

**Question for written answer E-002158/2021
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Vincenzo Sofo (ECR)

Subject: Next Generation EU funds and southern Italy

The Commission has distributed Next Generation EU (NGEU) funds among the Member States on the basis of population size, gross domestic product per capita and unemployment levels.

It has also said that it will assess national plans on the basis of criteria including growth potential, resilience and the economic, social and territorial cohesion of each Member State.

Italy is one of the fund's main beneficiaries, mainly owing to the economic struggles and poverty of its southern regions.

The COVID-19 crisis has widened the economic divide between northern and southern Italy.

If we apply the EU's allocation criteria to Italy, some two thirds of the funds should go to the south of the country.

The plan drawn up by the Italian Government, however, earmarks less than 40% of the funds for the south.

In view of the above:

1. Is the proportion of funds allocated by the Italian Government to the southern regions in line with the NGEU guidelines?
2. How will the Commission ensure that the Italian recovery and resilience plan does actually close this territorial divide?
3. Does it take the view that NGEU-beneficiary Member States should apply the same allocation criteria as the Commission?