

Ms Roxana Minzatu

Executive Vice-President for Social Rights
and Skills, Quality Jobs and preparedness
cab-minzatu-contact@ec.europa.eu

Mr Valdis Dombrovskis

Commissioner for Economy and
Productivity; Implementation and
Simplification
valdis.dombrovskis@ec.europa.eu

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Dear Vice-President, dear Ms Minzatu
Dear Commissioner, dear Mr Dombrovskis

The European Recovery and Resilience Fund/ Next Generation EU and the national plans were intended to support Member States to recover from the pandemic, strengthen competitiveness and help support sustainable growth.

Italy and Ufficio per il Processo

One of the uses of the funds in Italy was to support the judiciary to catch up with a backlog of cases/ files. The judiciaries were provided funds to hire staff.

Italy hired 12.000 workers on a fixed term contract. The workers implemented a new organisational model called 'Ufficio per il Processo'. Inspired by the role of the justices' clerks' office in the English legal system, this model aims to reduce backlog and shorten disposition time of judicial decisions. This assisted with catching up.

Impact of backlog on people

Our Italian unions and EPSU agree with this. A backlog in the judiciaries harms companies (and especially Small and Medium sized ones) to get permits/licences and so on, and focus on innovation, growth and creating quality jobs. For citizens backlogs undermine confidence in the government as complaints are not dealt with swiftly. Backlogs betray workers as cases against an employer - for example because of exploitation, non-payment of wages or occupational accidents due to negligence - take too long and workers feel that the system works for the employer and not for them.

EU funds being wasted?

These contracts come to an end 30 June 2026. Those workers risk losing their job as the government has only foreseen to employ 3000 of them permanently and the European funds come to an end. This makes little sense.

Due to the ageing of workers in the Ministry of Justice, there will be a shortage of over 20,000 staff in the next five years. This accounts for both the need to replace those who retire and to ensure adequate staffing levels for public services.

Without the conversion of temporary contracts and the permanent establishment of this new organisational model, the investment of European Union resources will be at risk and will have been wasted. The European Court of Auditors has been critical in general of this sort of use of European funds. The Italian National Association of Judges has written to the European Commission to request a hearing on this matter. We support this.

Italy needs those highly skilled workers. They have amply demonstrated their capabilities in achieving the objectives of the Italian RRF over the past four years. On top, the Italian public administration cannot afford to lose these workers.

Judiciaries, public administrations, competitiveness and European funds

The case shows the importance of the use of the funds and the lack at Member State level to make these changes achieved permanent. It undermines what the EU seeks to achieve.

It also raises the point, so often neglected in EU policies on Industrial Strategy, on Preparedness and on Competitiveness for example, that without funding and investment in judiciaries and public administrations at all levels (and in public services in general) we will not achieve the goals to improve industries, competitiveness and develop Europe's industrial base. Cooperation and joint work by administrations and judiciaries in the EU will suffer if Member States do not have sufficient and qualified staff.

We ask you therefore:

1. To raise with the Italian government that the use of the European funds of the RRF is not wasted. There is a need for continuing the work (Ufficio...).
2. To stress with the Italian government that well-staffed and equipped judiciaries are key to the competitiveness of EU Member States. In light of the staffing requirements, it makes sense to ask the Italian government to make those workers permanent.

We are of course ready to meet with you to explain our concerns and discuss what can be done. And we appreciate any advice you might have.

Yours sincerely,



Jan Willem Goudriaan,
EPSU General Secretary