



A word from the German Presidency



Claudia Dörr-Voß, State Secretary for Europe at Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy

Managing the COVID-19 pandemic will be a key preoccupation of the German Presidency of the Council of the EU, starting on 1 July. In line with our motto of "Together for Europe's recovery", we have set ourselves the goals as Presidency of the Council of the EU to lead the EU successfully out of the crisis, to rebuild its full economic potential and at the same time to further deepen European collaboration. It is also important to draw the right lessons from the crisis and to nurture the resilience of the European Union and its Member States.

In order to achieve these goals, it is important that the EU agrees swiftly on the next Multiannual Financial Framework, gets the Single Market fully back up and running and systematically seizes the economic opportunities of digitalisation and the European Green Deal.

We want to equip our industry and the many small and medium-sized and family-run businesses for the future. We want to strengthen Europe's digital and technological sovereignty. At the same time, multilateral trade needs to be stabilised and the EU's trade relations need to be diversified.

We want to have a constructive debate on globalisation and international value chains. This includes the matter of sustainable supply chains. We also want to continue implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights and the Youth Guarantee and support the development of an EU framework for national minimum wages.

As Presidency of the Council, we shall unremittingly champion the rule of law and our common European values.

The German Presidency thanks the EESC for the contribution it makes by giving a voice to civil society organisations. We look forward to a close collaboration of trust over the next six months – and beyond.

EESC opinions requested by the German Presidency

- Revision of the Territorial Agenda of the EU, the Leipzig Charter and the Urban Agenda for the EU
- The role of EU structural and cohesion policy in driving forward the transformation of the economy in an innovative and smart manner
- Strengthening non-profit social enterprises as an essential pillar of a socially equitable Europe
- Digitalisation and Sustainability – status quo and need for action in civil society perspective
- Sustainable supply chains and decent work in international trade
- Integration of women, mothers and families with a migrant background in the EU Member States and target language levels for integration
- Diversity management in the EU Member States
- Principles for public services (i.e. public services for citizens, public administration) that contribute directly to the stability of the free democratic basic order (democracy and the rule of law) in EU countries
- Social dialogue as an important pillar of economic sustainability and the resilience of economies, taking into account the influence of lively public debate in the Member States
- Fair work in the platform economy



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The EESC's activities during the German Presidency



July – December 2020



European Economic and Social Committee



A word from the President

Luca Jahier, EESC President

The German Presidency should pave the way to a European recovery that invests in a care strategy

In the second half of 2020, Germany will assume the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The German Presidency comes at a time when the European Union is facing unprecedented challenges. While its programme and organisational possibilities are heavily impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, there is widespread demand and political energy to depart from business-as-usual modus operandi and embrace change.

We must turn fears into hopes, accelerating the transition to more sustainable production and consumption, while securing a competitive environment in which businesses can re-start and play a leading role in relaunching the European economy, leaving no-one behind. If there is a dramatic lesson that we have learned in just a few weeks since the pandemic spread, it is that a Europe focused on health must become the key priority of the recovery.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that the launch of the Conference on the Future of Europe is now more than ever also a priority. This will further strengthen the huge social and political capital that has come together over the last few months. It will also do much to improve the democratic legitimacy of the EU, not least through the input of organised civil society.

The way we transform our societies will impact not only the future of our Union, but the future of our world. Any lack of responsibility or inability to act promptly could result in the implosion of Europe and the weakening of the global order, renewed conflicts and the end of many democratic achievements which are rightly a source of pride for us today.

The EESC will ensure that the voice of civil society continues to be heard and will remain committed to the work of the German Presidency, leading a Europe that heals and protects together and relaunching a solidarity-based, entrepreneurial and sustainable Europe for a new rEUnaissance.

So, a very warm welcome to the German Presidency: the EESC is ready to join forces to help shape and implement the plan to lead us out of this crisis while strengthening the European project.

The EESC's activities during the German Presidency



Economic and Monetary Union, Economic and Social Cohesion – ECO

- The economic response to the COVID-19 crisis and recovery plan
- Creating better integrated and more sustainable financial markets
- A Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-27 to contribute to a rebound from the COVID-19 crisis
- Towards a smart and innovative transformation of the economy and a new territorial and urban agenda
- Combatting tax fraud, tax avoidance, money laundering and tax havens
- Green growth: EESC policy proposals on taxation mechanisms for reducing CO₂ emissions
 - Annual sustainable growth strategy and recommendation on the economic policy of the euro area, including national contributions



Single Market, Production and Consumption – INT

- Industrial policy and SMEs
- The social economy as an important pillar of the European economy
- Consumer policy
- Digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence
- Circular Economy



Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society – TEN

- Europe's digital sovereignty based on safe, secure and human-centred digital solutions
- Ensuring an economically, socially and ecologically sustainable energy transition without leaving anybody behind
- Gender balance in the energy sector



- Developing sustainable, smart and clean mobility
- The future of EU air transport in and after the coronavirus crisis
- Universal access to housing that is decent, sustainable, and affordable over the long-term

Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship – SOC

- Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights
- Future of work, working conditions in the platform economy, social dialogue and minimum wages
 - Lifelong learning, employee training and green skills
 - Gender equality and equal opportunities
 - Socio-economic inclusion of migrants and refugees
 - Strengthening the rule of law and fundamental rights in the EU
 - Socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic



Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment – NAT

- A sustainable food strategy "from farm to fork"
- Climate: European Climate Law, European Climate Pact, COP26
- Youth engagement in sustainability and climate
- Implementation of the SDGs in the EU
- Circular economy action plan
- Biodiversity as a key element of the European Green Deal



External Relations – REX

- Partnership with the African Union and the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States
- Preparation and monitoring of accession (Western Balkan countries)
- Managing institutional and non-institutional civil society dialogue with neighbouring countries (Eastern and Mediterranean countries)
- Trade policy (multilateralism and WTO, sharing of key EU policies like the Green Deal with partner countries)
 - Managing institutional civil society dialogue with major trading partners (Japan, South Korea, Canada, etc.)
 - Enhancing civil society dialogue with key global actors (China, Russia, Turkey)
 - Encouraging more effective regional and bilateral cooperation and a modernised partnership with Latin America



Consultative Commission on Industrial Change – CCMI

- EU industrial sectoral policies including SMEs and the economic/employment/health impact of COVID-19
- Consequences of phasing out in coal regions
- Sectoral decarbonisation contributing to climate objectives (e.g. steel, cement, energy-intensive industries)
- Revision of the machinery directive
- Industrial impact of digitization on emerging society 5.0 and its contribution to a robust healthcare system, a need highlighted by the COVID-19

