

Poland, Germany 'optimistic' of EU climate deal

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Warsaw -- Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk and German Chancellor Angela Merkel Tuesday in Warsaw said they were "cautiously optimistic" the EU could agree a key climate package at a summit this week.

"We have made a great step forward," Merkel told reporters following talks with Tusk. "The possibility of a veto has become smaller.

"There are still many issues to clarify and resolve, but we can say we are cautiously optimistic," Merkel added, a remark echoed by Poland's Tusk.

"A veto is not our goal, a veto is a dramatic solution," he said.

"We want to avoid this. Neither Poland nor Germany are interested in a veto. We want to work out a package which will take into consideration everyone's concerns."

Heavily-dependent on coal, Poland and other EU newcomers have opposed the original proposal to begin full auctioning of CO2 emission quotas for industry in 2013, arguing it would see energy prices skyrocket and growth in their emerging economies nosedive.

The ex-Soviet bloc countries have said they need a substantially longer transition period before switching entirely to the auction system.

Dependent for roughly half of its electricity on coal, EU powerhouse Germany has also expressed its deep reservations over the plan.

Merkel, who has campaigned to make world industrial powers cut greenhouse gas emissions, vowed on Monday to fight any EU climate deal that jeopardized German jobs as recession tightens its grip.

Current holder of the EU's rotating presidency France is hoping to secure the unanimous agreement of the 27-member bloc on the climate package at its summit December 11-12.

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