
Resolution: Programme for the German Council Presidency

In the run-up to the German Council Presidency between July and December 2020, CESI calls upon the German government to focus the following policy priorities to make Europe more social, environment-friendly and resilient to face crises:

1. The German Council Presidency should strive to raise the transparency of the work of the Council, taking the European Parliament as an example, and ensure adequate levels of inclusion of **trade unions, including independent trade unions, and cross-sector and especially sectoral social partners** in policy discourses, deliberations and consultations. CESI calls for all European social partners to be credibly involved in the work of the Council Presidency, including independent trade unions.
2. The German Council Presidency should drive forward with determination the European **Commission's original work programme for 2020** in the sphere of employment and social policies– in particular the planned initiatives related to minimum wages, an unemployment reinsurance scheme and pay transparency – despite and indeed because of in the Corona crisis, which must not become a social crisis.
3. The German Council Presidency should strive to reach a swift agreement among the Member States for an ambitious and solidarity-based **EU response to the economic and financial fallout of the Corona crisis** in the Member States. The Presidency should take the European Commission's proposal for a Recovery Plan of May 27 2020 as a useful basis for a compromise and actively support the proposed funding mechanisms and principles.

4. In order to **make Europe and the Member States more resilient to face future crises**, which will surely come but the nature of which cannot be known, the German Council Presidency should promote mechanisms and measures for:
 - i. Health: common standards for more reliable and complete statistics and minimum testing capacities, a safeguarded supply of pharmaceuticals and other medical products, sufficient levels of personal protective equipment and a functioning early warning system in cases of pandemics for health pandemics;
 - ii. Employment: reinforced telework and distant working, put in place in cooperation with trade unions and social partners and in line with core labour rights;
 - iii. New technologies: performing and functioning internet networks throughout Europe;
 - iv. Investments: above all, substantial new public investments in performing public service.¹

5. The German Council Presidency should coordinate the conclusion of negotiations on a future-oriented **Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)**, which prioritises:
 - i. social fairness and decent work, coupling EU funding to the implementation of the 20 principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
 - ii. digitalisation of work and public service provision, which must be developed with the active involvement of trade unions and social partners and which necessitates as a prerequisite reinforced IT networks and infrastructure in cities as well as rural areas and peripheral regions; and
 - iii. environmental protection and climate neutrality, coupling EU funding to the environmental targets of an ambitious European Green Deal and starting from the assumption that only a socially-friendly green and digital economic agenda can secure the long-term competitiveness of the European continent.

The German Council Presidency should strive for a volume of the MFF that reflects the increasingly central role of the EU to meet common challenges. As the public budgets of the Member States cannot be overburdened excessively, the German Council Presidency should promote the introduction of new EU own resources through a digital tax to ensure the proper taxation of online multinationals, a financial transaction tax encompassing derivatives' trading in particular, or an environmental tax to support the aims of the European Green Deal.

6. The German Council Presidency should actively promote **investments in the national, regional and local public services** of the Member States, based on the assumption that the implementation of the policy priorities under the new MFF will only be possible if processes can be effectively and efficiently managed and overseen by performing and well-resourced public services.

¹ See CESI's position paper 'COVID-19 pandemic: Priorities for more resilience' of June 18 2020 for further details: https://www.cesi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-CESI-Presidium-Corona-pandemic-Priorities-for-more-resilience-EN-20200618_final.pdf

7. The German Council Presidency should further promote **administrative cooperation** in the EU so as to allow further **digital interoperability** between the different administrative layers, seamlessly from local authorities up to the EU agencies. This should cover areas including, but not limited to, internal security and cybersecurity, asylum and migration as well as social security and labour inspections.
8. The German Council Presidency cannot neglect the fight against **tax** fraud and tax avoidance. CESI advocates more European cooperation for tax transparency and against tax avoidance and tax evasion, thus laying the basis for an effective collection of taxes that can be reinvested in public services and social cohesion.
9. In terms of defence and external security, the German Council Presidency should prioritise to flank **PESCO** with a **social dimension**. Joint missions and activities should be based on common social and employment standards for soldiers and further employees of the armed forces.
10. The German Council Presidency should advocate a **Brexit agreement** between the EU and the UK by the end of 2020 so as to avoid negative economic, social and political consequences. If necessary, extending the transitional period ought to remain a possibility. The EU should not concede nonreciprocal advantages to the UK, especially in terms of social and labour rights and standards.
11. The German Council Presidency should advocate harmonised and sustainable neighbourhood relations. In particular, CESI calls for genuine **EU accession** prospects for the Western Balkans, not least due to its location and historic ties with other European countries,, with clear prospects being accompanied by the clear meeting of all accession criteria.
12. CESI expects the German Council Presidency to continue preparing for the **Conference on the Future of Europe** so that the results will be available in good time before the 2024 European elections. Trade unions, including independent trade unions, should be heard in this process.