

**Video message for social media  
from the Federal Chancellor and  
António Costa  
to mark the end of Germany's  
Presidency of the Council of the EU and  
the handover to Portugal**

**António Costa,  
Our Portuguese friends,**

**For the next six months, Portugal will hold the Presidency of the Council of the EU. We pass the baton on to you with all good wishes for the tasks facing you in this function.**

**When I look back on the six months of the German Presidency, then obviously the COVID-19 pandemic was *the* central challenge for us all.**

**I am confident that together we will be stronger than the virus. We are seeing this in action right now: the countries of Europe are promoting, procuring and distributing vaccines together. In this context, I am particularly grateful to the European Commission.**

**As the European Union, we are committed to making vaccines available in all countries – because the pandemic does not stop at borders.**

**Together we will also be able to manage the pandemic's impact on our countries' economies and our citizens' jobs. The seven-year EU Multiannual Financial Framework and the Recovery Fund will help us to overcome this extraordinary crisis. Many countries in Europe are urgently awaiting these funds.**

**At the same time, Europe is using the Recovery Fund to promote climate change mitigation and the digital transformation – in other words, to invest in our common future.**

**In the area of climate change mitigation, moreover, we have enshrined the goal of**

**cutting carbon emissions by at least 55% by 2030. This shows that we in Europe want to remain leaders in global climate change mitigation.**

**António Costa,  
Our Portuguese friends,**

**I wish the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union every success. Germany will do everything it can to support Portugal.**

**Dear Friends,  
Dear Angela,  
Thank you for your words.**

**Congratulations to the German Presidency for its excellent job at the helm of the European Union.**

**The joint purchase of the vaccines that will guarantee simultaneous distribution to all EU Member States, and the approval of a robust response to the economic and social consequences of the pandemic,**

**show a European Union close to its citizens, responding to their fears and expectations.**

**It's an honour and a huge responsibility for Portugal to receive this baton from your hands and to continue your work.**

**The Portuguese Presidency will focus on three main priorities:**

**The first is obviously the economic and social recovery based on the engines of the climate and digital transitions, drivers for growth and more and better jobs.**

**The second one is the development of the European Union Social Pillar, creating a basis of trust that these twin transitions will be an opportunity for all and will guarantee that no one is left behind.**

**The third one is to reinforce the strategic autonomy of a European Union open to the world.**

**There will be three milestones for these three priorities:**

**Approval of the national recovery plans, together with the Climate Law and the Digital Services Package.**

**The Social Summit that we will hold, gathering social partners, civil society, institutions and Member States in a joint**

**commitment around an Action Plan for the development of the Social Pillar.**

**And, finally, strengthening the relations with our neighbourhood and our strategic partners, with Africa and the Americas, but also in the Indo-Pacific Region, namely through the EU-India Summit.**

**Dear Angela,**

**Dear Friends,**

**Like in a relay race, it is now up to us to continue your work, with the motto of the Portuguese Presidency: "Time to deliver: a fair, green and digital recovery".**