

Study: New German govt's plans fall short of climate goal

December 3 2021, by Frank Jordans



A bucket wheel excavator is mining coal at the Garzweiler open-cast coal mine in Lutzerath, Germany, Monday, Oct.25, 2021. An analysis of the incoming German government's climate plans has concluded that they aren't sufficient to put the country on course to meet the goals of the 2015 Paris accord. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Probst, File

A research institute's analysis has concluded that the incoming German government's plans for curbing greenhouse gas emissions are insufficient to put Germany on course to meet the goals of the 2015 Paris climate accord.

The German Institute for Economic Research study released Friday was conducted by leading economists and commissioned by 140 civil society organizations, from trade unions to environmental groups and religious organizations.

They found that while the new center-left government's proposals for reducing greenhouse gases are the country's most ambitious yet, they fall short in all sectors.

A three-party coalition government of the Social Democrats, the Greens and the Free Democrats is expected to take office next week, with Chancellor Angela Merkel stepping down after 16 years.

Claudia Kemfert, one of the authors of the study, said the plans unveiled so far showed a "clear improvement on previous policies," including by setting a target of meeting 80% of Germany's electricity needs from renewable sources by 2030 and making it possible to end coal use by that date.

But to reduce emissions sufficiently to put Germany on a trajectory to meet the Paris goal of capping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 F) by the end of the century, the share of renewables would need to be 95%, she said.



German Green Party co-leader and candidate for chancellor Annalena Baerbock, left, and co-party leader Robert Habeck are displayed on an election campaign poster reading: ' Save the climate. Protect people - Ready, because you are' in Berlin, Germany, Monday, Aug. 30, 2021. An analysis of the incoming German government's climate plans has concluded that they aren't sufficient to put the country on course to meet the goals of the 2015 Paris accord. Credit: AP Photo/Markus Schreiber, File



Wind turbines turn behind a solar farm in Rapshagen, Germany, Thursday, Oct. 28, 2021. An analysis of the incoming German government's climate plans has concluded that they aren't sufficient to put the country on course to meet the goals of the 2015 Paris accord. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Sohn, File

The study found that in other areas, such as transport, building and agriculture, the new government would have to set significantly higher targets than it has currently proposed.

The environmentalist Greens will take charge of a combined climate and economy ministry, as well as the environment and agriculture ministries, giving them significant leverage. But the new government has made clear it won't impose a general speed limit on highways, which experts say would help reduce emissions.

A Green party spokeswoman, Nicola Kabel, said the new government's plan was supported by "concrete steps" that would put it on a path to meet the Paris goal.

These included foreign policy measures that would let developing countries and emerging economies achieve rapid technological progress, she said.

Industrialized economies such as Germany and the United States hope that by paying to keep emissions low in poorer countries the global targets can be achieved, even if rich nations emit more.

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