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## **Mattarella: "The commitment with the EU must be honoured"**

Solidarity and interdependence, equality and rights for all Italians. Speaking at the first Festival of the Regions in the city of Monza, Italy's Head of State outlined the necessary conditions for the implementation of what is known as "differentiated autonomy" in accordance with the Constitution. In doing so, he mentioned the speeches of two "governors" of opposing political factions who took the floor before him. "Both Presidents", Sergio Mattarella said, echoing the words of Massimiliano Fedriga (Friuli-Venezia Giulia) and Michele Emiliano (Puglia), respectively president and vice-president of the Conference of Regions, "expressed their willingness to address the subject of differentiating regional competences, on the condition that its realisation is based on the simultaneous observance and application of Constitutional provisions, whereby autonomy is pursued alongside the guarantee of civil and social rights extended to the entire national territory, paying due attention to equitable requirements. "These are not aspects that restrict or mitigate autonomy, in fact they constitute its inherent features", the President of the Republic pointed out.

This - and this alone - is the autonomy enshrined in the Constitution.

The underlying rationale is to try to overcome inequalities together (which likewise represent "major causes of economic inefficiency"), as opposed to accentuating them. This is called for in the same agreements that Italy was party to at European level, discussed in depth over the last few days, specifically in connection with the budget package introduced by the government, currently under parliamentary scrutiny with very tight deadlines. "The huge fund package granted by the EU Commission," Mattarella said, "is designed to step up the country's infrastructure by bridging disparities, starting with the disparities existing between the north and south of the country. It is widely agreed that the reforms agenda must be completed and, as far as investments are concerned, the Plan's objectives aimed at economic growth under the banner of sustainability and equality should be considered an absolute priority. Faced with challenges of such magnitude, the joint commitment of national institutions and of all political and social players is essential. We have made this commitment at European level and, of course, it must be honoured." Therefore, while consistent and timely decisions are to be taken now, it is important not to neglect the need for a forward-looking approach, since this is not a short-lived task, nor is it linked to election deadlines. "The National Recovery and Resilience Plan, the fruit of Government and Parliament's initiative, endorsed by the European Commission," the Head of State remarked, "sets out specific goals in terms of reform and investment, to which is tied the future of the Country that extends far beyond the Plan's implementation deadline, fixed, as everyone knows, for 2026." Mattarella noted with interest ("I am not unaware of the political and institutional value"), while referring the matter back to the government and parliament on account of competence, the request put forward by Fedriga on behalf of the regions to make the Conference system "constitutional", so as to incorporate a formal discussion and cooperation forum into Italy's legal system. So far, the "governors" have signed an agreement that recognises the Conference of the Regions and Autonomous Provinces as the body that unites these entities.

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