

The President

Mr Pier Virgilio Dastoli
President of the European Movement Italy
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D 300961 15.02.2021

Dear Professor Dastoli,

I wish to wholeheartedly thank you for the open letter by the European Movement Italy of last 7 December 2020 entitled 'In Europe democracy is an inalienable (and unnegotiable) right'. In the letter, you list the core values of the Union that should at all times be preserved and respected, including by the European leaders when trying to break the deadlock over the coupling of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the Next Generation EU to respect for the rule of law. As you put it: "*The full respect of all these principles exclude any compromise on the interpretation of the European rules in the implementation of EU legal, economic, political and financial acts.*"

The European Parliament has exactly taken that line throughout the difficult negotiations and discussions on the Regulation on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget and the adoption of the MFF and the Next Generation EU. Under the new regulation, EU budget payments can be withheld from countries in which established breaches of the rule of law compromise management of the EU funds. In its resolution of 17 December 2020¹, the European Parliament made clear that the applicability, purpose and scope of the Rule of Law Regulation is clearly defined in the legal text of the said Regulation, that the content of the European Council conclusions on the Regulation is therefore superfluous and that any political declaration of the European Council cannot be deemed to represent an interpretation of legislation, as interpretation is vested with the European Court of Justice.

In the letter, you also point out that a Conference on the Future of Europe should reform the "inefficient intergovernmental method". In the aforementioned resolution, the European Parliament indeed strongly regrets that the unanimity rule in the Council for endorsing the multiannual financial perspectives has unduly delayed the adoption of the entire package, including the new EU programmes for the period 2021-2027.

As regards the setting up of a Conference on the Future of Europe, Parliament called in its resolution of 18 June 2020² for such a Conference to be organised as soon as possible, since the COVID-19 crisis has made the need to reform the European Union even more apparent.

¹ European Parliament resolution of 17 December 2020 on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027, the Interinstitutional Agreement, the EU Recovery Instrument and the Rule of Law Regulation (2020/2923(RSP))

² European Parliament resolution of 18 June 2020 on the European Parliament's position on the Conference on the Future of Europe (2020/2657(RSP))

Parliament wants citizens of all backgrounds, civil society representatives and stakeholders at European, national, regional and local level to be involved in setting the EU's priorities in line with citizens' concerns in a bottom-up, transparent, inclusive, participatory and well-balanced approach. Furthermore, Parliament insists on a process of open-ended citizen participation that will establish the scope of the Conference itself, and calls for meaningful follow-up to the Conference's conclusions, including an express commitment by the three major EU institutions to substantive EU reforms in line with citizens' concerns, potentially including a review of the EU Treaties.

You can rest assured that the European Parliament will continue its intense work on promoting and protecting the Union's core values - democracy, rule of law and protection of fundamental rights - both within the Member States and at the level of the Union institutions.

Yours sincerely,



David Maria SASSOLI