



Deutscher Bundestag



Bundesrat

**Conference folder for the participants in the
video conference:**

**Virtual Conference of Parliamentary Committees
on Union Affairs of Parliaments of the
European Union
(COSAC)**





Virtual COSAC on 30 November und 1 December 2020

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Virtual COSAC

Draft Programme (as of 24 November 2020)

Please use a headset!



All time specifications refer to CET.

Monday, 30 November 2020

9.00 – 9.15

Opening of the conference

- Welcome address by Dr Wolfgang Schäuble, President of the German Bundestag
- Introductory remarks by Mr Gunther Krichbaum, Chairman of the Committee on EU Affairs of the German Bundestag
- Adoption of the agenda for the virtual COSAC

9.15 – 9.30

Procedural issues and miscellaneous matters

- Briefing on the results of the meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC
- Presentation of key findings of the 34th Bi-annual Report of COSAC
- Letters received by the Presidency
- AOB

9.30 – 10.30

Session I: „Aktuelle Stunde“

(Exchange on a topic to be named at short notice and of current particular interest)

Debate

Please use a headset!



10.30 – 11.00	Break
11.00 – 13.00	<p>Session II: Lessons learned from the corona crisis – Cooperation in the EU in the event of pandemics and in health care</p> <p><u>Keynote Speakers:</u> Mr Jens Spahn, Federal Minister of Health; Dr Andrea Ammon, Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control</p> <p>Debate</p>
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch break
14.00 – 15.30	<p>Session III: Review of the German EU Presidency</p> <p><u>Keynote Speaker:</u> Dr Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany</p> <p>Debate</p>

Please use a headset!



Tuesday, 1 December 2020

9.00 – 10.30

Session IV: The Future of the European Union

Keynote Speaker: Dr Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission

Debate

10.30 – 11.00

Break

11.00 – 12.30

Session V: Europe's role in the world – A responsible partnership with Africa

Keynote Speaker: Professor Dr Horst Köhler, President of the Federal Republic of Germany (2004-2010)

Joint debate with representatives from Africa and of the African Union

12.30 – 12.45

Closing remarks by the Chairs

Video Conference Guide for Webex and Interprefy

General information

The video conference including the original spoken audio (floor) will be transmitted via Webex. Simultaneous interpretation of the conference will be provided from German, English and French into German, English and French via the platform Interprefy.

Technical information

Please make sure you comply with the following technical requirements to ensure good video and audio quality – otherwise it will not be possible for your contribution to be interpreted.

- Use a stable LAN internet connection with sufficient bandwidth of at least 10 Mbit/s (please do not use a wireless network).
- When you take the floor during the conference use a high-quality external microphone, for instance in the form of a headset. Please do **not** use the built-in microphones on your laptop or PC, as these do not ensure sufficiently good audio quality.
- Sit in an evenly lit, bright place.
- Position your camera so that there is a good view of you in the video window that the other participants will see. The camera should be roughly at eye level. The background should be tidy and not distracting.
- Device for participating in the Webex conference: laptop or PC with built-in or external HD webcam, or a dedicated Webex device. To listen to the original audio (floor), you will need internal or external speakers.
- If you want to **listen to the simultaneous interpreting**, you have to open an additional window for the Interprefy platform in your internet browser (see below).
- Please do not log out during the break.

System/IT information

Please note you will need the following to avoid problems when installing and connecting to Cisco Webex:

- Authorisation to download and run .exe and .msi files or to share the programmes via the relevant software centre (if administration is organised centrally, i.e. via the IT department or system administrator).
- USB read and write permission
- Audio and microphone input must be activated.
- Authorisation for your browser to access the camera, microphone and speakers.
- You will need to allow Cisco Webex to bypass proxy settings in your browser and your in-house network or the configuration of the proxy server and firewall.
- More information on security during Cisco Webex meetings is available here:
<https://www.cisco.com/c/dam/en/us/products/collateral/conferencing/webex-meeting-center/white-paper-c11-737588.pdf?dtid=ossdc000283>



Participating in a video conference using Cisco Webex and using Interprefy to listen to the simultaneous interpreting

Participating in a Webex meeting

1. Please open the link in your e-mail invitation to the Webex meeting

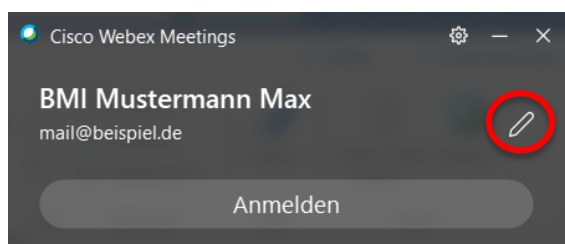
Option 1: Participate from the Webex Meetings app

→ If the Cisco Webex Meetings app is already installed on your PC, open the app by clicking on the link to the meeting.



Before joining the meeting, change your information in the programme to:

Iso-code for your country / Last name / First name
e.g. DEU Mustermann Max



Option 2: Participate from your web browser

→ You can also participate using your web browser: click on [Join from your browser.](#)



If you are participating from your browser, enter your information as follows:

Iso-code for your country / Last name / First name
e.g. DEU Mustermann Max



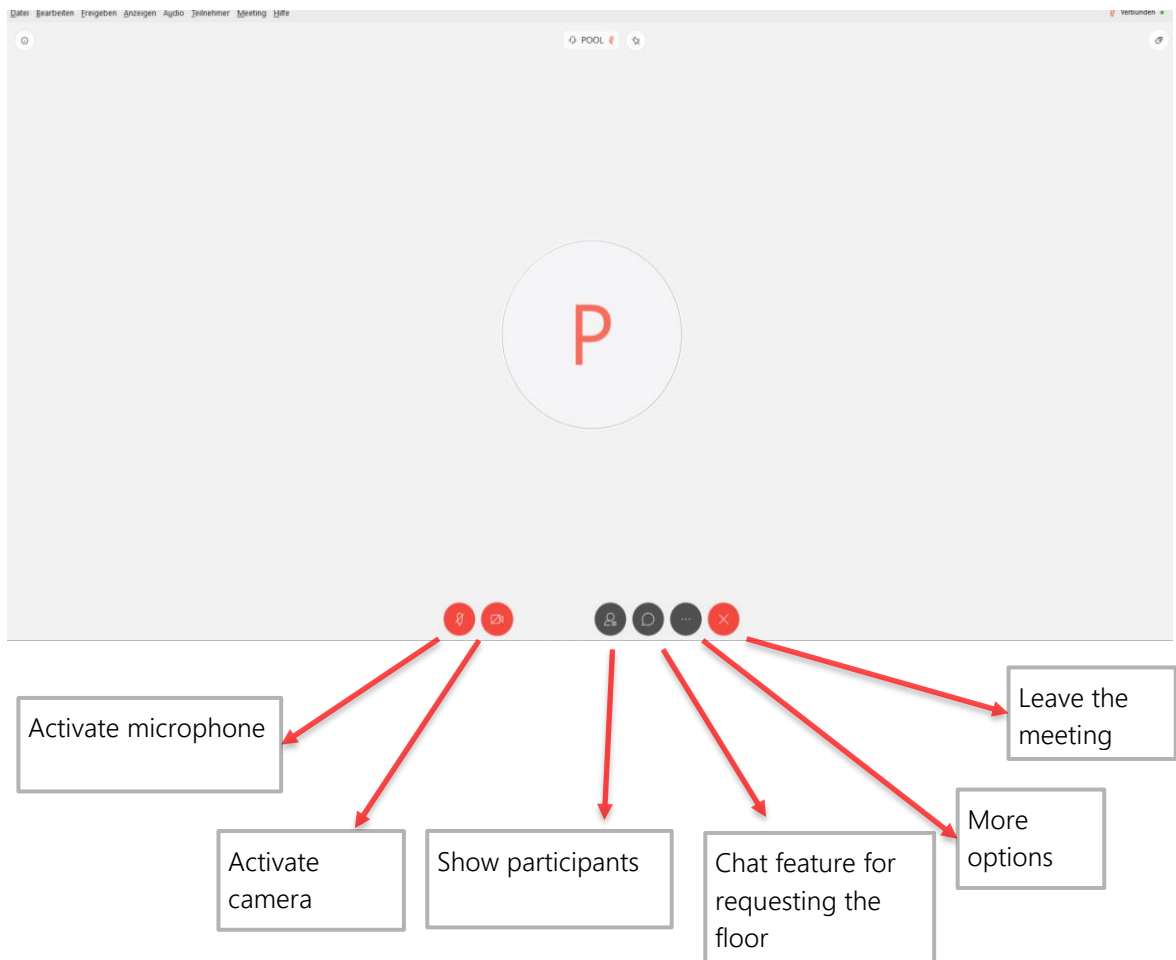
2. Before joining the meeting, please activate your camera and mute your microphone.



3. Then click on „Join Meeting“.



Webex features during the video conference



4. Using the chat feature to request the floor:

- You should only use the chat feature to request the floor – please direct your contentual questions via direct chat message to us.
- Please do not use the chat feature for any other communication. If, for instance, you need technical support please call the technical hotline (see below).

How to request the floor:

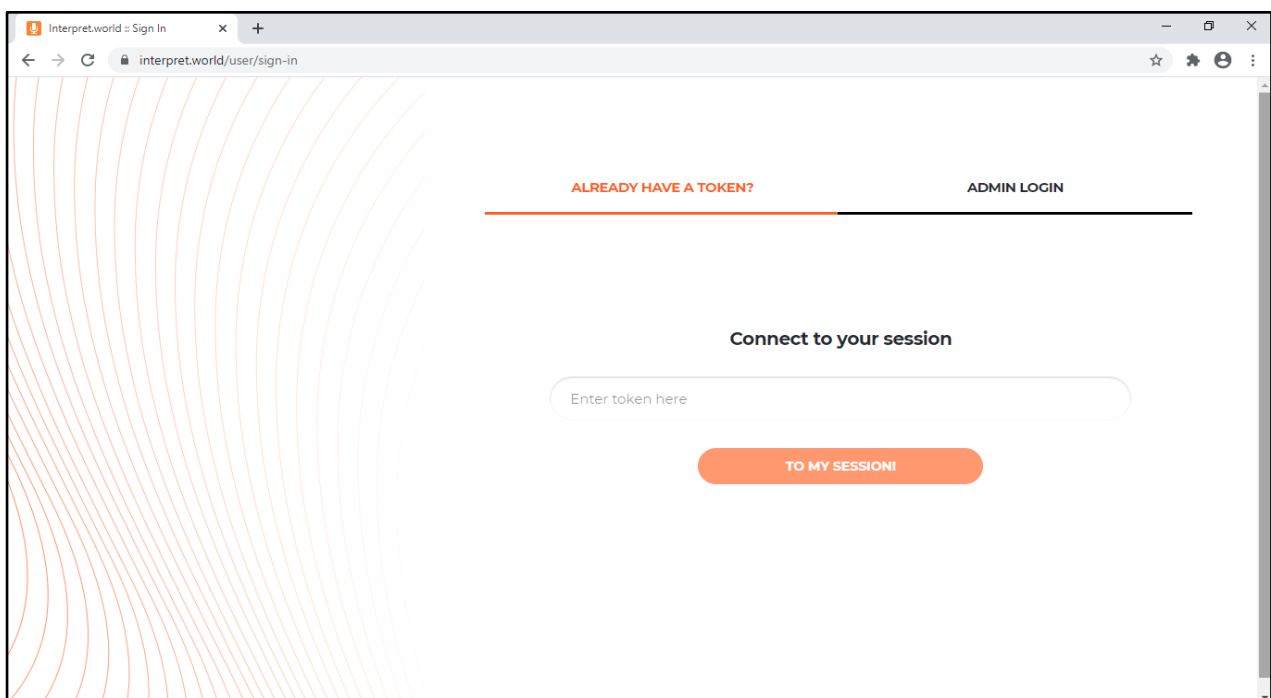
- Enter your three-digit country code, your last name and the language you will be speaking and send it to the chat.
- You will receive a private message that you are up next whilst the speaker before you is still speaking.
- Wait until you are given the floor by the chair of the meeting.
- Once you have been given the floor, please activate your microphone.
- Speaking time is limited to two minutes. The chair reserves the right to shorten or lengthen this speaking time, depending on how many participants are requesting the floor.
- Once you have finished speaking, please do not forget to mute your microphone again.

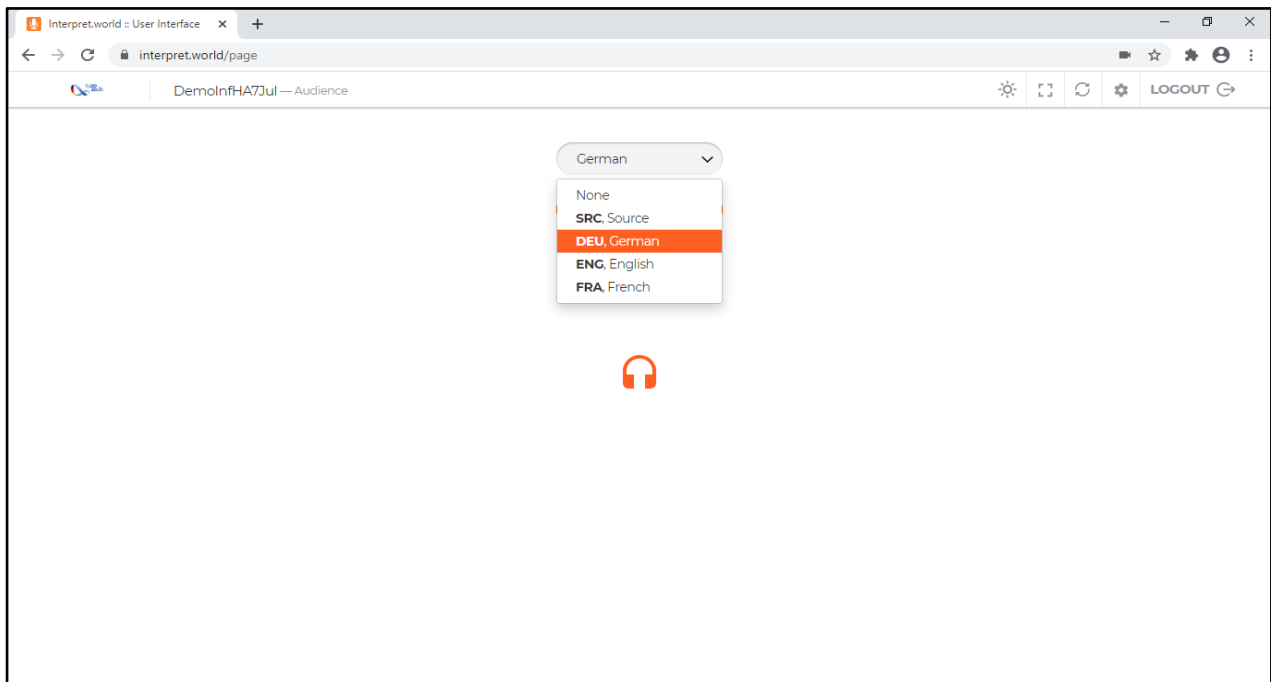
5. Using Interprefy from your web browser to listen to the simultaneous interpretation

We recommend you use the Google Chrome browser and a wired internet connection for this.

Use the link: <https://interpret.world/user/sign-in>

Participants using Interprefy receive a separate e-mail with an event access token allowing them to log in.
Enter your token → Press „To my session!“ → Plug in your headset → Choose a language





Help in the event of technical problems

- If you have any technical questions or difficulties, please contact either support.bundestag@pool.de or +49 2572 920 164.
- For any other questions relating to the conference please contact either cosac2020@bundestag.de or +49 30 227 33766.



If you have any technical questions or difficulties, don't hesitate to contact us at the following e-mail address or on our hotline: support.bundestag@pool.de or +49 2572 920 164



Virtual COSAC on 30 November and 1 December 2020

Background note: Coordination of European action against the COVID-19 pandemic and initial lessons from the coronavirus crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic is currently confronting the EU and its member states with formidable challenges once again. The first wave of infections in the spring of 2020 had already highlighted the need for closer cooperation within the EU and for increased preparedness and response capacity. In spite of promising progress in the development and authorisation of a vaccine, the pandemic will remain with us for some time to come.

I. More recent EU responses to the COVID-19 pandemic

On 28 October 2020, the European Commission adopted a comprehensive [set of measures](#) in response to the new rise in the number of COVID-19 cases. Under this package, member states were to present **testing strategies** and **testing protocols** (for medical personnel, for example) by mid-November. The Commission also recommended provision for the use of rapid tests because of the limited laboratory capacity for polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests. An amount of EUR 100 million is to be available under the Emergency Support Instrument for a **joint procurement procedure for rapid antigen tests**. The Commission calls on member states to support the development of **warning apps** where not already available. On 19 October 2020, a solution for linking national apps across the EU was launched. In addition, the Commission is continuing its pursuit of a coordinated **vaccination strategy** and is establishing a platform to register national vaccination strategies and monitor their effectiveness. **Data sharing** between member states, particularly through the ECDC, says the Commission, is to be improved through the creation of other platforms, providing information such as the current capacities of intensive care units. To simplify **travel** within the EU, work is being done on a **European travel form**, which is to be available in December 2020. The

The **European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)**, based in Solna, Sweden, has been operational since 2005. Since 2017, the EU agency, which currently has 290 employees, has been headed by Dr Andrea Ammon. The mission of the ECDC is to identify, assess and provide information on risks to human health from transmissible diseases. It delivers surveillance data and advice on 52 communicable diseases. The agency cooperates closely with the European Commission, the member states and with other EU agencies and organisations, including the **European Medicines Agency (EMA)** and the World Health Organization.

Commission also intends to present proposals for an extension of the **Green Lane** approach for goods traffic.

On 29 October 2020, an informal video conference of EU **Heads of State or Government** took place. They shared experiences and best practices relating, for example, to testing, tracing of infection chains, quarantine rules and maintenance of the single market. The German Presidency of the Council is continuing its efforts to establish more coordination.

II. The Commission's most recent proposals for health-related regulations

As first steps towards the creation of a “European Health Union”, the European Commission presented **proposals** on 11 November 2020 for regulations reinforcing the **ECDC** and **EMA mandates** and for a regulation on [serious cross-border threats to health](#).

The last-named regulation in particular is intended to enable the Commission and EU agencies to play a more coordinating role in the event of any serious cross-border threat to health. For the establishment of an EU **preparedness plan**, the member states, with the assistance of the ECDC where necessary, are to draw up their own national preparedness plans, which will be stress-tested by the Commission and EU agencies. The Commission wishes to reinforce epidemiological **surveillance**, to require member states to **report** free treatment and staff capacities and to provide scope for closer cooperation in the development, procurement and storage of crisis-related products if an **EU state of emergency** is declared. Under the proposed regulation on a reinforced role for the EMA, the Agency's mandate is to be widened to include additional monitoring, advisory and coordination tasks.

The Commission has also announced that it will present a proposal on 24 November 2020 for greater EU autonomy in **ensuring the supply of medicines**. Among the particular interests of the German Presidency of the Council are ensuring the quality of active ingredients, greater transparency and diversification of supply chains and European cooperation in developing the production of active ingredients for critical medicines.

From the 34th Bi-annual Report of COSAC:

- 17 out of 36 Parliaments/Chambers favour a reinforcement of the ECDC
- Proposals for improving coordination in the EU:
 - * creation of a general European framework
 - * better information-sharing
 - * definition of uniform criteria
 - * cross-border crisis-response plans
 - * consultation prior to any border closures

By the end of 2021, the Commission also intends to present a proposal for the creation of a new EU Health Emergency Response Authority (HERA).

III. Spotlight on the proposed regulation on the mandate of the ECDC

In a [resolution adopted on 10 July 2020](#), the European Parliament had called on the Commission to propose a revised mandate for the ECDC to increase its budget and staffing and widen its sphere of competence. At the Informal Meeting of Health Ministers on 16 July 2020, the German

Federal Minister of Health, Jens Spahn, and the European Commissioner for Health, Stella Kyriakides, also called for the ECDC to be **strengthened**, developed into a European **Health Emergency Response Authority** and incorporated into a **uniform EU-wide reporting system** to increase the **resilience** of the EU in times of crisis.

In its [proposal of 11 November 2020](#), the Commission provides for measures to strengthen the role of the ECDC. According to the proposal, the ECDC is, in particular, to support the member states and the Commission by:

- establishing a real-time system of epidemiological surveillance,
- providing advice on preparedness and response planning and on reporting practice and audits,
- making non-binding recommendations on risk management,
- monitoring the capacities of health systems,
- mobilising and deploying an EU Health Task Force to assist local response in member states, and
- establishing a network of reference laboratories.

It is expected that the Presidency of the Council will place the improvement of predictive capacity, the establishment of comparability between member states' databases and the development of a digital early-warning system at the forefront of the initial deliberations on this proposal.



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Session II: Keynote Speakers' CVs

Dr Andrea Ammon

Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

2005–2011

Head of ECDC's Surveillance Unit

2011–2015

Deputy to the Director of ECDC and Head of Unit for Resource Management and Coordination

2015–2017

Acting Director of ECDC

Since June 2017

Director of ECDC



Source: ECDC

Jens Spahn

Federal Minister of Health

2009–2015

Spokesman on health policy for the CDU/CSU parliamentary group in the Bundestag

2015–2018

Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Finance

Since March 2018

Federal Minister of Health



Source: Federal Ministry of Health



Virtual COSAC on 30 November and 1 December 2020

Background note: Developments in selected areas of the EU agenda under the German Presidency

Germany's Presidency of the Council of the EU will end on 31 December 2020. On the basis of the priorities of the Presidency programme, the following pages provide a brief summary of developments in selected areas of the EU agenda.

I. Europe's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

The German Presidency of the Council has been conducted under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the cornerstones of the efforts to tackle the crisis is the Next Generation EU (NGEU) recovery instrument. On 10 November 2020, the German Presidency brokered a political agreement in the trilogue on the **NGEU programme**, which will have a budget of EUR 750 billion, and on the **multiannual financial framework (MFF) for 2021-2027**, which is to have a budget of EUR 1,074 billion. The compromise with the European Parliament (EP) establishes greater flexibility to meet unforeseen needs and a route map for the introduction of revenue streams giving the Union more of its own resources and provides an additional EUR 15 billion to top up future-oriented programmes such as EU4Health, Erasmus Plus and Horizon Europe.

With a view to improving the coordination of member states' efforts to tackle the pandemic and to avoiding fragmentation and obstacles, the Council adopted a [recommendation](#) on 13 October 2020 on a coordinated approach to measures restricting **free movement**. Deliberations have also taken place on **reform of the World Health Organization (WHO)**. The Council adopted [Conclusions](#) on **strengthening the WHO** in written procedure in November 2020. Other conclusions are being prepared on the **"lessons learned" process**, in the context of which facilities such as the Emergency Support Instrument (ESI) are to be reviewed. The next regular meeting of the Council of Health Ministers will take place on 2 December 2020.

Further information is provided in the background note on coordination of European action against the COVID-19 pandemic and initial lessons from the coronavirus crisis.

II. A stronger and more innovative Europe

On 13 October 2020, the Council adopted [Conclusions](#) on **seizing the opportunities of digitalisation for access to justice**. In those conclusions it encourages member states to make increased use of digital tools in the course of judicial proceedings and calls on the Commission to develop, by the end of 2020, a comprehensive EU strategy for digitalisation of the justice system.

Following on from the [White Paper on Artificial Intelligence \(AI\)](#) presented by the Commission at the beginning of 2020, the German Presidency of the Council presented [Conclusions](#) on 21 October 2020 on the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the context of AI and the digital transformation, which 26 member states have endorsed. In December, a Declaration on Digital Society is to be signed at a high-level conference on a values-based digital transformation. On 24 November 2020, the Commission presented a proposal for a **European data governance** framework. This is to be followed on 9 December 2020 by a package of measures relating to **digital services**.

III. A fair Europe

On 9 October 2020, the Council adopted Conclusions on [improving the working and living conditions of seasonal and other mobile workers](#), on [participation and well-being of older persons](#) in the era of digitalisation and on [minimum income protection](#). Negotiations began within the relevant Council bodies in November on the Commission's [proposal](#) on adequate minimum wages in the European Union. The Council also reached agreement on a **renewal of the youth guarantee**. Council conclusions on the sharing of work and care responsibilities between partners are planned for December. The Presidency intends to continue, as a matter of priority, the **revision of the EU provisions on the coordination of social security systems**.

IV. A sustainable Europe

The Council has been dealing with the strategy papers presented by the Commission on the **European Green Deal**; in particular, following intensive discussions, it set out its position on the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#) on 19 October 2020. It unanimously requested the Commission to base all of its related legislative proposals on scientifically sound *ex ante* impact assessments so as to establish consistency across all pertinent policy areas and emphasised the importance of **food security** and of **ensuring a fair income** for primary producers. The Council Presidency is aiming for the adoption of conclusions on the [hydrogen strategy](#) in December 2020.

For the funding of the European Green Deal, the Commission has published a **Sustainable Europe Investment Plan** as well as launching the **Just Transition Mechanism**. The amount of EUR 40 billion that was originally earmarked by the Commission from the Just Transition Fund has been reduced to EUR 17.5 billion under the trilogue agreement.

The Council has also agreed on a general approach to the reform package for the **post-2020 common agricultural policy (CAP)**. Among the new features of the package are mandatory eco-schemes and enhanced conditionality. The Council therefore has the political mandate it requires to enter into negotiations with the European Parliament.

On 23 October 2020, the Council arrived at a partial general approach on the [European Climate Law](#) without being able to agree on the **emission reduction target**. The Presidency of the Council supports the Commission's proposal for a reduction of at least 55 per cent of 1990 CO₂ emission volumes by 2030 and is striving for a Council agreement on this target before the end of the year.

V. A Europe of security and common values

On 30 September 2020, the Commission presented its first [Rule of Law Report](#), on the basis of which the Council held a cross-cutting debate on 13 October 2020. On 17 November 2020 an initial country-specific exchange of best practices was conducted with five member states – Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Estonia; it is planned to repeat these discussions at half-yearly intervals. Portugal and Slovenia intend to continue with the debates.

On 5 November 2020 an agreement was reached at the trilogue negotiations with regard to the **Rule of Law Mechanism**, which was initially proposed in 2018. Under this agreement, payment of EU funds may be suspended if breaches of the principle of the rule of law in a member state are ascertained which affect or seriously risk affecting the **sound financial management of the EU budget** or the **protection of the financial interests** of the EU in a sufficiently direct way. The Council, acting by a qualified majority, must, in principle, decide within a month on any suspension proposed by the Commission. Final beneficiaries of funds, such as Erasmus students or farmers, will be protected and supported by the Commission through a platform.

On 23 September 2020, the Commission presented a [new pact on migration and asylum](#) to replace the existing **Dublin system** and pave the way for a fresh start in the stalled negotiations on the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). The German Presidency of the Council would like to bring about a political agreement on strategic guidelines by the end of the year.

VI. An effective European Union for a rules-based international order anchored in partnership

In its [Conclusions](#) of 16 October 2020, the European Council expressed concern at the lack of progress in **negotiations on future relations with the United Kingdom**. The parties are still divided on the parts of the agreement relating to a level playing field, fisheries and governance. Since 22 October 2020, the negotiations have been continued on the basis of draft provisions for a possible agreement. The Commission, moreover, instituted infringement proceedings against the UK on 1 October 2020 on account of the **Internal Market Bill 2019-21**. The EU is insisting on the withdrawal of provisions of the Bill, which has been before the House of Lords since 19 October 2020 and will probably be discussed again by the House of Commons in December.

A Council agreement on the framework for negotiations with **Albania** and **North Macedonia** and the opening of the first accession conference with North Macedonia are still awaited.

The heads of the Commission and the Council met by video link with the President of **China** on 14 September 2020. They emphasised the importance of competing on a level playing field and discussed measures to combat COVID-19 and climate change. An **EU-China summit** of Heads of State or Government is to take place in **2021**.

On 2 October 2020, the Council imposed sanctions, including travel bans and asset freezing, against 40 persons held responsible for violent repression and intimidation of peaceful demonstrators following the presidential elections in **Belarus**. On 6 November 2020, the Council also added 15 members of the Belarusian Government to the **sanctions list**.



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Session III: Keynote Speaker's CV

Dr Angela Merkel
Federal Chancellor

Since 1990

Member of the German Bundestag

1991-1994

Federal Minister for Women and Youth

1994-1998

Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation
and Nuclear Safety

2000-2018

Chairwoman of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU)

Since November 2005

Federal Chancellor



Source: Federal Government/Steffen Kugler



Virtual COSAC on 30 November and 1 December 2020

Background note: The future of the European Union

The EU has to make its voice heard in an increasingly interconnected, complex and fast-moving world. The Strategic Agenda for 2019-2024 provides the medium-term framework for its pursuit of this goal and sets ambitious targets. The COVID-19 pandemic has confronted the EU with new challenges but has also highlighted opportunities in some areas for fundamental changes that will make the EU more resilient.

I. The Conference on the Future of Europe

In her [political guidelines](#), the President of the Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, announced a Conference on the Future of Europe. The Conference, which should run for two years, is conceived as a public forum for inclusive and transparent debate. In January 2020, the Commission and the European Parliament (EP) presented their ideas on the institutional structure and substance of the Conference. In June 2020, the Council set out its position. The EU institutions are currently negotiating a **joint declaration** on the structure and scope of the Conference. The Presidency of the Council aims to have the Conference begin before the end of 2020.

The **national parliaments** have repeatedly claimed the right to participate on an equal footing with the EP in the Conference as well as on its steering committee against the EU institutions.

The intended topics of the Conference are, on the one hand, the priorities of the EU (a sustainable, resilient economy; climate action; the digital transition; justice and equality; assertion of European values) and, on the other hand, institutional issues, including the system whereby each political group publicly designates its lead candidate prior to elections.

From the 34th Bi-annual Report of COSAC:

- 22 out of 34 parliaments/chambers favour the involvement of civil society, and 21 favour the involvement of COSAC alongside the EU institutions, national parliaments and citizens
- 28 parliaments/chambers advocate decentralised events in the member states as part of the Conference
- Numerous parliaments/chambers suggest the use of digital participation tools because of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Topics proposed by national parliaments: institutional matters (12 out of 36 parliaments/chambers), the green transition (10), the rule of law (8)
- 19 out of 27 parliaments/chambers do not want treaty amendments to be ruled out

II. A more resilient European Union

Charting the course towards a more resilient Europe is the theme of the first [Strategic Foresight Report from the Commission](#). Besides the lessons to be learned from the pandemic, the report stresses the need to anticipate future developments and respond accordingly. The Foresight Report identifies four dimensions of resilience. The first is the **social and economic** dimension, where the report assesses that the EU is well equipped for the coming years through the multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027 with its Next Generation EU recovery fund. Promotion of a Capital Markets Union and completion of the Banking Union, says the report, could make the EU more resilient. Social protection systems, it says, should be adapted to fit new, flexible employment models. For **geopolitical** resilience, the report focuses on the crucial importance of revitalising multilateral forums and of continued commitment to open, fair and rules-based trade. Existing dependence in critical sectors could be reduced, according to the report, by diversifying supply chains, relocating production back to the EU and introducing innovative substitute products. The main prerequisites for the creation of **green** resilience cited in the report are the reduction of dependence on fossil fuels, support for the preservation of biodiversity and the development of a clean and circular economy. The use of **digital** technology, says the report, could be particularly beneficial in the health sector when it comes to predicting the spread of diseases, developing therapies, vaccines and diagnostic procedures and ensuring the fair distribution of resources. At the same time, the report emphasises the need to preserve and enhance human dignity, freedom, equality, security, democracy and other fundamental rights and values and to respect them when creating a European data space.

III. The European Green Deal as a model for economic recovery

One of the core interests of the Commission is the **European Green Deal**. On the basis of this approach, a large percentage of the funds dedicated to tackling the pandemic is to be used for the **transition to a more sustainably structured economy** as a step towards a **climate-neutral Europe**. The [Communication on the European Green Deal](#), published on 11 December 2019, announced almost 50 projects in diverse areas, such as the environment, climate, agriculture and energy. The Commission has also outlined various aspects of the Green Deal in **strategy papers**. In **2021, numerous existing legislative acts are to be revised and new regulatory instruments presented**.

Back in March 2020, the Commission had presented a [draft regulation](#) proposing what it called a **European Climate Law**, which was to serve as a basis for pursuing the goal of a climate-neutral Europe by 2050 and permit the adoption by the Commission of delegated legislative acts designed to achieve climate targets as well as allowing for regular progress reviews. On 16 September 2020 the Commission proposed an **increase in the CO₂ emission reduction target to at least 55 per cent** and published an accompanying impact assessment and an [amended proposal](#) on the European Climate Law.

More proposals are to follow by **June 2021**, such as instruments designed to reinforce consumer rights in the light of the green transition and to revise the Energy Taxation Directive as well a

proposal for a **carbon border adjustment mechanism** for selected sectors and a **levy on non-recyclable packaging waste**.

IV. The multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027 and the Next Generation EU recovery instrument

On 10 November 2020 the trilogue of the EU institutions yielded a political decision on the forthcoming multiannual financial framework and on the Next Generation EU recovery instrument. With a total amount of **EUR 1.8 trillion**, this is the largest stimulus package ever financed through the EU budget. For the first time, the Commission itself will be allowed to borrow. It is planned to devote more than **50 per cent of the funds** to modernisation through **research and innovation** (e.g. Horizon Europe), to the promotion of the **green and digital transitions** (e.g. the Just Transition Fund and the Digital Europe Programme) and to **recovery and resilience** (e.g. the Recovery and Resilience Facility, rescEU and EU4Health). At the same time, there is to be greater **flexibility** to permit appropriate responses to future uncertainties. As a result of the trilogue, an additional amount of EUR 15 billion is to be devoted to strategic programmes. Under the trilogue agreement, the largest appropriation from the general budget is to be allocated to cohesion policy and the Common Agricultural Policy. At the same time, a total of 30 per cent of the EU funds will be dedicated to fighting climate change.

In parallel, the Commission announced proposals relating to **new resources of its own for the EU** and intends to begin, in the period up to June 2021, by presenting proposals on the carbon border adjustment mechanism, the digital levy and the emissions-trading system. By June 2024, these are to be followed by proposals for a financial transaction tax and a common corporate tax base.

The outcome of the negotiations on the multiannual financial framework are subject to approval by the EP and all member states. Hungary and Poland have announced that they will not approve the package. Once it has been approved by the Council, the decision on the Union's own resources has to be ratified in all member states in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements. In most Member States, national Parliaments will have to approve the Own Resources Decision.



Virtual COSAC on 30 November and 1 December 2020

Session IV: Keynote Speaker's CV

Dr Ursula von der Leyen

President of the European Commission

2005–2009

Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

2009–2019

Member of the German Bundestag

2009–2013

Federal Minister of Labour and Social Affairs

2013–2019

Federal Minister of Defence

Since November 2019

President of the European Commission



Source: European Commission/
Claudio Centonze



Virtual COSAC on 30 November and 1 December 2020

Background note: Relations between the EU and Africa

High priority attaches to a deepening of relations and a partnership of equals between the European Union (EU) and Africa. The European Council describes Africa as a natural partner for the EU, resulting from our geographical, historical and cultural proximity. In the second half of 2020, a joint Euro-African agenda was to lay the foundations for a new ambitious partnership.

I. The foundations of relations between the EU and Africa

Since 2000, the **Cotonou Agreement** has been the framework for relations between the EU and the 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States, **48 of which are located in sub-Saharan Africa**. The Agreement combines development cooperation with economic and trade cooperation as well as with a regular political dialogue. The Agreement expired in February 2020 but remains in force as a transitional arrangement until 31 December 2020. Since the current negotiations on a successor agreement have been subject to delays, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and by contentious issues, including some relating to migration, the Commission is proposing an extension of the transition period until 30 June 2021. The successor agreement is to have a **common foundation** and **regional protocols**, one of which will cover relations with **Africa**.

Further cornerstones of this cooperation are **the Joint Africa-EU Strategy** adopted in 2007 and the action plans for its implementation, each covering a fixed period. The last summit of the AU and EU Heads of State or Government took place in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in November 2017. Its theme was investing in youth ([Final Declaration](#)). A summit meeting scheduled to take place in Brussels at the end of October for the purpose of adopting an **EU-African agenda** has had to be postponed until 2021. An **EU-AU Leaders' Meeting** is now planned for 9 December 2020, and its declaration should help to maintain the momentum in relations.

The African Union (AU)

In 2002, the AU replaced the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which had been founded in 1963. The aims of the AU are to promote economic growth, peace and stability, democracy and human rights as well as unity and solidarity in Africa and to represent the interests of African states in the world.

The Union of 55 member states has its headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Since February 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa has been in office for a one-year term as President of the AU. Since 2017, Moussa Faki Mahamat of Chad has been Chairperson of the AU-Commission.

II. A comprehensive Strategy with Africa

After the meeting between the AU Commission and the European Commission in Addis Ababa on 27 February 2020, the EU presented **proposals** in March 2020 **for the definition of a joint partnership agenda** ([JOIN\(2020\) 4 final](#)), comprising partnerships for **green transition and energy access**, for **digital transformation**, for **sustainable growth and jobs**, for **peace and good governance** and for **migration and mobility**. Besides the creation of a favourable investment climate (Proposed Action 4) and better access to education (Proposed Action 5), the proposals also cover support for African peace efforts (Proposed Action 6) and strengthening the international rules-based order (Proposed Action 10).

In its [Conclusions of 30 June 2020](#), the Council of the EU committed itself to a closer partnership with Africa in the pursuit of **multilateralism**, peace, stability and security and **sustainable and inclusive development** as well as sustainable economic growth. The EU, said the Council, was Africa's leading partner in trade and investment, security, energy, green transition, development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, as well as in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Council of the EU defined nine priorities, which include democracy and the rule of law as preconditions for peace and stability as well as tackling the root causes of irregular migration. In particular, the Council expressed the support of the EU for the implementation of the **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)**, which, it said, could lead in the long run to a comprehensive continent-to-continent free trade agreement. The Council of the EU called on its African partners to outline their **interests and expectations for the future partnership**.

III. Current developments and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa

The COVID-19 pandemic is confronting Africa with major challenges too. The **collapse of key economic activities**, such as tourism and the export of raw materials and agricultural products, is threatening many jobs. For 2020, the World Bank has forecast negative growth of 3.3 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa, which would thus suffer its first **recession** in 25 years.

At the same time, African countries' financing requirements are rising. On 8 April 2020, the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, in the Joint Communication [JOIN\(2020\) 11 final](#), presented the **Team Europe** approach – a comprehensive investment package designed to cater for the geopolitical priorities of the EU while also addressing the expectations of its African partners. By July 2020, the funds pledged to sub-Saharan Africa by the EU institutions, the EU member states, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development amounted to a total of EUR 5,892 million, comprising EUR 151 million for humanitarian aid, EUR 2,494 million for health, water supply and research and EUR 3,247 million to alleviate the social and economic consequences of the pandemic.

In its [Conclusions](#) on relations with Africa adopted on 16 October 2020, the European Council focused, among other things, on support for African health systems and on EU efforts to secure **international debt relief for African countries**. The Council is to prepare a common approach for these debt-relief efforts by the end of November 2020.



Virtual COSAC on 30 November and 1 December 2020

Session V: Keynote Speaker's CV

Professor Horst Köhler

Former Federal President

2000–2004

Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)

2004–2010

Federal President of the Federal Republic of Germany

2012–2013

Member of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

2016–2017

Co-chair of the African Development Bank's Special Panel for the implementation of the Bank's strategies (with Kofi Annan)

2017–2019

Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Western Sahara



Source: Dennis Williamson