

# Sustainability Priorities of the German Presidency in second half 2020



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On 1 July, Germany took over the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU. This news update provides an overview of the German priorities in the field of sustainability for the upcoming six months.

## General Support for EU Climate, Environmental and Biodiversity Ambitions

- The German Presidency expressed its support for the ambitions of the European Commission as laid down in the European Green Deal.
- Moreover, the German Presidency wants to bring forward European beliefs via climate diplomacy in the context of the UN climate forums;
- Finally, Germany will ensure that the Green Deal's implementation will contribute to the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in Europe.

## Specific ambitions

During the second half of 2020, the German Presidency aims to:

- Adopt conclusions on the Commission's new Circular Economy Action Plan and its implementation;
- Start the negotiations on the 8th Environmental Action Program;
- Adopt Council conclusions on the new EU Biodiversity Strategy to put a halt to biodiversity loss;
- Successfully finish the Council's deliberations on the draft of the European Climate Law;
- Determine to what extent the EU can enhance its 'nationally determined contribution' (NDC) to the Paris Agreement for the year 2030. The German Presidency would welcome a proposal from the Commission to increase the ambition for 2030 from a reduction of 40% to a reduction of 50-55% by 2030;
- Continue work towards sustainable mobility in the transport sector;
- Adopt Council conclusions to support the upcoming Offshore Wind Energy Strategy of the European Commission;
- Promote renewable hydrogen as energy source in the decarbonization of the EU energy mix;
- Extend carbon pricing via the EU Emissions Trading System, by extending it to all sectors and by introducing a moderate carbon minimum price in the framework of the EU ETS;
- Internationally promote, via the EU Energy Diplomacy Action Plan, the increase of national climate contributions of third countries, thereby reducing the risk of 'carbon leakage';
- Start the negotiations on the upcoming European Commission's proposal for the transposition of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 in the EU, thereby insisting on the introduction of frequent progress reports to monitor progress in Member States;
- • Reach Council conclusions on the Farm to Fork Strategy, animal welfare and nutrition labelling schemes;
- • Support rural and urban development by adopting the 2030 Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities (2007).

## Broader context German presidency

Apart from these specific sustainability priorities, the German Presidency will strongly focus on currently urgent issues. The beginning of their Presidency will be strongly focused on guiding the negotiations on the MFF 2021-2027 and the Next Generation EU Recovery Fund. Simultaneously, the German Presidency has to deal with the formal completion of the UK's exit from the EU, including the final details on the provisions for the future relationship. Apart from these high-level priorities, the German Presidency will strongly focus on the overarching ambitions of the EU, which are the digitalization and the green transition, as elaborated in this news update, of the European economy.