

Simpol



Simpol-UK

The simultaneous policy



Persuading politicians to sign the pledge to implement Simpol

The time when Simultaneous Policy Supporters have maximum influence in encouraging politicians to sign the pledge to implement Simpol is during elections. However, Simpol supporters can encourage their elected representatives to sign up at any time.

Which politicians should sign?

As the Simultaneous Policy addresses global issues, pledges are sought from politicians operating at national and international level. In the UK, this means members of the Northern Ireland and Welsh Assemblies and the Scottish and UK Parliaments. Members of the European Parliament are, by definition, dealing with international issues and so it is also important for them to sign the pledge. In this action sheet we will use the term 'elected representatives' or 'reps' to refer to all of these.

Local government representatives are not included in the effort to gain pledges as they will not vote on implementation of Simpol. However, as implementation will have an influence over local issues, just as international agreements at the World Trade Organisation impact at a local level, it is worthwhile informing members of local councils about Simpol and encouraging them to support it within their parties.

Who are your elected representatives

You can find out who represents you by following the links on the Simpol-UK website to search engines which just require you to enter your postcode. Alternatively, you can find out by phoning your town or city council and asking for the office that deals with the electoral roll. They will be able to tell you.

How to contact your representatives

If you find information on your representatives online, you will also find their contact details. Otherwise phone the local party office. As well as writing to your representatives by email or letter you can make an appointment to meet at a 'surgery'. Members of the Parliaments and Assemblies usually hold a surgery at least once per month. Members of the European Parliament may be harder to meet as their constituencies are far larger.

What to ask your representatives

Ultimately you want your reps. to sign the politician's pledge. You could make a copy of the pledge attached to this sheet and send it with a cover letter explaining that you live in their constituency and are an Simpol supporter. Explain briefly why you support Simpol and ask them to sign the pledge or to contact you or Simpol-UK for further information. Include a leaflet so you don't have to explain Simpol in detail in your letter. You could also include recent articles on Simpol, particularly if these refer to activities of your local Simpol group. If your local group has held policy fora, you might like to send an example of a resulting discussion paper.

Alternatively, or subsequently, you could make contact over specific issues or forthcoming events. For example, your rep. may have been in the news over an issue to which Simpol is linked. Or you may be holding a policy forum and would like them to participate or even to be a guest speaker.

Keep an eye on their website and party leaflets coming through your door as well as the media to find out about their interests. You could search for their name on the internet (see box for list of websites of the elected bodies). For the UK Parliament, there is a website called Public Whip (www.publicwhip.org.uk) which gives information on parliamentary committee members and your rep's voting record, Early Day Motions they have signed (EDMs are like petitions for MPs) and the Parliamentary Questions they have raised. If you are able to link Simpol to these interests it could be more persuasive.

Don't forget to mention that Simpol supporters undertake to vote for any candidate at elections, within reason, who has pledged to implement SP. While we do want to make support for Simpol a vote-winning, and ultimately election-winning, issue bear in mind that some politicians may feel they are opening themselves to the charge of cynical vote chasing if they sign the pledge. In your communications with politicians work on the assumption they can be convinced that Simpol is worth supporting because of its potential to address global problems, not just to pick up the votes of Simpol supporters.

Approach your reps. regardless of party. However, if you have a party preference, you can restrict your approach to the party you support. If it is not in power, then make similar approaches to the party local office and to any candidates who have been selected in advance of elections.

What if they don't sign?

Your representatives may not sign the pledge for a variety of reasons. Perhaps they:

- Do not understand SP.
- Have not heard of SP before and question its credibility.
- Do not have time to give your request priority.

In any of these cases, keep using opportunities to raise SP with the rep. Also, in your awareness raising activities make public calls for your rep. to sign the pledge (see sheet *Raising Awareness of SP*). Mention that you have asked your rep. to sign and are still waiting. When this is coupled with the SP Adopters' undertaking to vote for any candidate at the next election who supports the pledge, it increases the pressure to sign and may encourage others to contact the rep. Asking them to do so.

Alternatively, the pledge may be unsigned because your rep:

- Is worried that signing the pledge could discredit them.
- Is opposed to Simpol.

By keeping your rep. informed of growing support for Simpol, particularly amongst members of their own party and by other parties and governments, you may help to convince them. In some cases the only way to gain a rep. Who has signed the pledge is at the next election by ensuring it is the election-winning issue (see sheet *Elections and candidates*).

What if they sign?

If your rep. signs the pledge and sends this to you, be sure to contact Simpol-UK immediately. In some cases the pledge will go direct to Simpol-UK, which will inform your local group.

Simpol-UK will discuss with you how best to coordinate making the pledge public. It may be most effective to do this at a national level *before you attempt to gain local coverage* (see the sheet *Working with the media*).

Once the pledge is public, use it in your awareness raising activities to demonstrate how Simpol is building towards its goal. Remember to mention that candidates from any party can sign the pledge to ensure that your local campaign is not too directly associated with your rep's party. It may be representatives in other elected bodies or declared candidates have also signed the pledge and you can refer to this to show Simpol has cross-party support.

When you hold events, invite the rep. to come and speak or to provide a comment for your publicity materials. Approach the rep. with the thought that you want to demonstrate how support for Simpol helps to raise the rep's profile and do not become a nuisance.

What if they rescind the pledge?

Politicians are free to rescind their pledge at any time. They may have signed it cynically to gain votes at the last election. They may have come under pressure from colleagues who do not support Simpol. They may have taken objection to the way the policy package is developing.

If you are the first to be informed that your rep. has rescinded their pledge, contact Simpol-UK for advice.

The next election

If your rep. has already signed the pledge, they will not have to do so again when an election is called. It is likely that other candidates will sign the candidate's pledge in an attempt to pick up some Simpol supporter votes. If you don't have a preference for your rep.'s party you should encourage all candidates to sign the pledge.

If more than one candidate has signed, the point of difference may become how much they promise to promote Simpol. A sitting candidate who has been actively involved in doing so can bring this into their election campaign in appealing to Simpol supporters.

Party support for Simpol

Candidates and elected politicians sign the pledge to implement Simpol in their own names, not in the name of their party. This is made clear on the pledge forms, which point out there is a different procedure for the party to pledge its support to Simpol. Once a rep. has signed the pledge, you may like to suggest they encourage their party to do the same. A draft resolution is included on the *Elections and candidates* action sheet.

Simultaneous Policy Pledge Form

(for elected representatives)



As an elected member of the _____ Parliament/Assembly, I pledge that I will vote in the Parliament/Assembly for the Simultaneous Policy to be implemented when the governments of all, or sufficient, nations have likewise pledged to implement it (hereafter the "Simpol Pledge"), and I will encourage members of my party to join this effort.

I understand that the Simpol Pledge is only provisional at this stage since the policy content of SP is yet to be decided by citizen-supporters of Simpol world-wide under the auspices of the International Simultaneous Policy Organisation. I further understand that the Simpol Pledge, although provisional, applies to Simpol as an integral and indivisible package of policy measures.

If I wish to cancel my pledge, I will notify the UK Simultaneous Policy organisation, Simpol-UK, in writing.

I understand that Simpol-UK and the International Simultaneous Policy Organisation may make my Simpol Pledge – and any cancellation of that pledge – known publicly, and particularly to Simpol supporters in my country or region.

I am making this pledge in my own name (not that of my party as a whole*).

Optional public statement in support of Simpol:
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Name (*in block capitals*):

Party:

Address:

Telephone number: Email:

Date:

Signature:

Please return this form to:

Simpol-UK • PO Box 26547 • London SE3 7YT.

Note that contact details will be held by SP organisers only and will not be published or passed to third parties without prior permission, unless already publicly available.

**The party as a whole can pledge to support Simpol using a different procedure.*