SIMPOL · BRIEFING FOR POLITICAL PARTIES

Promises a government can keep

The two-dimensional manifesto

The gap every manifesto faces

Every manifesto promises action on the issues voters care about most: jobs, prices, energy, security, the environment. On a growing share of them, no government can act alone. Investment, firms and capital move across borders, so a country that is first to raise standards, taxes or regulation risks losing jobs and investment to countries that do not. Simpol calls this **Destructive Global Competition**. It constrains every party that governs, whatever its values.

The political scientist Peter Mair described the result as a widening gap between what parties must do to be responsive to voters and what they must do to govern responsibly in an interdependent world.[1] Voters sense that gap. Only 9% of Britons trust politicians to tell the truth,[2] and trust in political parties averages 26% across OECD countries.[3] No party created this gap, and none can close it alone. But any party can be the one that offers a credible way through it.

What Simpol is

The International Simultaneous Policy Organisation (Simpol) is a non-partisan citizens' campaign that works with parties across the political spectrum. It offers a way for nations to act on problems none can solve alone without any of them moving first. Citizens who support Simpol give their voting preference at elections to candidates and parties that sign the **Simpol Pledge**: a commitment to implement, alongside other nations, a set of multi-issue policy packages once sufficient nations have made the same commitment. The packages are developed with citizen participation and negotiated between participating nations, and are balanced so that each nation is better off overall. Until the threshold is reached, the Pledge binds no one.[4]

The two-dimensional manifesto

A two-dimensional manifesto separates what a government can deliver on its own from what it can deliver only together with other nations, and gives voters a credible plan for both.

DIMENSION 1 **What we will do at home**	FOR EU MEMBER STATES **What we will do in Europe**	DIMENSION 2 **What we will do together**
Policies a government can implement promptly on its own authority, regardless of what other governments do.	Measures best taken at EU level, where member states already act together.	Goals on issues where acting alone would harm national competitiveness, implemented via Simpol simultaneously with other nations once enough of them commit.

Dimension 2 does not list finished policies, because those are developed jointly with the other participating nations. Instead, it sets out the party's goals, the proposals it will bring, and its commitment to implement simultaneously via it's support for Simpol once the threshold is reached. It promises to pursue these goals through a working mechanism rather than guaranteeing an outcome, and that is what makes it believable. The message to voters is simple: **here is what we will do at home, and here is how we will get the rest done.**

Why it works across the political spectrum

Destructive Global Competition constrains parties of the right as much as parties of the left, and cooperating with Simpol on Dimension 2 answers the core concerns of both.

If your party's priority is competitiveness and sovereignty	If your party's priority is protecting citizens, workers and the environment
Competitiveness safeguarded by design. Nothing is implemented unless enough other nations implement at the same time, so no country is left at a disadvantage. **Reciprocity, not goodwill.** Every commitment must be matched by others before it takes effect. **Decided by national parliaments.** Each parliament implements under its own constitution. No new supranational body is created and no powers are transferred. **Your proposals on the table.** The party brings its own policies into Simpol's joint policy development process.	**Higher standards without undercutting.** Nations can act on climate, tax and AI safety without being undercut by those that do not. **Reach on global problems.** Issues no single government can solve alone are brought within reach. **Complementary.** Works alongside unilateral action and existing diplomacy, and replaces neither. **Every nation gains.** Multi-issue packages are balanced so that each participating nation is better off overall.

Complementary to existing international institutions

Simpol does not replace or compete with the United Nations, the European Union, the OECD or any other international body. These institutions provide the forums, expertise, data and agreed frameworks on which international action depends, and Simpol relies on that work.

What Simpol adds is something no international institution can supply on its own: advance, conditional commitments by national legislators, backed by their voters. In any forum, governments face the same first-mover problem, because none can safely commit before knowing that others will. Simpol addresses that problem at home, before and alongside international negotiation, so that governments can come to the table with a mandate to move together.

- **United Nations.** UN frameworks set shared objectives, for example on climate and sustainable development. Simpol offers a way for nations to implement measures towards those objectives at the same time.
- **European Union.** Within its competences, the EU already enables member states to act together. That is why, for member states, the European dimension of the manifesto sits between national and simultaneous measures. Simpol applies to issues that reach beyond what Europe can settle on its own.
- **OECD and other expert bodies.** Their analysis and model rules, for example on international taxation, can inform the content of the packages and help parties judge what is workable.

International institutions remain where nations meet, deliberate and agree. Simpol strengthens the domestic mandate for acting together on what they agree.

What adopting Simpol involves

Simpol's draft Party Resolution, for adoption by party conference, provides for the party to:

- require its candidates and elected representatives to sign the Simpol Pledge;
- recommend that party members become Simpol supporters;
- offer its policies on global problems to Simpol's policy development process when that process is launched;
- adopt the Simultaneous Policy as official party policy, to be implemented in government only once it has been negotiated within a framework approved by citizens and agreed by sufficient nations

The Resolution commits the party to nothing unless enough other nations commit too, and it can be rescinded in writing at any time.

What a party gains now

- **A practical process, not just an aspiration.** The party can show citizens and NGOs that it backs a concrete, working mechanism for solving global problems, not only statements of intent.
- **An answer when asked to do more.** When constituents, campaigners or the media ask why more is not being done on climate, tax or AI, the party can point to its commitment under Simpol to act as far as others will act together, without putting national competitiveness at risk.
- **A clear message for candidates.** Every candidate has a straightforward answer to the question they all face: *how will you deliver on problems no country can solve alone?*
- **Nothing given up.** No commitment takes effect until the threshold is reached, and the party's national programme is unaffected.

Questions parties ask

Isn't this admitting we can't deliver? No. It shows voters how the party will deliver on issues that no government, of any party, can currently settle alone. Dimension 2 extends what a government can do; it does not concede anything to opponents, who face exactly the same constraint.

What if other nations never commit? Then nothing is implemented and the party is bound to nothing. Its Dimension 1 programme is unaffected, and its candidates can still say what they will do together once others are ready.

Does it tie the hands of a future government? No. Implementation depends on sufficient nations agreeing the packages, within a framework their citizens have approved, and the Resolution can be rescinded in writing at any time.

What about countries that are not democracies? They face the same global problems and the same competitive pressures. Simpol's campaign works through democratic elections, but non-democratic governments would be invited to join the process at a later stage. Because the packages are balanced so that every participating nation gains, taking part is in their interest too.

Why adopt it before others do? Because it shows you have a practical solution for global problems. Also, nothing takes effect until enough nations commit, so early adoption places the party at no competitive disadvantage, and it lets the party help shape the agenda from the start.

Next step

Simpol is non-partisan and takes no part in preparing any party's manifesto: how a party builds its own two-dimensional manifesto is entirely a matter for the party. The draft Party Resolution and the Simpol Pledge are available from Simpol. To request a copy or to notify Simpol of a Resolution adopted by conference, please contact us at **info@simpol.org**.

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1 Peter Mair, as discussed in "Responsive vs Responsible? Party Democracy in Times of Crisis", European University Institute: https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/67028/Responsive_vs_responsible.pdf

2 Ipsos UK Veracity Index 2025: https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/ipsos-veracity-index-2025

3 OECD Trust Survey 2025, international comparisons (CSO Ireland): https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-trsic/trustsurvey2025internationalcomparisons/keyfindings/

4 For a fuller account, see Thiessen, Bunzl and Beaumont, Toda Peace Institute Report 287, March 2026: https://toda.org/publications/policy-briefs-and-reports/report-287-full-text/