

Dear Minister/Sir,

We are writing to request that the Italian government and the governments of the EU Member States review and, if necessary, redefine, the funds allocated to the World Health Organisation (WHO) and intervene for the purpose of restructuring its organisation and reformulating its mission and original objectives, today disregarded, with a view to making its bureaucratic organisation leaner, its decision-making processes transparent and its employees accountable for their decisions and actions. We request that choices be fostered which promote the scientific method and the free choice of citizens, overcoming the current ideological approach dictated by countries hostile to liberal democracy and by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which are contrary to individual responsibility.

The World Health Organisation is betraying its mission and our trust. Rather than dealing with health emergencies and increasing basic levels of health protection, it has developed into an ideological corporation that professes to determine the fate of us citizens through non-transparent decision-making processes responding to often dubious compromises.

The WHO declares an annual budget of over \$4.4 billion, in addition to flexible funding worth another \$1.5 billion. Italy is the WHO's 7th largest funder, behind the USA, China, Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom and France. But how is our money spent?

Very badly. 53% of the so-called "mandatory" funds cover personnel costs and ancillary expenses relating above all to flights and accommodation around the world, according to the missions carried out. And indeed as much as 71% of the "voluntary" funds paid by Italy are allocated to the staff and administration budget. Only a minor amount (29%) is left for practical, problem-solving activities. As confirmed by members of the WHO administration themselves, these budgets are often spent on expensive travel and conferences organised in exotic luxury resorts.

It is therefore possible to state that the majority of WHO funds are not invested in scientific research projects and activities preventing and mitigating health emergencies, but are in fact squandered by the bureaucratic organisation that, in this way, increasingly acquires power.

The decision taken by the President of the United States of America, Donald Trump, to cut his country's contribution is a clear message that Italy and other countries of the European Union should share and follow.

This is not the first time that we have denounced the operations of the WHO. We reported the lack of transparency in its decision-making processes and ideological approach, the objective of which is not to guarantee methods and instruments that allow us citizens to make free and aware choices, but rather to impose a certain lifestyle. This dirigiste or dictatorial attitude has even enslaved science to extremely questionable ideological positions and theories on the world.



For this reason, Italy and the other EU Member States must demand greater transparency from the WHO in its decision-making processes and greater accountability for the consequences these decisions can have on us citizens.

1. The decision-making and management processes are not subject to the direct control of its contributors. Many of its initiatives are the result of political compromise which has little to do with the organisation's actual mission.
2. The management of the Covid-19 emergency has revealed underhanded conduct, attitudes and practices on the part of the WHO and its executive body. During the initial phases of uncertainty, the WHO failed in its management of the prevention and containment phase. It provided no clear and precise guidelines for countries, including Italy, which could have been at risk due also to their contacts with the sources of the outbreaks. Thereafter, it was slow in declaring the emergency situation even when the progression of the disease was clear for all to see and its hazardousness known. Finally, it mainly followed the Chinese line, without checking any alternatives to containment. The results, above all in socio-economic terms, are clear, and we are heading for one of the worst economic crises in history. No investigation has been opened on the origin of the virus and the poor safety conditions of the laboratories and virology researchers in the city of Wuhan, instead relying on the Chinese government's declarations, which lack credibility and have been belied by the facts.
3. The untransparent management of funds received by the WHO leaves many doubts. For instance, €28,500 are spent every year on travel costs for each staff member employed. That is more or less the per capita GDP of countries like Spain or Italy.
4. Many campaigns promoted by the WHO are not producing measurable benefits for human health, but rather damage the economy, contradict the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), undermine personal freedom of choice and betray the scientific method. Competere has drawn the attention of the Italian government and the European Commission to the WHO's ideological opposition to sugar, reporting that the freedom-destroying policies promoted not only do not solve the problem of obesity but indeed worsen it, undermining individual liberties. It has drawn attention to the lack of a clear position in favour of palm oil, which science has demonstrated to be a safe ingredient when used in a balanced diet. It has drawn attention to the WHO's long tradition of positions and policies hostile to the protection of intellectual property, which have damaged entire industrial sectors such as the pharmaceutical industry, one of the greatest contributors to the Italian economy, and millions of people would have received effective and innovative drugs, vaccines and treatments more rapidly without such iniquitous choices.
5. The WHO does not permit dissent or criticism. Over the years we have witnessed deplorable conduct by the organisation's staff and directors. The most notable case concerns the latest editions of the FCTC (Framework Convention on Tobacco Control). Journalists, representatives of associations and the third sector and representatives of industry were forcefully removed from the conference locations, which should instead be open to debate by all stakeholders.

Why should the Italian citizens, who today are required to make further sacrifices, continue to fund an organisation that has betrayed its mission, does not accept responsibility for its decisions and is run by bureaucrats who use our funds without any accountability?



Science is also criticism, and the scientific method forces us to continuously question theories, processes and discoveries, in order to produce updated, innovative and more elaborate solutions. Why does the WHO sidestep these criteria?

Respectfully yours,

Pietro Paganini

President of Competere – Policies for sustainable development