



HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR GERMANY

The Council Presidency at a Pivotal Moment for the EU

ZOOM DISCUSSION ON 14 JULY 2020, 14:00–15:15

INVITATION

Dear friends of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung,

On July 1, 2020, Germany took over the EU Council Presidency. Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, expectations were very high given the challenges that needed to be addressed (EU budget, Brexit, etc.). Those challenges are now greater than ever. With the profound economic crisis triggered by Covid-19 and the unprecedented burden on public health systems, Germany also faces the task – most likely the central challenge of its presidency – of managing the current crisis on the one hand while, at the same time, setting the course for the future. The keywords here are: green deal, digitisation, innovation, environment, social cohesion and the rule of law. The two tasks cannot be separated from each other; they are linked in terms of time and content.

At the beginning of the crisis, the EU struggled to play a role as a crisis manager. Solo national efforts by member states dominated the picture and some observers argued that the Union was falling apart. The turning point came with the Merkel-Macron recovery plan, which paved the way for the 750 billion euro programme proposed by the European Commission that will be discussed at the next EU summit on 17–18 July. The EU has thereby begun to demonstrate its capacity to act, and there is a chance that it could emerge from this crisis stronger and more united.

This online panel is part of a series of **»Zooming-in on progressive responses«** with social democratic politicians and experts all across

from Europe, organized by FES offices in Europe. It will discuss Germany's EU Presidency, and focus in particular on a few key questions: How is the Covid-19 crisis reshaping the goals and agenda of the German Presidency? Will internal cohesion be strengthened and old divisions overcome? Is it possible to make sustainable economic, social and budgetary decisions that will pave the way for a balanced economic and social recovery in Europe? Can the EU strengthen its international role, especially in the face of escalating competition between the US and China?

These questions and others, including your own remarks and queries, will be discussed by

Michael Roth, MP
*Minister of State for Europe,
Federal Foreign Office, Germany*

Ana Paula Zacarias
*Secretary of State for European Affairs,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Portugal*

Prof. Marek Belka, MEP
*ex-Prime Minister, ex-President Central Bank,
ex-Minister of Finance, Poland*

Moderation: **Jacki Davis**,
Meade Davis Communications, Brussels

Looking forward to meeting you online for another most interesting debate.

Your FES-Team

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PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING TECHNICAL AND PROCEDURAL ASPECTS

- › We are inviting you and other progressive FES-partners from European and neighbouring countries to discuss the current situation in Europe.
- › Your Confirmation will arrive via Email and include a personalized link to enter the meeting room. FES is using Zoom.
- › Zoom works well with PC, smartphone or tablet. You can find the app »Zoom Cloud Meeting« in the respective App Store. Otherwise, when opening your personalized entrance-URL, a free client program for PC, Mac or Linux is being installed. Please just follow the instructions.
- › Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung uses the software of the US company www.Zoom.us for its webinars. Zoom's technical infrastructure is stored on US servers. FES does not store any data from webinar participants in the zoom system. There is no obligation to use the audio, chat webcam function during the webinar session (<https://zoom.us/de-de/privacy.html>).

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Deputy Leader MSZP-caucus, Hungarian National Assembly

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Katarina Barley
Fourth Vice President of the European Parliament

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Pedro Delgado Alves
Deputy of the Assembly of the Portuguese Republic

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Valerie Rabault
Leader of the Parliamentary Group of the Parti Socialiste in France

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Norbert Walter-Borjans
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Nicolas Schmit
European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights

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Lars Aslan Rasmussen
Social Democratic Party, Leader of the Friends of Europe in the Danish Parliament

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Georgios Kaminis
MP and previous Mayor of Athens

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Birgit Sippel
MEP, S&D Group Coordinator, Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, EP

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