

Joint article by Swedish Prime Minister, Fredrik Reinfeldt and President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso.

The symbolic meeting place of the G8 in L'Aquila is a signal of the world's solidarity with Italy after the terrible earthquake earlier this year. It is also a unique chance to prevent another disaster – this one man-made. Climate change is happening and it is happening fast. When G8 leaders and their partners from around the world meet in L'Aquila, a global, wide-ranging and ambitious post 2012 agreement in Copenhagen must be their top priority. An agreement which by respecting science brings real global emission reductions.

Such a deal in Copenhagen will demonstrate that we are serious about tackling the climate challenge. This will stimulate the necessary investments to create a green economy, creating new jobs and driving growth over the next two or three decades. Those who understand this today will be the winners of tomorrow.

The post crisis economy will be very different from its predecessor. And we will not get the same chance twice. That is why the measures to tackle the economic crisis and fight climate change must be done at the same time. We know that there is ample room for improvement in the energy efficiency of businesses, consumers and the government. In fact, according to the International Energy Agency, 54% of the abatement measures needed to keep to the two degree global warming target could be reached through the introduction of existing energy efficient technologies.

The economic crisis can thus be a trigger for smart climate solutions that also save money and provide better energy security.

We go to l'Aquila with a number of key objectives. We will insist on the need to respect the 2 C target. We will reiterate the need for a global goal of achieving at least a 50% reduction of global emissions by 2050. In addition, we will ask all developed countries to reduce emissions by at least 80% in the same period and underpin these efforts through robust and comparable mid-term reductions. A key part of the solution will be financing of the fight against climate change: the EU will come forward with proposals in good time on financing, and is of course ready to play its full part.

Indeed, as the largest contributors to past emissions, we of course agree that the developed countries have a special responsibility to take the lead.

But this is not going to be enough. The emerging economies, for example, where growth in emissions is surging, must also join in the effort. We must all do our part, in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

The European Union and its member states are proud of the commitments we have made, to reduce emissions by 20% by 2020, and are ready to go further and reduce them by 30% in the context of an ambitious Copenhagen agreement. We are ready to share our experience, such as on emissions trading, with others. We would like to see an OECD wide emissions trading system by 2015. We would also like to reform and develop the clean development mechanism and thereby bring new investment and new technology to the poorest people on the planet.

We are determined to bring European leadership to bear in facilitating an agreement at Copenhagen of which we can all be proud. There is no alternative. If we fail now, we are breaching the contract that all parents must make with their children: to leave them a better world. Let us turn climate change into a global opportunity in L'Aquila.