



Press Release

Berlin, 16. Juli 2020
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Federal Minister Altmaier sets out priorities of Germany's Council Presidency before two committees of the European Parliament

Today, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy Peter Altmaier presented Germany's priorities for its Presidency of the Council of the EU before the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) and the Committee on Regional Development (REGI).

Both the presentation by the Minister and the discussion in the ITRE committee focused on action to induce a swift economic recovery and to strengthen cohesion within the EU.

Economic Affairs Minister Peter Altmaier said: "The industrial sector and small and medium-sized enterprises are key drivers of the European economic and innovative power, and they have an essential role to play in the economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic. This is our opportunity to choose to make Europe greener, more digital and thereby more competitive in the long term. If we are to achieve our objective of making the European continent climate-neutral by 2050, we need a framework that is pro-business and attracts private investment in the clean economy and modern and climate-friendly technologies, such as offshore wind power and hydrogen. Parallel to this, we want to harness the digital transformation for strengthening sustainable growth, competitiveness, innovation, and resilience in Europe's industry and economy. It will be absolutely essential for the Council of the EU and the European Parliament to be on the same page on this and to join forces in leading Europe from the crisis stronger than it was before."

The ITRE committee of the European Parliament is in charge of industrial policy (including SMEs), research policy, energy policy, EU space policy, and the information society and ICT. The committee is currently chaired by Christian-Silviu Buşoi (EPP parliamentary group).

The meeting in the Regional Development committee had a strong focus on the negotiations for the cohesion package, which will set the framework for the new programmes financed from the Structural Funds as of 2021.

Economic Affairs Minister Peter Altmaier said: "The Structural Funds play a major role in overcoming the crisis. By the end of the year, the negotiations between the European Parliament and the Council must be concluded for the new funding programmes to be ready to be launched on time. The fact that the negotiations are



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lagging behind creates enormous challenges. The Council and the European Parliament are both accountable to the regions of the EU and owe it to them to work together closely and in a constructive manner to reach an agreement. Having assumed our role as the current Council Presidency, we stand ready to play our part.”

The Committee on Regional Development is in charge of the EU’s regional and cohesion policy. Its decision-making powers notably extend to the legal framework governing the use of financing from the Structural Funds, which account for approximately a third of the volume of the EU’s Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). The committee is chaired by Younous Omarjee (GUE/NGL parliamentary group).