity of protecting forests and their biodiversity.

Domestic Action

France's poor showing derives in large part from its failure to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions.

While the UK has cut emissions by 17.4% since 1990, France has reduced its emissions by only 5.3% during the same period. This decrease is due more to the economic situation (oil prices, economic crisis) than structural changes. Even though France's per capita emissions are lower than Germany's and the UK's emissions, there need to be structural plans to reduce its emissions.

Its obsession with nuclear energy has prevented the development of renewable energy or strong efficiency policies in France. Answering to one environmental problem with another one leads nowhere.

In the absence of an ambitious policy to develop alternatives to road transport, France has no less than ten highway projects under consideration, as well as an airport project. Emissions from the transport sector have increased by 26% since 1990!

Final Rating: 37 / 100

Prime Minister Donald Tusk – Poland

Under Donald Tusk, Poland has persistently undermined efforts to secure a progressive climate policy. Domestically, Poland remains addicted to coal and seems to have little interest in changing this.

Targets

Like all EU nations, Poland is committed to an EU-wide CO₂ reduction of only 20% by 2020 on 1990 levels. This is half the at least 40% required. Under Tusk, Poland has pushed for a high share of offsets to be permissible, making this target less convincing.

Finance

Donald Tusk has not yet put any figure on the table regarding financial resources that have to flow from Poland to developing countries to combat climate change, and he is resisting ambitious targets in EU negotiations.

Forests

Tusk wants to halve tropical deforestation world wide by 2020; in fact, a complete halt is needed. Poland has also lobbied to have forest offsets take the place of real domestic action.

Tusk wants to protect biodiversity while protecting forests but his proposal lacks sufficient safeguards to achieve this. Under Tusk, Poland has said it wants to respect indigenous people's rights but is unclear how this will be achieved.

Domestic Action

Tusk has put in place a Polish energy policy that is in line with the EU renewable energy target for Poland by 2020 – however, after 2020, no further growth is expected. For that reason Poland earns only 2 points.

No more points are awarded to Tusk because:

- He lobbied successfully for a delay of full auctioning in the EU Emission Trading System until 2020.
- Polish energy policy relies heavily on Carbon Capture and Storage, which will be unable to deliver significant reductions in CO₂ emissions before 2020 – if ever.
- Polish energy policy also includes new nuclear plants, even though there is still no solution to the nuclear waste problem.
- Polish emissions from transport are predicted to increase 68% by 2030, yet there is no plan in place to prevent this.

So, 2 out of 10 points for Tusk for walking the talk at home.

Final Rating: 35 / 100

Prime Minister Jose Luis R. Zapatero – Spain

Zapatero made it to Copenhagen to lobby for Spain's Olympic bid, but has said nothing about attending the climate summit. He was absent as negotiations began in Barcelona. Indeed, saying nothing and doing little seems to be a good description of Spanish climate policy.

Targets

Like all EU nations, Spain is committed to an EU-wide CO₂ reduction of only 20% by 2020 on 1990 levels. This is half the at least 40% required. Under Zapatero, Spain has pushed for a high share of offsets to be permissible, making this target less convincing.

Finance

In terms of the developed countries' commitments regarding public finance for developing countries, the Spanish government has been very reluctant to openly express a concrete position. The announcement made by the vice-president in the welcome ceremony of the climate talks in Barcelona has been taken into account in terms of political will, but it is still too vague to merit any more points. In addition, the Spanish government has no public position regarding the mechanisms to ensure the delivery of the needed amount of funds.

Forests

Spain has expressed no clear positions on the important elements of forest protection.

Legal architecture

Regarding legal architecture of the agreement, in spite of admitting in private the benefits of keeping Kyoto alive, in the public debate Spain remains behind the EU position of giving up on the Kyoto Protocol. Nevertheless, supporting a legally binding outcome gives 1 point to Spain.

Domestic Action

Spain has been a leading country in implementing renewable energy. However, the most recent policies introduced have been intended to slow the growth in renewables in order to preserve the existing fossil fuel infrastructure. This has included additional subsidies for the coal industry.

Spain scores an additional point for its commitment to phasing out nuclear power, even though it is doing so very, very slowly.

Spain is held back because of:

- A failure to fulfil its Kyoto obligations.
- New coal subsidies in the 2010 budget.
- Inadequate energy policy.

...leaving it with 4 out of 10 for domestic action.

Final rating: 28 / 100

President Barack Obama – USA

President Obama's election hasn't brought the breath of fresh air to the climate talks many had hoped for. Instead it's seen a perpetuation of old efforts to disrupt and water down attempts to agree a strong treaty, as Obama tries to bring the whole world down to his own low level of ambition.

Targets

The USA has not brought any target to the negotiation table, making it impossible to build trust with the developing world. Furthermore, proposals to abandon legally binding international targets measured against a single standard, in favour of voluntary national ones, threaten to destroy the integrity of any target agreed at the Copenhagen Summit.

Finance

Under Obama, the USA has failed to put any money on the table to support developing countries in their efforts to prevent or adapt to climate change.

Forests

Under Obama, the USA has not developed any target on stopping deforestation.

Legal Architecture

Obama's negotiating team has been trying to replace the Kyoto Protocol with a deal that would not be legally binding - effectively undoing decades of work on climate protection and returning the world to square one.

Domestic Action

Obama's administration has begun work on climate legislation after George Bush refused to act for eight years. For acknowledging the problem and incorporating funding for renewable energy and energy efficiency into the stimulus package, Obama scores 1 point.

More points cannot be awarded because:

- The proposed climate legislation delivers a cut of less than 4% on 1990 emissions.
- The proposed climate legislation gives billions of dollars to fossil fuel companies.
- The proposed climate legislation would allow massive amounts of offsetting, meaning real US emissions may not fall below their 1990 level at all.

Final rating: 8 / 100

President Hu Jintao – China

Under Hu Jintao, China has taken an increasingly strong role in the negotiations, and backed this with large-scale action at home. However, there remain concerns about Chinese policy on forests and the legal structure of a final deal, plus its overall level of ambition.

Targets

President Hu is willing to ensure China's emissions deviate significantly from business as usual – in the form of aiming for a significant carbon intensity reduction of the whole economy by 2020 with help from developed countries. However, he hadn't given any specific numbers and it's as yet unclear whether China would commit to what science dictates (at least 15% to 30% reduction compared to business as usual).

Finance / Reporting

Hu is willing to report on China's emissions for the next commitment period, but more frequent greenhouse gas inventories would be needed ensure an actual emissions' deviation in line with policies. Hu is willing to allow international verification on measures taken by international money, but ideally he will also allow international verification on unilateral actions.

Forests

Hu does not want emission credits that are generated by preventing deforestation to be used by developed countries to fulfil their national targets - meaning developed countries would have to take real action at home. However China's stance on biodiversity protection and indigenous people rights need improvement.

Legal Architecture

Hu's position on the legally binding aspects of a new protocol is not good enough. He supports only amendments to the Kyoto Protocol and only COP decisions as an outcome from the negotiation track under convention. The risk of this position is that any commitments made by the US may not be legally binding.

Domestic Action

Renewable energy development in China has been spectacular (installed wind power generation capacity doubled four years in a row, and in 2008 China built a wind turbine every two hours). China is also making progress toward its ambitious energy efficiency targets and implementing more policies to ensure these targets are met (although challenges remain).

Hu was not awarded more points because:

- There are still many coal projects underway in China.
- China's coal price remains too low to drive more growth in renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- There is still room for improvement in China's energy policy for the development of renewable energy.

For domestic action, Hu receives 7 out of 10 points

Final Rating: 59 / 100

President Jacob Zuma – South Africa

South Africa has adopted a series of good positions in the negotiations, and backed them with a progressive domestic policy. By pushing for an even stronger treaty and stripping nuclear power and carbon capture and storage from his domestic policy, Jacob Zuma could become a true climate leader.

Targets

President Zuma is willing to ensure South Africa's emissions deviate significantly from business as usual. However, he hasn't given any specific numbers and it's as yet unclear whether South Africa would commit to what science dictates (at least 15% to 30% reduction compared to business as usual).

Finance / Reporting

Zuma is willing to report on South Africa's emissions for the next commitment period, but more frequent greenhouse gas inventories would be needed to ensure an actual emissions' deviation in line with policies. Zuma is willing to allow international verification on measures taken by international money, but ideally he will also allow international verification on unilateral actions.

Forests

Zuma does not want emission credits that are generated by preventing deforestation to be used by developed countries to fulfil their national targets – meaning developed countries would have to take real action at home. South Africa's stance on biodiversity protection and indigenous people rights is quite good but could still improve.

Legal Architecture

Zuma wants to keep the Kyoto Protocol architecture for any follow-up agreement and he also wants to stick to a commitment period of 5 years. It would be good if Zuma pushes for a strengthening of the compliance measures of any follow-up protocol.

Domestic Action

Zuma earns points for putting in place domestic policies that seek a peak in emissions and an absolute decline in emissions afterwards. Zuma has also put in place feed in tariffs for renewables and there are plans for energy efficiency.

Zuma was not awarded more points because:

- South Africa's energy policy also includes many new nuclear plants, even though there is still no solution to the nuclear waste problem. Answering to one environmental problem with another one is a dead-end.
- South Africa's energy policy relies heavily on Carbon Capture and Storage, which will be unable to deliver significant reductions in CO₂ emissions before 2020 – if ever.
- Stronger implementation of renewable energy and energy efficiency is needed.

For domestic action, Zuma receives 4 out of 10 points

Final Rating: 63 / 100

President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva – Brazil

Under Lula, Brazil has shown a willingness to act on deforestation and emission reduction. However, on issues around reporting, biodiversity and indigenous rights, Brazil should do better. Further, domestic implementation of climate policy to date has left a lot to be desired.

Targets

Lula is willing to ensure Brazil's emissions deviate from business as usual by 2020, by reducing 80% of Amazon deforestation by 2020, with help from developed countries. Having a target is important, but the number and timeline proposed is not ambitious enough. Brazil has the capacity to go for zero deforestation in the Amazon, and should enhance its target to that level of ambition

Finance / Reporting

Lula is willing to report on Brazil's emissions once every five years. However, more frequent greenhouse gas inventories would be needed to demonstrate an actual fall in emissions. Brazil's most recent inventory is from 1994, meaning Brazil's official figures do not take account of 15 years of development and deforestation. Lula's credibility and the negotiations would be enhanced if he were to present Brazil's second inventory before Copenhagen.

Lula is willing to allow international verification on measures taken by international money and to monitor and verify national actions domestically.

Forests

Lula does not want emission credits that are generated by preventing deforestation to be used by developed countries to fulfil their national targets – meaning developed countries would have to take real action at home. Lula's stance on biodiversity protection and forest dependent communities needs improvement.

Legal Architecture

Lula's position on the legally binding aspects of a new protocol need improvement too. He is in favour of a legally binding outcome but needs to push harder for a two protocol outcome – an amended Kyoto Protocol and a new Protocol that brings the US into the game.

Domestic Action

Lula gets only 2 points for the reduction in deforestation in the Amazon, as most of this was not related to government action. In fact, public banks continue to finance the drivers of deforestation, land tenure issues remain a problem, there are no new full-protection forest reserves, roads and big hydroelectric dams are still being pushed into the forest, and other biomes receive little attention from the federal government. Lula has to enforce existing laws and create new development strategies that add value to the intact standing forests.

Lula has not adopted the target presented by his own Environmental Ministry, which is much more ambitious than the present Brazilian target. Additionally, the 80% deforestation reduction plan doesn't stipulate clear actions and policies that need to be adopted in order to reduce deforestation. This makes it impossible to know if Lula is really committed to achieving the target or just making nice international speeches.

Lula has an extremely bad track record on the adoption of renewable energy other than hydro, despite Brazil's excellent natural resources. The Brazilian energy mix has shifted toward fossil fuels during his government and Lula is pushing hard for the production of oil from the newly discovered 'pre-salt' layers. He is also allowing the creation of new nuclear power plants (which are highly dangerous and which produce nuclear waste, for which no solution exists).

Final Rating: 50 / 100

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh – India

Prime Minister Singh has recently announced massive solar projects to accompany strong energy efficiency targets. On the details of forest protection and the legal form of a treaty, Singh could still significantly improve India's position.

Targets

Singh is willing to ensure India's emission deviate significantly from business as usual by 2020 with help from developed countries, along with certain unilateral actions. However, he fails to specify and commit to what science dictates (at least 15% to 30% reduction compared to business as usual).

Finance / Reporting

Singh is willing to report on India's greenhouse gas inventory twice in five years, to allow international verification on measures funded with international money. Ideally, he would also allow international verification on unilateral actions.

Forests

Singh does not want emission credits that are generated by preventing deforestation to be used by developed countries to fulfil their national targets - meaning developed countries would have to take real action at home. Singh's stance on biodiversity protection and indigenous people rights need improvement.

Legal Architecture

Singh does want a legally binding agreement, but has his doubts on a new protocol. He wants the multilateral approach to deliver a fair, ambitious deal. On the new protocol, Singh wants Kyoto Protocol architecture to be replicated into the new deal. Yet, Singh's position lacks the security of a two protocol approach.

Domestic Action

Regarding domestic action, Singh receives 6 out of 10 points. Under Singh, India has announced ambitious plans to increasing solar power generation to 20 GW by 2020 and has also taken ambitious steps on efficiency, with a commitment to improve efficiency by 5% annually by 2012. Singh still needs to deliver on these commitments but appears determined to act on climate change domestically.

Final Rating: 53 / 100

Prime Minister Gordon Brown – United Kingdom

Gordon Brown's stated ambitions have been frustrated by his fellow EU leaders and his own domestic failures. A failure to embrace renewable energy and an inability to quit coal have put the UK Prime Minister at odds with his own advisors on climate change, while EU wrangling over finance has left the UK unable to offer more than words to developing nations.

Targets

Gordon Brown, along with the other EU leaders, has agreed to the EU-wide greenhouse gas emission target of a 20% reduction by 2020 compared to 1990. For the UK this has been transposed as a 34% UK target for 2020. Greenpeace believes that climate science clearly implies that, to have a reasonable probability of staying below 2°C global average temperature rise, developed country reductions need to be at least 40% below 1990 levels by 2020. Moreover, three quarters of these emissions cuts need to be achieved domestically. Brown's position is currently to allow a much larger share of trading than this, which undermines domestic reductions and reduces the effectiveness of the target in climate terms.

Finance / Reporting

Brown was the first EU leader to suggest a number for the level of financial resources that should flow from developed to developing countries. At \$100 billion US dollars, the figure he suggested falls short of what most experts, such as Lord Stern, suggest is needed, which is more than \$140 billion (or around €100 billion). The EU Heads of State meeting has more recently accepted that *cost* of climate finance will be the higher figure of €100 billion. But, also as part of the EU, Brown has backed a suggested conditional public contribution of only €22 - €50 billion towards this total cost from all developed countries as a whole. Of this, a fraction would come from the EU.

Brown is unusual among leaders in being specific about what this means for his own country. He says the UK will put €1 billion down on the table, but this remains conditional on the rest of the deal being secured. Brown also said he would limit the amount of funding for climate finance that could be taken from the aid budget to 10%. But European leaders did not agree with him, and so there is currently no commitment that Europe won't raid aid budgets to pay for climate finance.

Forests

As part of the EU, Brown has made the commitment to halve tropical deforestation by 2020. Greenpeace believes deforestation needs to stop, worldwide and completely, by 2020. As part of the EU, Brown has not excluded the inclusion of credits from avoided deforestation into carbon markets, which will undermine the carbon price and the effectiveness of the EU emissions trading scheme. Also as part of the EU, Brown currently supports a position that would undermine biodiversity protection and indigenous people's rights.

Legal Architecture

Brown has allowed the UK to adopt the diplomatic language of the US and refers to a 'politically binding' agreement from Copenhagen and not a 'legally binding' one. Brown's spokespeople have remained supportive of making some elements of the deal as strong as in Kyoto, but worryingly they have indicated that they might allow it to be weakened in order to keep the US on board. The reason a 'politically binding' outcome would be bad news is that it means that as soon as the negotiators start translating it into legal text, we will see the same disagreements we're seeing now. Equally, 'political agreements' only bind the governments who agree to it in Copenhagen. As soon as a new government takes office, there's a risk that the political commitment will disappear, and even if there's no shift in government, the political commitments of governments can shift with changes in domestic political situation.

Domestic Action

Gordon Brown's Department of Energy and Climate Change produced a good strategy to meet the legally binding renewable energy targets set by the EU and is bringing forward policies to increase the share of renewables in the UK energy system. However, the UK has an extremely bad track record on renewables (among the lowest share of the renewables in Europe despite the UK having amongst the best renewable energy resources) and therefore no more points are awarded.

Brown has done less well on energy efficiency however, since the implementation of the existing plans is behind schedule and the commitment to invest in this area is far below the levels needed to address the wasteful UK energy system and building stock.

Gordon Brown's Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change has put up a barrier to completely unabated coal-fired power stations and has acknowledged that emissions from new coal plants must be dealt with from Day One. However, this policy proposal (minimum of 400 MW of CCS on any new coal plant, though it is not yet finalised) is weak as it only partially deals with the problem and crucially it fails to meet the advice from Brown's own senior statutory advisors on this policy area – the Committee on Climate Change. They say that, for the UK to meet its legally binding emissions targets, all emissions from coal (new plants and existing plants) must be eliminated in the early 2020s and no later than 2025.

The Committee also recommends that the whole UK power sector must be close to zero emissions by 2030. Brown has yet to accept this advice, does not have a coal policy proposed that is compatible with this timeline, and has not committed to the 2030 decarbonisation imperative. There is also a danger with Brown's position, which is to make the taxpayer meet all costs related to the CCS demonstrations required by his proposed policy, that money may be diverted away from other green energy sources such as renewables and efficiency programmes that remain chronically underfunded in the UK.

Final Rating: 45 / 100

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) – Indonesia

President Yudhoyono has shifted his rhetoric on climate change this year and taken up some strong positions at the talks, but has to do more at home to convince. A weak target, a failure to control deforestation and plans to invest in new coal power all need to be addressed.

Targets

In September SBY stated his willingness to ensure emissions reductions targets of 26% from business as usual by 2020 and says he will increase this to 41% of deforestation by 2020, with international support. Whilst this is a good first step, the targets he has committed to are not high enough. To ensure global warming is kept to well below 2 degrees, globally emissions from deforestation must be halted by 2020. Reducing 80% of Indonesia's emissions (the same amount as are caused by deforestation and peatland degradation in the country) - over 2 Gigatonnes - is essential to this strategy. Brazilian President Lula da Silva has already committed to reduce Brazil's emissions from deforestation by 80% over the same period.

Greenpeace is calling on Indonesia's President to instigate an immediate moratorium on any further destruction of Indonesia's rainforests and peatlands and commit to zero deforestation.

Finance / Reporting

SBY is willing to report on Indonesia's emissions once every five years, but it would be better to have greenhouse gas inventories at least biennially to check an actual fall in emissions in line with the policies adopted. He is willing to allow international verification on measures taken by international money and to monitor and verify national actions domestically.

Forests

SBY is willing to allow developed countries to offset their own emissions reductions targets by funding forest protection. Actions to reduce deforestation must not be used as an excuse by industrialised countries and companies not to reduce their emissions at home – they must do both. SBY's stance on biodiversity protection and forest dependent communities needs improvement. Also much of SBY's solution to reducing emissions involves increasing plantations of pulpwood and palm oil, rather than cutting deforestation rates. Further, although there is a 'zero tolerance' approach to forest fires, the law is not often enforced and the culprits rarely prosecuted.

Legal Architecture

SBY has a strong position in this category as he wants the Kyoto architecture to stay in place and wants commitment periods of five years. He could push for stronger compliance rules under a Kyoto architecture.

Domestic Action

Greenpeace is concerned that any commitments from the President on the international stage will be fatally undermined by actions of his ministries at home. This is best exemplified by the actions of the Ministry of Forestry in allowing the growth of the palm oil and pulp and paper industries by granting licenses for industrial expansion into the rainforest.

In addition there are major coal developments on the way in Indonesia. This has implications both in terms of rainforest destruction and in terms of promoting fossil fuels instead of clean energy production. More positively, SBY has stated he is no longer committed to the nuclear option, has reduced subsidies to the fossil fuel industries and increased geothermal energy developments. SBY scores 3 out of 10 points for domestic action.

Final Rating: 45 / 100

Prime Minister Apisai Lelemia – Tuvalu

Tuvalu gets the best scores in almost all categories. The stakes are clear for the President of one of the smallest independent nations in the world, which lies more than 1000km from Fiji. With a land mass of just 26 km², and an average height of less than 3m above sea level, Tuvalu is extremely vulnerable to sea level rise. If nothing is done to prevent the worst climate change impacts, those eight islands will be completely uninhabitable by 2050, and their 11,000 inhabitants will be climate refugees.

Therefore Lelemia is putting forward strong positions in the Copenhagen process and urging other leaders to take action.

Final Rating: 87 / 100