

Joint Declaration **Bolzano, 26th October 2020**

In light of the renewed spread of the Corona pandemic in Europe, everything necessary must be done to protect the health of Europe's citizens, and to maintain the free movement of goods. In such a challenging time, infrastructures are a fundamental and strategic asset for the relaunch of Italian and German economies, and for Europe's society as a whole. The creation of material and immaterial infrastructures can boost sustainable growth and employment, with positive effects on social inclusion, connectivity, and the competitiveness of our countries. The future infrastructure will be digital and green.

Therefore, the construction and maintenance of the trans-European transport network – the TEN-T – are fundamental steps towards a truly connected and intelligent European economy. The Italian and German governments are called to simplify administrative procedures when implementing major infrastructure projects. In addition, both countries should utilise their research, development, and innovation capabilities. Our industries are technological leaders in many of these fields and can contribute in a decisive way to enable this process.

In order to eliminate all bottlenecks along the transport corridors and to promote competitiveness of our two countries, Italy and Germany should complete construction of their parts of the EU network as soon as possible. The free movement of goods is a fundamental principle in the EU treaties: transport plays a crucial role in ensuring the functioning of the single market. In particular, the Brenner Pass, at the heart of the Scan-Med Corridor, represents the main gateway between our two countries and an essential node for the EU internal market. As the main connecting route between the North and the South of Europe, it should become a role model of integrated and intelligent mobility, in line with 2050 climate neutrality objectives and considering local and national needs.

The health emergency caused by the Coronavirus has redefined the political and social priorities of both Member States and the EU. Confronted with a new economic crisis, Europe's answer was prompt and ambitious. The Next Generation EU will offer us several new opportunities: we have to grab this unique opportunity to build a prosperous, connected and resilient Europe.

Finally, we reaffirm the need for joint action to overcome the obstacles that persist on the Brenner Pass. So far, Italian and German authorities are working to find a common solution with the Austrian Government, without any effective solution until now. The European Commission has a duty to solve issues with a European dimension: it has called on Tyrol to end unilateral blocks, but more actions must be taken. We cannot accept that national and local policies jeopardise the proper functioning of the EU's internal market. We call on the European Commission to guarantee the free flow of goods on all major European corridors and thereby support the fundamental principles of the Single Market, especially in critical situations such as the current pandemic. We will strengthen our cooperation and thereby help in finding a positive solution to the current developments.

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