

**JOINT DECLARATION OF ITALIAN ENTERPRISES ON
EUROPE AND ITALY'S EUROPEAN POLICIES**

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- 1. The European Union represents an undeniable cornerstone of peace**, prosperity, democracy, and growth for its member states and is the instrument for affirming to the world its economic and social model based on the competitive strength of its companies and the solidarity among its citizens and its regions.
- 2. Far from representing a threat to national sovereignty**, the European Union represents the instrument for effectively protecting the interests of its member states and its citizens in a globalised world that is faced with rapid technological change and engulfed in geopolitical tensions that threaten the safety of its borders and peace. The answer is not nationalism and isolationism.
- 3. The European Union enters a new phase** in which a core group of states - organised under a common currency - can make significant achievements on the road to integration in order to strengthen its ability to boost the prosperity of its citizens and the interests of the European Union itself on the world stage.
- 4. Italy meets the requirements to participate in this phase:** It is the third economy in the Eurozone, it is one of the founders of the European Community, it has always contributed to the development of the common European home with its people and its ideas. This however, requires that it comes to the table with credible policies to improve industrial productivity, reduce the weight of its national debt, and strengthen the economy's environmental and social sustainability.
- 5. A thriving and competitive economy** must take full advantage of the potential of its domestic market. The long recession, with its high social costs, have hampered the process towards greater European integration. A new impetus is now needed to finally provide realistic results to the programmes that are under way, putting European employment and civil and economic growth at the forefront. The prospects of exploiting opportunities from the application of new technologies on a European scale can mobilise important private investments aimed at improving the quality of life, and employment and economic growth. Completion of the banking union must proceed pragmatically and without making any changes to the prudential treatment of sovereign bonds. The realisation of energy union, capital markets union and the digital single market.
- 6. Protectionism and nationalism** cannot be defeated if we are unable to make the globalisation and integration processes more inclusive, strengthening social cohesion and involving those sections of the population and the regions that were excluded from their benefits. An important proposal for boosting investment in social infrastructure and the ways to finance it was recently presented by the High-Level Task Force of the European Long-Term Investors Association. It foresees a multiplication of the resources dedicated to life-long learning, the set-up of health care

and welfare systems for an ageing society, social housing, employment of persons displaced by technology, concentrating the development actions of the domestic and European institutions and creating a new class of investment instruments for private investors. The European Union needs to take on this initiative that brings the focus of the European project back on the people.

- 7. The current increase in economic activity** provides the opportunity to absorb the pockets of unemployment that still afflict vast areas of the European economy. The primary responsibility for improving the way the labour market works mainly lies in the domestic policies. However, the European Union must contribute to strengthening the process with its policies to combat social dumping and promote common labour protection standards in the member states - including further harmonisation of the existing minimum wage systems.
- 8. Improving the competitiveness** of enterprises is the primary tool for promoting growth and employment. To this end, public and private investment in new technologies need to be increased creating conditions that are favourable for their introduction. The instruments for the direct financing of enterprises need to be improved by further developing the channels, including non-bank channels. European regulations which are often further complicated when transposed into different national laws need to be greatly simplified. Enterprises are committed to tackling the major energy and environmental challenges but are in need of well-defined public strategies, that avoid unreasonably excessive costs, and regulatory certainty that is often-lacking. The European tools of promotion and access to innovation must be improved. With this in mind, the community resources for improving the competitiveness of enterprises must be leveraged to the maximum with a general reconsideration of the EU budget and the cohesion funds.
- 9. A key challenge for the European Union** is its policies on immigration. A common governmental border policy is needed to prevent irregular migration flows, as well as a cooperation policy to develop the countries of origin that contribute to mitigating the causes. At the same time, adequate financial policies and resources are needed to facilitate the integration of immigrants in our countries. The external dimension of the EU policies need to find an adequate complement in an internal agenda that includes integration processes and the adoption of a common asylum and refugee placement system, the costs of which would not burden only those countries that are affected by the initial impact. The costs related to these policies must be jointly shared by all the EU countries and supported by adequate allocations of community resources. Immigration policies cannot ignore the need to attract people with adequate qualifications to our country that can help fill the voids that exists in the labour supply for industry.
- 10. The European Union must develop common military operations** and assume greater responsibility with regard to the security and defence policies within the NATO framework. The

first steps announced by the European Council in the structured cooperation appear weak. The common policies for combating terrorism and protecting information systems must be strengthened. All too often, the exchange of information and cooperation between the various national authorities have proved to be insufficient in preventing attacks. Enterprises can provide a significant contribution to the development of stronger data protection systems.

11. Economic governance of the European Union and the Eurozone must be reconsidered to promote macroeconomic stability through a mix of austerity in public finances and instruments for international growth such as Eurobonds. The European Union must be able to overcome the divisions in economic governance between creditor and debtor nations and agree on a common economic policy capable of combining responsibility and solidarity, in a virtuous and non-destructive way, that will lead to growth.

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