

German Council Presidency Agenda

1 July – 31 December 2020

Introduction

The Presidency of the Council of the EU (the Council) is held on a rotation basis. Every six months a Member State holds the Presidency and hence, sets the Council's **political agenda** and chairs meetings at every level of the Council.

The German Presidency initiates **the start of a new 'trio' presidencies**, together with Portugal and Slovenia. Germany will hold the presidency of the Council from the **1st of July until December 31st this year**. For this period, Germany has outlined the priorities it wants to push forward in the Council.

The programme in a nutshell

Germany has as an overall goal to **overcome the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic** by investing in the European economy and strengthening its innovative potential while enhancing the social cohesion.

The **guiding principles of the German Presidency** are:

- the permanent overcoming of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic recovery;
- a stronger and more innovative Europe;
- a fair Europe;
- a sustainable Europe;
- a Europe of security and common values;
- a strong Europe in the world.

The economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic will be placed at the centre of Germany's efforts to pursue a sustainable and inclusive growth strategy and the transition to a sustainable economy, based **on the European Green Deal and the digital transformation**. In order to master these changes, the presidency has the goal to advance the **industrial and SME strategy** by looking at the needs of strategic ecosystems. The horizontal top priorities are the negotiations on the **Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)** for 2021-2027 and an **EU-UK trade deal**.

European sovereignty plays an important role as a lesson learned from the pandemic. This materialises in the aim **to bring 'home' production of strategic goods**, but also to enhance the **digital sovereignty** as a guiding principle for the European digital policy. In the digital sphere, **artificial intelligence** and the **development of data policy** are earmarked by the Germans as of particular interest for the European

healthcare sector. Due to the increasing role digital technologies play in the life of Europeans, Germany also aims to look at **data protection and cybersecurity**.

Enhancing European sovereignty does however not mean refraining from global interactions, which the presidency underlines by wanting **to improve the EU's leadership role at the world stage**.

The priorities in health

The following is an analysis of the health agenda put forward by German stakeholders during meetings and official documents.

The health programme is based on four key focal points, having as a horizontal pillar the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic:

1. The EU's crisis preparedness and management should be improved, with **a more prominent role for the ECDC** and a **reinforced RescEU initiative**. The production of strategic goods, such as medical devices, should be brought back to Europe to enhance our resilience in times of emergency. At the same time, Germany recognises the need for a **diversification of global supply chains**.
2. Research and innovation will play a central role in prevention and living with health crises, underlining the need for an agreement on **Horizon Europe** and **EU4Health**. As data and digital will play a pivotal role here, Germany will work on improved Europe-wide **access to and exchange of health-related data**. Germany supports a transparent and legally compliant **European health data space** and, by means of Council conclusions, initiate a **"Code of Conduct" for the data protection-compliant use of health data**. The presidency sees the role of research and innovation also important when it comes to the **Europe's Beating Cancer Plan**, which they aim to introduce to the Council.
3. The German Presidency wants to enhance the position of the EU as a global leader, by making sure it has **a more active role in international organisations such as the WHO**. At world stage, the EU should help define criteria for fair and equal access to therapeutics, diagnostics, and vaccines to fight COVID-19. In relation to this, Germany also want to **strengthen the role of the WHO** and **expand the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT-A) Platform**.
4. **Improvements in the use and supply of pharmaceuticals, medical products and personal protection equipment** is also high on the agenda. Next to the autonomy in production, the emphasis lies on **guaranteeing the quality of these goods**. In relation to this, the German Presidency wants to evaluate the use of the **joint procurement agreement** and assess whether it can be used more efficiently to address supply disruptions.

On **HTA** specifically, the presidency has outlined that at the moment there are too many conflicting positions in the Council and among stakeholders. As a result, the Council will have to propose significant changes to the original proposal. **The German Presidency has decided to continue the discussions but not to include the file in their priorities list.**

What does this mean for the medtech sector?

The German Presidency has set out an ambitious agenda with multiple points of focus that are highly relevant for the medtech sector.

- 1. Above all, the objective is to initiate Europe's recovery process while taking into account the lessons learned.** The prominent role of the Green Deal and multiple digital files show that this recovery is meant to be digital and environmentally sustainable. However, first the right conditions must be set with an agreement on the MFF and the recovery instruments, but also on the programmes that are scheduled to start in 2021, including Horizon Europe and Digital Europe. The programme holds a lot of opportunities to engage in shaping Europe's first steps into recovery with a central role for **industry and SMEs.**

The **first steps towards European recovery will be set**, for which it is important for us to follow and engage with.

- 2. Relevant public health files** are mentioned throughout the Programme:
 - a. Including on the pivotal role of **pandemic preparedness and resilience.** The German Presidency also acknowledges **the role for medtech** in this by bringing back **the production of certain strategic medtech goods.**
 - b. Outside of the pandemic topic, relevant health topics on the agenda include **the pharmaceutical strategy, HTA and Europe's Cancer Plan.**

The German Presidency will have an essential role in **moving forward these files, which will highly impact our work over the next years.**