

---

## **EU: Plenkovic (Croatian Prime Minister), “four challenges for Europe”. Multiannual Financial Framework, Brexit, Balkans and Conference about the future of Europe**

(Strasbourg) Multiannual Financial Framework, Brexit, Balkans and Conference about the future of Europe: these are the four main “challenges” that the Croatian presidency on duty at the Council of Ministers of the European Union is having to face in this first half of 2020. This has been explained, in the Strasbourg headquarters of the European Parliament, by the Prime Minister of Croatia, Andrej Plenkovic (in the photo, with the president of the European Parliament, Sassoli, and the president of the European Commission, von der Leyen). “Europe needs a proper Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027 that can be up to its policies and plans”, to be accomplished in the next few years to “make the EU more effective, able to respond to the citizens’ expectations and visible on the global scene”. As to Brexit, Plenkovic says he is “sad at seeing a member state leaving the Union”, but now the after-divorce period, which is expected to start on January 31<sup>st</sup>, must be prepared. The Prime Minister of Croatia is thinking of a strong partnership that may be useful to both parties, London and the 27 member states. Third point: the Zagreb Summit, in early May, that is expected to review the Union’s position about the extension to the Balkans. Plenkovic states he hopes Albania and North Macedonia may be granted the status of candidates for future membership, because “the European perspective” is still the way to go for that region. The fourth point is the Conference about the future of Europe: it should start on May 9<sup>th</sup> after an inter-institutional agreement (EU Parliament, EU Commission and EU Council), last two years, and put “citizens back at the centre of attention. We must listen to them to respond to their demands and thus bring them closer again” to the European integration project.

Gianni Borsa