

**Ms. Ursula von der Leyen
President
European Commission**

Ref: A COOPERATIVE EUROPE WILL SAVE THE EUROPEAN DREAM

Dear Ms. President,

We are writing to express some considerations on the ongoing emergency and on the urgent need to face, with adequate tools, the devastating effects that the COVID-19 pandemic is producing in the social and economic life of our continent and, in particular, of our Country.

Cities are empty, businesses are stopped, people are locked in the house waiting to be able to resume their life. In the toughest tests in history there is often a crossroads: selfishness or solidarity? Loneliness or cooperation?

In this phase too, we do believe **that cooperation is the solution**, the way out for European States and citizens. Italy suffered the emergency first, and the Italian cooperatives continued to work for people's health and to guarantee products and services necessary for communities.

Europe of citizens and all businesses, regardless of typology and size, Europe of social rights, democracy and freedoms, Europe of open markets and, at the same time, of economic and social sustainability : this is our Europe, not that of bureaucratic rigor, technocracy and national selfishness.

Now is the time to correct the path and, in a pandemic crisis that threatens life of millions of citizens, solidarity cannot be subordinated to budgetary reasons alone.

Europe was established as a "Cooperative", before becoming a "Community", and then compacted into a Union.

Today, affirming only national interests would mean feeding nationalistic instincts already flared up to seriously affect the common institutions.

It is time to expand the action capacity of fiscal and monetary policies. The situation requires extraordinary and so far new interventions, which allow States to get direct resources to support the real economy and to safeguard people, those most suffering .

The agreement reached by the Eurogroup is only a first step; but it cannot be the EMS alone, though with apparently reviewed conditions and for the amount of resources provided for individual country, to save Italy and Europe.

Instead, we hope that the "Recovery Fund", which was foreseen in the agreement but the discussion was postponed, is an effective tool, to be implemented with the issue of extraordinary Eurobonds and common guarantees.

Today the risk is tangible of fueling, with depressive policies for the next few years, mistrust and, this time, open citizens' aversion towards the European Union.

The Italian cooperative movement will continue to work so that no person will be left behind: nobody saves himself/herself alone . This is the Europe we want.

Italy is a great Country, free and democratic, and asks to be able to fully contribute, "on equal playground and terms with other States", to a Europe that returns to being once again, and finally, cooperative.

We take this occasion to thank you for the attention ,

Respectfully Yours,

Mauro Lusetti, President, Alliance of Italian Cooperatives

Maurizio Gardini, Co-President

Giovanni Schiavone, Co- President