
Italy to receive €209 billion from the EU, Brussels closely monitoring spending plans

There could be national parliamentary scrutiny and some issues yet to be clarified, but we assume that the Recovery Fund will take effect and trigger widespread European relaunch as agreed by the Heads of State or Government in Brussels. The 2021-2027 Plan was never unconditional, hence it never meant "take the money and do as you please." Italy is the country that obtained the most due to the severity of the pandemic, and is thus entitled to €209 billion (€81.4 billion in grants and over €127 billion in loans), €58 billion of which in the first two years. Under the agreement Italy is required to invest this money in the growth of the country, new jobs, new infrastructures and digital technology, and more agriculture, while supporting education and health care. Thus our reforms will be closely monitored to ensure that European money, whether non-repayable or low-interest loans, are not spent on elections or on economically inefficient reforms. "These 209 billion are not manna from heaven, Santa Claus has not arrived, we must keep our feet on the ground and avoid raising false expectations", remarked the Deputy Minister of Economy, Antonio Misiani. *We are being asked to do more than just cover the costs incurred during the pandemic, to support families, businesses and local institutions. We are urged to seize this opportunity to make an economic leap for the benefit of young people, for the benefit of the most vulnerable sectors. How? There are no certainties yet, but there are some indications.* Railway infrastructure would seem to take precedence compared to other forms of transport, digitization is aimed at ensuring a good service also to inland territories, thereby bridging the digital divide that marginalized sections of the population. The environment is another important theme for the EU Commission, as is speeding up civil justice, whose technicalities challenge the ascertainment of the truth. This is set against the backdrop of requests for greater economic competitiveness and combating tax evasion.

We will need a new task force, a group of experts that can advise the Government on the most effective measures.

Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte wants to pull the strings in this stage, each ministry will be pulling to their side. The government is expected to elaborate reforms and submit the most urgent ones as of September. They will be examined by the Commission in October. This is the only way to access European funds. The EMS (bailout fund) worth €36 billion may also be activated. Entrepreneurs and some political groups are in favour. The government is divided. It will do its utmost to ensure a speedy and efficient Recovery.

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