



Letter to Commissioners Johannes Hahn and Helena Dalli regarding recent anti-abortion measures adopted by the Italian Parliament financed by EU funds

To Mr Johannes Hahn

European Commissioner for Budget and Administration

To Ms Helena Dalli

European Commissioner for Equality

Dear Commissioner Hahn,

Dear Commissioner Dalli,

As Members of the European Parliament and coordinators of the pro-choice network All of Us, we are writing to express our deep concern about the recent adoption in the lower house of the Italian Parliament of an amendment which would allow anti-abortion associations to participate in the counselling that is mandatory for women to receive prior to accessing abortion care. If adopted, this measure would fall under Italy's national Recovery and Resilience plan and therefore would be financed under the EU's Recovery and Resilience Facility.

Italy's abortion legislation (law 194) provides the possibility for publicly-run family planning facilities, which provide abortion care to allow access to associations seeking to "help to overcome the causes that cause induce a woman to terminate a pregnancy." This wholly goes against international public health guidelines on abortion care provision, which clearly mandate for any counselling about abortion to be voluntary, non-directive, and for information to be presented in a non-discriminatory and non-biased manner¹.

This proposal, part of a broader package of unrelated measures pertaining to Italy's national Recovery and Resilience plan, represents yet another attack towards women's rights and sexual and reproductive health and rights in the country. It could further undermine women's ability to exercise their right to freely choose if, when and how to have children. The social and psychological impact of this measure should not be underestimated. With this initiative, the Italian government clearly shows their disregard for bodily autonomy, jeopardizing the freedom of women to make decisions on their own future and lives without being subjected to persuasion or harassment. We strongly believe that EU funds should not be used in ways that undermine women's rights or benefit anti-rights actors.

¹ [WHO, Abortion Care Guideline, p. 40, 2022; See also: WHO, Health Worker Roles in Providing Safe Abortion Care and Post-Abortion Contraception, 56 (2015)].

As the European Parliament, we have repeatedly called for the right to safe and legal abortion to be enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, as well as for Member States to ensure full access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, including through the removal of any legal, financial, social or practical barriers or restrictions on abortion. We highly regret that the Italian Government is taking steps in the wrong direction.

Under the EU treaties, the EU and all Member States have an obligation to promote gender equality in all its activities, including in the budget. Access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, including safe and legal abortion care, constitutes a fundamental right and it is a key requisite to achieve gender equality.

In this regard, as Member of the European Parliament, we condemn the fact that the package , which proposes to include measures that undermine women's rights, is planned to be funded using EU funds granted to Italy under the Recovery and Resilience Facility. The package needs to still needs to confirmed by the Italian Senate. **We therefore urge you, as Equality and as Budget and Administration Commissioners to act and make use of all tools possible to ensure that no EU fund will be used to finance a measure that is contrary to women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender equality and the EU's founding values.**

Thanking you in advance for your close attention to this urgent matter, we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Alice Bah Kuhnke, Greens/EFA Member of the European Parliament

Malin Björk, GUE/NGL Member of the European Parliament

María Eugenia Rodríguez Palop, GUE/NGL Member of the European Parliament

Maria Noichl, S&D Member of the European Parliament

Samira Rafaela, RENEW Member of the European Parliament

On behalf of the All of Us Network in the European Parliament

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