

# Yellow card!

## 2009 Swedish EU Presidency Checklist

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**June 2009** (A version of this document is also available in Swedish)

The boots are on and the referee is about to blow the whistle: the Swedish Presidency is almost underway. But before the game has even started, Greenpeace has ranked the Swedish government for its performance in the lead up to this crucial moment. We have judged the country's readiness to undertake the tasks at hand in the most important environmental issues on the EU agenda during the second half of 2009. We also rank the Swedish government's track record at home for the same topics.

The Swedish Presidency gets a yellow card for playing dangerously in a number of areas, including climate policy, fisheries policy and policies on chemicals. It gets a red card for its attitude towards genetically modified organisms. **Overall, the Swedish government gets a yellow card and a warning: for a successful Presidency, Sweden must push harder on the environmental flank.**

### Climate

This autumn, the biggest political issue for the EU will likely be the ongoing economic downturn and negotiations to achieve a global climate deal in Copenhagen in December. The role of the Swedish Presidency will be to steer the EU towards a coherent response to both the economic and climate crises. The Presidency will have to ensure that short-term measures taken by the EU are in line with long-term objectives for social, environmental and economic prosperity.

The outcome of the Copenhagen climate conference could set us on the path to necessary climate action or it could lock us into catastrophic, irreversible climate change. The EU is vital for brokering an ambitious deal in Copenhagen. Sweden has, during its Presidency, the opportunity and obligation to ensure that the Copenhagen Summit is a turning point for climate protection.

### Emission reductions of at least 40% by 2020

To avoid the worst climate change scenarios, the increase in global average temperature must be as far below 2 degrees Celsius as possible. If we are to manage this, global greenhouse gas emissions must peak by 2015, and start declining rapidly thereafter. A fair climate treaty - based on responsibility and capability - would mean that industrialised countries as a group commit to legally binding emission cuts of at least 40% below 1990 levels by 2020. At least three quarters of these cuts should be met through domestic action.

### Sweden must ensure that the EU:

- Commits to reducing its emissions by at least 40% by 2020 (with 30% of the cuts achieved domestically). A meagre 20% is not an option and jeopardises our planet;

- Advocates five years as the length for future commitment periods so that targets and actions can be adjusted to reflect the latest science;
- Ensures that Heads of State and government personally attend the Copenhagen meeting to steer the world towards an ambitious agreement.

Sweden has clearly put the climate issue on top of its EU Presidency agenda but there is great room for improvement. Even though the minister for environment has admitted that global emissions have to peak in 2015, his actions are not consistent with this objective. The Swedish government has so far not shown any ambition to strengthen the existing 2020 targets for the EU. During its Presidency, Sweden must finalise as soon as possible a strong common position by the EU on the issues listed above.

**Greenpeace gives the Swedish government a yellow card for not trying to ensure sufficient emission cuts for the EU as a whole and for Sweden nationally.** Sweden needs to ensure that the EU comes to Copenhagen with a strong line-up and ambitious positions.

### **Invest in a rescue package for the climate**

An agreement on a predictable flow of money from rich nations to developing nations (for investments in renewable energy, forest protection and adaptation measures) is a precondition for an agreement in Copenhagen. Sweden must show the way for an EU commitment to such a rescue package for the climate.

#### **Sweden must ensure that the EU:**

- Recognises that at least €110 billion in public funding is needed annually in developing countries;
- Agrees that these funds should be mainly generated by international auctioning or a levy;
- Secures the necessary upfront funds for immediate needs by developing countries to support adaptation and prepare low carbon strategies.

We also call on the Swedish Presidency to organise an extraordinary meeting between EU finance and environment ministers in early September so that there is a concrete proposal from the EU on the table well before the United Nations General Assembly later in the same month.

Sweden has highlighted the importance of a finance deal, but the government seems to be waiting for someone else to lead. The Swedish government does not want to discuss numbers, nor does it publicly support any of the mechanism options presented by other countries. It is positive that Sweden has put aside funds for adaptation but it is unacceptable that these funds have been taken from the national aid-budget.

**The government gets a yellow card for not even pretending to try to speed up negotiations on the climate financing issue.**

### **Protect the world's tropical forests**

Deforestation in the developing world is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and must be stopped. A funding mechanism should raise the necessary funds in industrialised countries. In priority areas such as the Amazon, the Congo Basin, and South East Asia, we must reach zero deforestation by 2015. At the same time, the protection of forest areas in developing countries

and the resulting emission reductions should not offset the necessary mitigation actions needed by the developed world. Forest offset credits should not be allowed in international or regional carbon markets.

#### **Sweden must ensure that the EU:**

- Provides funds to stop deforestation, in addition to the emission cuts within EU borders;
- Prioritises protecting biodiversity and the rights of indigenous peoples;
- Makes progress on the EU law to regulate timber products and that it strengthens and finalises this law as soon as possible;
- As promised releases its study on the impact of EU consumption of imported food (such as beef) and non-food commodities (such as leather) that are likely to contribute to deforestation.

The Swedish government again hides behind excuses. It claims that it is too early to decide on the best way to raise forest protection funds. When it comes to illegal logging, the government is close to receiving a red card for not supporting new EU legislation that aims to regulate the trade in wood products and stamp out the presence on the market of illegally logged timber.

**Overall, the Swedish government gets a yellow card for putting its arms up in the air and pretending not to understand the offence. Sweden knows what needs to be done to protect the world's tropical forests, but has failed to take clear action.**

### Other issues:

#### **Reform the common fisheries policy and create marine reserves**

In the ocean we can witness the widespread collapse of fish stocks, marine species and ecosystems, not least in the seas around European shores. The causes are all too often man-made: unsustainable and destructive fishing practices, oil and gas exploration, eutrophication (an increase in chemical nutrients, often from agricultural fertilisers), sand and gravel extraction, shipping, climate change and more. The second half of this year will set the tone for the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). Greenpeace recommends that the primary objectives of this reform must be the recovery and sustainability of marine ecosystems. Marine reserves, in which fishing activities are banned, have been shown by scientists to be an efficient conservation tool. Greenpeace therefore demands that governments create a global network of marine reserves covering 40% of the sea.

In the context of the CFP reform, Sweden should work to forge an agreement among EU ministers to amend the policy so that safeguarded and sensitive sea areas are adequately protected from the impacts of fishing. It is Sweden's role to set the EU on an ambitious, open and transparent path towards such a reform, while at the same time upping its own game on marine protection. In particular, the reformed CFP should enable EU countries to restrict and ban fisheries in conservation areas. Moreover, Sweden should ensure that the Baltic Strategy identifies the reform of the CFP as a way to solve the current conflict between fisheries and conservation policies.

We also call on the Swedish Presidency to host at least one EU ministerial debate on the future reform of the CFP. Stakeholders should be invited to a meeting between fisheries and environment ministers to debate the future of our seas. Having claimed that the Swedish Presidency will be the most open and transparent to date, Sweden should arrange to transmit all fisheries Council debates publicly, including in particular the debates on the CFP reform and on the allocation of catch quotas.

Sweden has not yet established effective marine reserves. Its own strategies for sustainable ocean management are not delivering and a recent government proposal fails to address specific man-made pressures and the underlying causes of marine degradation. Poor performance on the home front is a worrying signal that Sweden may not be serious about prioritising ocean protection. While much talk has been made of protecting the Baltic Sea, the Swedish government has to demonstrate that it is willing to walk the talk with respect to all of our seas and oceans. **Until we see this commitment, we are giving Sweden a yellow card. A progressive position in the CFP reform and bold initiatives to challenge the prioritising of fisheries policy over conservation policies can boost Sweden's performance during the second part of 2009.**

## Stop the authorisation of GMOs

Genetic engineering (GE) enables scientists to create plants, animals and micro-organisms by manipulating genes in a way that does not occur naturally and cannot be achieved through traditional cross-breeding techniques. Once released, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) can spread through nature and interbreed with natural organisms, contaminating 'non-GE' environments and future generations of plants in an unforeseeable and uncontrollable way. Their release is 'genetic pollution' and is a major threat because GMOs cannot be recalled once released.

A fundamental problem exists in the process used to assess the safety of GMOs in Europe. Scientific opinions provided by a single organisation, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), are translated into decisions with no broader consideration of societal or economic arguments for or against the introduction of GM crops and products. This situation contravenes EU legal requirements for a broad consideration of the risks and impacts of GM products. In 2008, EU environment ministers unanimously called for the strengthening of the EU's authorisation system (Council Conclusions, 4 December 2008). Several GMO authorisations will be discussed under the Swedish Presidency.

Six countries have national bans in place forbidding the only GMO currently cultivated in the EU, Monsanto's MON810 maize. These bans are based on solid scientific and legal grounds. It is however likely that during the Swedish Presidency the European Commission will reiterate its proposal to lift most of these bans.

### **Sweden must ensure that the EU:**

- Implements last year's recommendations by EU ministers to strengthen the GMO authorisation system and puts on hold pending authorisation of GM crops while this review happens;

- Defends the right of France, Greece, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg and Austria to keep their national GM bans in place.

The Swedish government has distinguished itself by systematically voting to allow new GMOs in the EU. Sweden also recently voted to lift the GM bans in France, Greece, Hungary and Austria. This was not the first time that Sweden has tried to force GMOs onto another country - this was repeated in 2006 and 2007. **Based on its track record, the Swedish government receives a red card. Greenpeace will welcome the government back on the pitch once it has revised its strategy.**

## Identify more chemical substances of very high concern

Toxic chemicals in our environment threaten our rivers and lakes, our air, land, and oceans, and ultimately us and our future. The release of many synthetic chemicals is now widely recognised as a global threat to human health and the environment. A new EU law provides for some of the most hazardous substances to be substituted with safer alternatives. The REACH regulation sets out a new approach for the control of the manufacture, import and use of chemicals in the EU.

The first-ever list of 15 hazardous chemicals, a list of substances of very high concern that will become subject to stricter controls, has been released. However, it is a drop in the ocean when compared to the hundreds of well-known dangerous substances in products used every day across Europe. Only six EU countries (including Sweden) have so far put forward chemicals for the candidate list. One of the reasons some member states have given for not being proactive in identifying 'substances of very high concern' is a lack of human/financial resources.

### Sweden must ensure that the EU:

- Holds a formal Council debate during one of the EU environment ministers' meetings to highlight the importance of REACH in phasing out hazardous chemicals and the need for governments to invest more resources into this process.

To show leadership during the EU Presidency, the Swedish government also needs to commit to urgently adding additional hazardous substances on the list of substances of very high concern.

**Sweden has already put forward two substances to this list, a brominated flame retardant and plastic softener, but the list must be expanded to include the hundreds of known hazardous chemicals. There is no signal from the Swedish government that it is planning to raise this important issue under their Presidency. Sweden gets away with a yellow card this time for playing a dangerous game. But immediate action is needed, or a red card will be given.**

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