

Sigmar Gabriel
Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy
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Germany

Amsterdam, Brussels, Lisbon, London,
Ljubljana, Luxemburg, Madrid,
Paris, Prague, Rome, Warsaw,
4th February 2014

**Open letter from the European Civil Society outside Germany to Minister Gabriel:
“We urge you to step up and make Germany the EU leader we need on climate and
energy policy.”**

Dear Minister Gabriel,

As representatives of non-German NGOs from all around Europe, we applaud Germany’s continued commitment to the Energiewende and its willingness to increase its share of renewable energy while phasing out nuclear power. By doing so, Germany shows the world – and in particular its European neighbours – that the Energy Transition is not only technically possible, but also an economic and social opportunity. If a thriving industrial economy like Germany can switch from nuclear and fossil fuels to an efficient energy system based on renewables, it will likely become a model for many other countries of the world.

We also welcome the German government’s support for a three binding target approach at European level, in terms of greenhouse gas reduction, energy savings and renewable energy. For the Energiewende to be achieved, three targets are needed at the European level.

With the European Council on climate and energy less than two months away (20-21 March), we are particularly concerned by the lack of climate leadership in Europe. We therefore ask you to step up and create a new dynamic at the European and international levels in the lead up to the Paris Climate Summit.

In particular, we strongly urge you to be more ambitious than the current German position established in the Coalition Treaty.

While the Coalition Agreement supports a climate target of “at least” 40% emissions reduction by 2030, we ask you to officially support a greenhouse gas emissions reduction target that goes far beyond 40%. To be in line with science, Europe must achieve at least 55% *domestic* emissions reduction by 2030:

- A 40% target is not sufficient to get us out of the climate crisis. It implies a 50/50 or higher likelihood of exceeding 2°C, and therefore causing runaway climate change and terrifying impacts all around the globe, that will put people’s lives at threat, especially in vulnerable countries.
- In Europe, a 40% emissions reduction target may put an artificial cap on the deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency improvements, thereby threatening hundred thousand green jobs and the creation of millions more, as well as putting Europe’s energy security of supply at risk.
- A 40% climate target, combined with other measures proposed by the Commission, is not enough to revive the EU's flagging carbon market. Yet strengthening the EU ETS is urgently needed to avoid locking the European economy into high carbon investments and significantly increasing the costs of meeting its long-term climate objectives.

Europe also needs binding targets for renewable energy deployment and energy savings. Fully binding EU targets of 45% renewables in final energy consumption by 2030 and 40% energy savings compared to 2005 are necessary to achieve ambitious climate goals and ensure energy transitions in Europe.

With this in mind, our organisations are deeply concerned by the European Commission proposal for the 2030 framework for climate and energy policies, published on 22 January. EU governments should not consider it a best option – they should instead go beyond it.

In particular, the Commission’s 2030 proposal does not propose a fully binding target for renewables deployment, nor does it suggest setting a binding target for energy savings. Because Germany is a global leader in both renewable energy and energy efficiency, it should strongly support setting fully binding national targets in both areas and convince other Member States to do so as well.

Europe needs a European leader that can inspire other countries to step up. We firmly believe that Germany has the ability to build a coalition of the willing ahead of the European Council. This will allow for higher EU climate ambition and the three-target approach. As Germany has already adopted domestic climate and energy targets, we think it is in your country’s own interest to fill that leadership vacuum and drive the negotiating process.

In the past Germany has been a key player in climate policy-making at both the European and international levels. It is time for Germany to start leading again.

Kind regards,

Note from the signatories: The same letter was sent to Chancellor Merkel.



Signatories:

- Rob van Drimmelen – General Secretary, **APRODEV** – EU
- Ariel Brunner – Head of EU Policy, **Birdlife International** – International
- Eva Filzmoser – Director, **Carbon Market Watch** – EU
- Kit Vaughan – Director, Poverty, Environment and Climate Change Network, **CARE International** – International
- Petr Hlobil – International Affairs Director, **CEE Bankwatch Network** – EU
- Wendel Trio – Director, **Climate Action Network Europe** – EU
- Morgane Créach – Director, **Climate Action Network France** – France
- Ondrej Pasek – **Centre for Transport and Energy (CDE)** – Czech Republic
- Bernd Nilles – Secretary General, **CIDSE** – EU
- Arthur Mitzman – Coordinator, **Concerned Citizens against Climate Change** – Netherlands
- Nick Mabey – CEO, **E3G (Third Generation Environmentalism)** - UK
- Jeremy Wates – Secretary General, **European Environmental Bureau (EEB)** – EU

Živa Gobbo – **Focus, Association for Sustainable Development** – Slovenia
Karine Elisabeth Lind – Executive Director, **Forests of the World** – Denmark
Paul Polfer - **Mouvement Ecologique (Friend of the Earth Luxembourg)** – Luxembourg
Hector de Prado – Responsible for Energy and Climate, **Friend of the Earth Spain** – Spain
Génon K. Jensen, Executive Director, **HEAL (Health and Environment Alliance)** – EU
Hélène Connor – President of the board, **HELIO International** – France
Mauro Albrizio – European Affairs Director, **Legambiente** – Italy
Allain Bougrain-Dubourg – Chair, **Ligue de protection des oiseaux (LPO)** – France
Natalia Alonso – Head of EU office, **Oxfam International** – EU
Urszula Stefanowicz – Project coordinator, **Polish Climate Coalition** – Poland
Nuno Sequeira – President of National Board, **Quercus, Associação Nacional de Conservação da Natureza (ANCN)** – Portugal