
State of the Union Address: Covid-19 leaves its mark on the EU agenda. Von der Leyen, “a world public health summit in Italy”

“Leaving no one behind”, planning and accomplishing a modern Europe (“broadband, even in the smallest village”), pursuing “a veritable recovery plan” (Next Generation EU). In her first “State of the Union Address”, which she gave at the European Parliament in Brussels earlier today, the president of the EU Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, unravelled a long list of measures to be taken across Europe, with stronger cooperation between the member states and the EU institutions. An hour and a half-long speech (unusually long for Brussels), repeatedly interrupted by the ovations of many MEPs, followed by a further standing ovation at the end of her speech. The Covid-19 pandemic marked and imbued the entire speech and actually changed and reshaped all of the EU’s agenda. “We must build a ‘Public Health Union’ – Von der Leyen stated –. With the Italian Prime Minister, Giuseppe Conte, and the Italian G20 presidency, we will organise a world public health summit in Italy”, in order to “prove that Europe is there, to protect its citizens”.

Valentina Bombelli