

COVID-19 Exit, Recovery & Transformation

As we are entering into a new phase of the pandemic, the exit of the current confinement measures and a comprehensive recovery plan are the subject of discussion. Representing the employers of the tech & industry sector with more than 17 million direct jobs, Ceemet propose one single plan that covers it all: exit, recovery and transformation of industry.

Get the exit right

The Joint European Roadmap offers a solid concept for exiting the COVID-19 crisis. With different situations in the Member States it is clear that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. However, the EU together with Member States are encouraged to choose a well-coordinated approach and use the same framework. Bearing in mind that all efforts have to focus on revitalising and re-enforcing the Single Market as the foundation of the four freedoms.

As the exit phase will blend into the recovery phase, Ceemet proposes that the following four action points must be considered:

- a) **Ensure liquidity** for the economy. The current measures taken at national and European level are having a positive effect. There is a need to maintain these in the exit phase;
- b) Start immediately to **fix broken international supply-chains**, e.g. by removing disproportionate border controls within the EU to allow the free movement of goods;
- c) Make sure that employees and workers **can actually resume their work**. A gradual restart will be difficult without childcare facilities, public transport or frontier/posted workers blocked at borders;
- d) Provide EU-level match-making websites to **connect demand and supply**, e.g. for PPE, and accelerate the exchange of successful sanitary and occupational health & safety protocols.

Launch a sustainable recovery phase – putting industry at its heart

Alongside coping with COVID-19, industry is undergoing massive transformation processes, whether [it being the digitalisation of the world of work](#) or the « Green Deal ». Therefore, any recovery plan should go hand in hand with the ongoing transformation of industry.

Reinforcing the sustainable industrial ecosystem in Europe, as laid down in the [Ceemet 10 Point Plan for a competitive industry sustaining social Europe](#), could strengthen the EU's leading role in the world. To get there, Ceemet identified three pillars for a recovery and transformation plan:

1. Finance the future: be big on the big things

COVID-19 has shown that single Member States alone cannot cope with managing a symmetric shock. The Heads of State and Governments have to swiftly approve the EU's

Chetan Corten
HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS
T +32 (0)2 706 84 72
M +32(0)472 25 02 28
E chetan.corten@ceemet.org
Bd A. Reyers Ln 80
1030 Brussels – Belgium
www.ceemet.org
[@ceemet](https://twitter.com/ceemet)
EU Transparency Register
61370904700-45

2021-2027 multiannual financial framework that is sufficiently robust to support the recovery from the current deep crisis.

In addition to public spending, it needs to be assured that the right framework conditions for private investment are in place and that access to finance is possible with reasonable conditions.

2. Complete the single market: fit for a safe and prosperous digital future

The current crises shows the huge potential industrial products, AI and data driven apps have. It contributes to contain COVID-19, but it equally plays its part in mitigating climate change. The swift digital transformation of industry and its entire value chain are vital for achieving the goals of a circular, resource efficient economy.

In a complete and future proof single market, it will be important to speak with one voice that is balanced and bold if it wants to maintain free rules-based trade and foster open economies.

3. Labour Markets & (digital) Skills

The COVID-19 pandemic made clear that permanent up and right skilling is not a choice. There is a need for better digital skills and digital learning tools. Offering the appropriate infrastructure, to for example continuous or vocational education and training, will be to the benefit of workers and companies.

It is a precondition to apply agile working methods that are used in agile labour markets. It is these agile labour markets that facilitate the uptake of digitalisation in companies and the creation of start-ups.

Lessons for the future

The next symmetric shock will come. The EU should use the collective experience and develop a blueprint to react in a coordinated way and more swiftly to predictable challenges such as ensuring free movement of workers by developing a standby European « Laissez Passer ».

This ranges from coordinated procurement and distribution of medical devices, medicine or protective equipment, to ensuring mobility of goods. But it also includes cooperation with partners on an international level, i.e. WHO, and social partners.

About Ceemet

- Ceemet represents the metal, engineering and technology-based industry employers in Europe.
- Member organisations represent 200,000 companies in Europe, providing over 17 million direct and 35 million indirect jobs.
- Ceemet is a recognised European social partner at the industrial sector level, promoting global competitiveness for European industry through consultation and social dialogue.

