



## PRESS RELEASE

### Proposal from France, Germany and Poland for a modernized European competition policy

As a follow-up to the Ministerial Conference of the Friends of Industry held in Paris on 18 December 2018 and at the invitation of Poland, the Ministers of the Economy of Poland, Germany and France, **Jadwiga Emilewicz**, **Bruno Le Maire** and **Peter Altmaier**, met on 4 July 2019 in Poznan (Poland) in "Weimar" format to discuss the future of European industrial policy. This meeting highlighted the strong convergence between our three countries on the importance and content of an ambitious industrial policy for the EU.

On 19 February 2019, France and Germany jointly published a [Manifesto for a European industrial policy for the 21st century](#). It calls for massive investments in innovation and for adapting the European framework on state aids and on competition to enable European companies to compete globally against Chinese or American players and to protect European technologies, companies and markets through an active trade policy.

At the Poznan meeting, the three ministers presented a joint proposal to modernise European competition policy and adapt it to global competition and the increasing digitalisation of the economy.

French minister Bruno Le Maire declared:

*"We know full well how much France and Europe owe to competition and to European competition rules. But competition is an ever-moving field. In order to retain their relevance and efficiency, rules must adapt to the new economic realities, in particular to the digital revolution and to the increasing concentration observed in the economies of our main partners. Modernising our competition rules is one of the main challenges that the EU will need to address in the coming months.*

*A shared European industrial policy cannot work if we do not have a coherent competition policy and a coherent trade policy. The times when these policies could evolve in separate ways is are past us. We must think these three policies globally in order to preserve our industry."*

Our three countries hope that the Poznan proposal will constitute a useful and constructive contribution at a time when the political priorities of the next European Commission are being debated. Our propositions are aimed in particular at:

- **Better taking into account potential competition, in particular from third countries companies receiving state support.**
- **Counterbalancing the excessive market power of major digital players** by being more responsive to infringements of competition rules, better combating predatory acquisitions, identifying systemic players and applying specific rules where appropriate.
- **Modernising the control of concentrations** by giving more precisions to companies on the markets taken into account and on the efficiency gains expected from concentration in Europe, which will benefit the European industry.



- **Clarifying the conditions for the creation of joint ventures** and encouraging alternative conditions to asset transfers in the event of concentrations, which discourages European companies from merging.
- **Broadening the spectrum of expertise put at the disposal of the European Commission.** We believe that the Commission should rely on a broader capacity for expertise on digital issues.
- **Ensuring political demands from the Council are better taken into account in defining political orientations and in the decision process.** European ministers should make a greater contribution, using the Competitiveness Council, which should further discuss the guidelines of European merger control policy and express their appreciation of the competitiveness issues of European industry in competition policy.
- **Encouraging the use of behavioural remedies rather than structural remedies.**

The trilateral position on competition policy is a common contribution to the agenda of the future European Commission. It aims at initiating a debate, with the Commission and the Member States within the EU Council, on the necessary steps which must be taken to adapt competition rules to the issues at stake. The European Council of 21 and 22 March 2019 asked the Commission to present its vision of European industry in 2030 by the end of 2019. The ministers called on Member States which are in favour of these positions to join this contribution.

The ministers also had the opportunity to discuss the progress of the electric batteries project and welcomed the confirmation of the participation of Poland and Polish companies in this initiative.

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