



***EUROPEAN PATIENTS' RIGHTS DAY 2022***

***CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF A HEALTHY EUROPE***

***Taking part in the decision-making process on health priorities***

*20 – 21 April 2022 | 14:30 – 16:00 CEST*

**SESSION 2**

***The health mission within the National Recovery and Resilience Plans***

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“There is life beyond the Recovery and Resilience Plan”. This provocative question wants to show how important the Recovery Plan is in the Italian public discourse, as well as the expectations placed on this Plan, and the idea that it represents a key turning point for the country.

With or without the Recovery Plan, there will obviously be life. But is also understandable why Italy is committed to this Plan, for three reasons:

1. Italy has received the highest amount of funds within the Recovery and Resilience program;
2. Italy has received these funds mostly as a loan, knowing that they will be a burden on future generations;

3. Italy has asked for funds for several policies, from digital transition to the environment, from social matters to health, not on a few as other countries have done, and this means that the Plan has an impact on all areas of public life.

Finally, it combines investments and reforms, some of which we have been waiting for years. Reforms in particular areas, such as health care outside the hospital, or care for the elderly who are not self-sufficient, as well as transversal reforms such as justice and taxes. Receiving these funds is tied to all these reforms being carried out. These considerations are necessary to introduce our focal question: in the face of such a strategic plan, what is the level of civic participation?

Regarding the definition phase of the Plan, unfortunately answering this question is very simple: citizens and communities are not guaranteed any form of participation, despite the European Economic and Social Committee recommendations.

And now, in the first implementation phase of the Plan, citizens' participation was still low, with often a top-down approach, both for time reasons and because of complicated institutional governance mechanisms: as with Mission 6 on Health, as well as relations between the central State and the Regions whose agreement requires extensive and complex negotiation phases.

There has obviously been a wide mobilization of the civil society, with also *Cittadinanzattiva*: associations have organized themselves into networks and platforms, such as the Civic Observatory on Resilience Plan made up of more than 50 civil society organizations, in order to demand spaces and ways of participating, and transparency of data and information.

Also in response to this mobilization from below, it is the Government that has made a clear commitment, entrusting a mission unit to realize, among other actions, also *transparency and participation actions*. Immediately after the approval of this

Decree, the Civic Observatory sent a letter to the Prime Minister to urge him to make public which transparency and participation actions he was preparing.

The outcome of this request was the opening to a number of civil society subjects a partnership table, which initially excluded civic organisations, interacting with the Government on the implementation of the Plan. The positive side of this Table is the frequency with which it meets. A critical point is the traditional setting of the debate, with the Ministers presenting the activities they are working on. It is not clear how the contributions, both verbal and written, that they receive from the participants, will be incorporated into the choices that are being made.

Regarding transparency, following demands from the civil society, the Italia domani website has been improved. But it's a far cry from having clear, open data.

Citizens' actions continue and are key in providing civic recommendations for the definition of priorities. Just to give an example regarding Mission 6, organizations are monitoring the reform of territorial assistance, and are making proposals and interacting with institutional levels even if no structured consultation has been launched until this moment and all the Regions have decided where to place the Case della Comunità (which according to the reform are a territorial reference, with an integrated care service, for example for the chronically ill), without any of them having started a public debate with the communities.

The truth is that things seem to happen not in time for a real involvement of citizens: so, the doubt is that this Plan, despite its weight in public discourse, remains virtually a Plan for the few. It must absolutely be avoided.