[Economic Affairs Minister Peter Altmaier](https://www.bmwi.de/Redaktion/EN/Artikel/Curriculum-Vitae/curriculum-vitae-bm-altmeier.html" \o "Peter Altmaier) has invited participants to a high-level virtual conference today on the future of European cohesion and structural policy. The central issue is the role the policy can play in tackling the coronavirus crisis. In addition to Minister Altmaier, the participants include Reiner Haseloff, Minister-President of Saxony-Anhalt, Saxony’s Europe Minister Katja Meier, the ministers for cohesion policy of the EU Member States, EU Regional Commissioner Elisa Ferreira, Members of the European Parliament – Younous Omarjee, the chair of the Committee for Regional Development, Andrey Novakov and Constanze Krehl, the co-rapporteurs on the main cohesion policy regulation – and representatives of the European Economic and Social Committee. Due to the pandemic, the conference, which was originally to be held together with Saxony-Anhalt and Saxony in Halle (Saale) is now taking place online.

Economic Affairs Minister Altmaier said: “We need a strong Europe in order to emerge from this crisis. A crucial role here is played by the [regions](https://www.bmwi.de/Redaktion/EN/Dossier/regional-policy.html" \o "Boosting the regional economy), town and cities and municipalities around Europe. The additional European cohesion funding sends out an important signal to help strengthen the innovative strength and competitiveness of the regions.”

The statements by the Members of the European Parliament highlighted the importance of structural policy for Europe’s regions and stressed that no town or city, no region can be left behind.

EU Regional Commissioner Elisa Ferreira flagged up the opportunities offered by the instruments for an innovative and green transition: “The additional European cohesion fund of €47 billion makes an important contribution towards rebuilding after the crisis. We need coherent and long-term strategies which rapidly trigger the green and [digital transition](https://www.bmwi.de/Redaktion/EN/Dossier/digitisation.html" \o "Taking control of the digital transformation) and which are adapted to the local needs and potential.”

Reiner Haseloff, Minister-President of Saxony-Anhalt, added: “Saxony-Anhalt is facing great challenges as it moves to a climate-neutral economy and society and in view of digitisation and demographic development. With backing from the EU structural funds and support from the REACT-EU initiative and the Just Transition Fund, we can succeed in transforming Saxony-Anhalt and the entire central German region into an innovative, climate-neutral and forward-looking region.”

Saxony’s Minister for Europe, Katya Meier, said: “It is not often that we have needed EU cohesion policy as much as we do now, in order to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic and to attain the EU’s climate targets. As additional regionally based instruments, the EU structural funds and the JTF make a substantial contribution to tackling the crisis and to growth and employment. This is especially true of regions like Saxony, which are particularly affected by structural change.”