



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 13.7.2020
C(2020) 4884 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera dei Deputati for its Opinion regarding the proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on providing Macro-Financial Assistance to enlargement and neighbourhood partners in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis {COM(2020) 163} final.

This proposal forms part of the EU's robust and targeted response strategy to support partner countries' efforts in tackling the coronavirus pandemic. The macro-financial assistance (MFA) will help partners cover part of the external financing needs for the period 2020-2021, thereby reducing their economies' short-term balance of payments and fiscal vulnerabilities. The assistance is consistent with the principles governing the use of the instrument of macro-financial assistance, including its exceptional character, political preconditions, complementarity, conditionality and financial discipline.

The Commission welcomes the Camera dei Deputati's support for the aims of the proposal and is pleased that the discussions between the Commission and the co-legislators concerning the proposal were constructive and efficient, leading to an agreement on 25 May 2020 (Decision (EU) 2020/701). This MFA package and its quick adoption by the Council and the European Parliament are an important demonstration of the EU's solidarity with partner countries at a time of unprecedented crisis.

The Commission is pleased that the Camera dei Deputati shares the view that the spirit of solidarity and cooperation should be the basis for future EU strategies in enlargement and with the neighbourhood countries, and agrees that such strategies should always aim to create stability and prosperity in the neighbouring regions. In this context, the Commission confirms that macro-financial assistance will continue to be available to eligible partner countries in need.

*Mr Roberto FICO
President of the Camera dei Deputati
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In its Communication adopted on 29 April 2020¹, the Commission expressed its strong solidarity with and support to the Western Balkans in tackling COVID-19 and the post-pandemic recovery, while also stressing the need for these countries to deliver on fundamental reforms with a stronger focus on the rule of law, the functioning of democratic institutions and public administration. The EU will continue to guide and support macroeconomic and structural reforms in the Western Balkans through the well-established economic and financial dialogue, based on the partners' economic reform programmes. Furthermore, in May 2020, the Commission proposed to extend the European Fund for Sustainable Development-plus (EFSD+) to the Western Balkans, as well as to increase the budget for the guarantee that will cover EFSD+ and MFA operations.

Finally, the Commission confirms to the Camera dei Deputati that disbursements under the macro-financial assistance programme will be tied to the fulfilment of the political preconditions as well as to the financial and economic policy conditions to be agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding. The political preconditions are that the beneficiary country maintains effective democratic mechanisms, including a multi-party parliamentary system, the rule of law, and guarantees respect for human rights.

The Commission will keep the European Parliament and the Council informed about all developments regarding the implementation of the macro-financial assistance in all the beneficiary countries.

The Commission looks forward to continuing the political dialogue with the Camera dei Deputati in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

*Paolo Gentiloni
Member of the Commission*

¹ Support to the Western Balkans in tackling COVID-19 and the post-pandemic recovery. Commission contribution ahead of the EU-Western Balkans leaders meeting on 6 May 2020 {COM(2020) 315 final}