

Recovery Fund. Mons. Crociata (COMECE): “A great fear has been overcome”



, Bishop of Latina, Vice-President of the Commission of the Episcopal Conferences of the European Community (COMECE), breathes a sigh of relief. Positive news finally arrived from Brussels. European leaders reached a landmark agreement on the Recovery Fund and on the EU 2021-2027 budget after four days and four nights of negotiations. The earmarked funds will support public programmes aimed at a quicker recovery from the economic and social damage caused by the Covid-19 epidemic. **Fear of what, Msgr. Crociata?** There is a saying attributed to a classics author, "the greater the danger, the greater the salvation." The danger was great since the painful and tragic situation we are still going through as a result of the epidemic has and will have very serious consequences at societal level. If an agreement on the necessary resources to overcome the crisis had not been reached each country would have struggled to meet ongoing challenges while creating a growing and dangerous tear within the Union. **And now...?** Now something more is needed, namely to properly monitor the distribution of funds so as to ensure, above all, employment recovery, support to the most vulnerable groups who suffered the most from the impact of the crisis, and to productivity at various levels in each Member State. All this should be properly supervised and accompanied so that the goal may be achieved by all and at the same time. **What do you mean by "something more"?** There should be greater political will and greater political unity. Unity and determination are necessary, along with the ability to find extraordinary economic solutions to an extraordinary period in time. What was achieved in Brussels is definitely a political success: European countries have understood the importance of sticking together, that over and above differing initial stances, we need to find a common ground. However, we still need to grow in this direction, in terms of an overall vision, a common project. **What do you like about the way the Italian government has acted on this occasion?**



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The Prime Minister has represented our country in the best possible way, sending out messages not of recrimination and threat but messages aimed at highlighting Europe's interest as a whole in finding a common solution that will enable each Member State to get back on track. I believe that the outcome should be credited not only to this ability of the Italian Government but also - as we have seen - to the prior efforts of communication and dialogue leading to a climate of harmony and fair relations, which were the prerequisites for achieving this result today. **It was the longest summit in the history of the European Union and the discussions brought to the fore a Union divided between richer and poorer countries. What is the lesson to be drawn for the future?** This summit further exemplified the efforts made by the Union to find solutions when everyone selfishly defends positions of strength previously attained. But when struggling to find shared solutions to a crisis such as the present one, these different initial positions must not serve as grounds for advocating positions of superiority and advantage over others. Rather, everyone must make the effort to take a step forward. If not, everyone risks being hurt. That is the lesson of this summit.

M. Chiara Biagioni