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TEPSA, in cooperation with the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), is organising a discussion on **Euroscepticism in Italy and how the Covid-19 crisis will affect governability in the country**.

In the aftermath of the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in Italy, the need to find urgent economic and social responses has resulted in an unprecedented centralisation of power by the Italian Government. Ironically, with the Parliament playing a lesser role in determining the country's response, Prime Minister Conte has been assuming the same absolute power Salvini once pursued.

Against this backdrop, Italian sovereignism is not over; it has simply changed its connotations. Matteo Salvini's League and Giorgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy are casting themselves as frontrunners in the defence of democracy and freedom. They criticise the Government for not consulting the Parliament enough and, by often minimising the risk of the pandemic, they support the opening up of all social and economic activities as soon as possible to allow citizens to go back to their "normal lives".

Leaving aside some aesthetic changes in their political discourses, Italian sovereignist parties are not abandoning their usual anti-European stances. Building on the initial poor reactions of many member states and European institutions vis à vis the urgent needs of Italy, the League and Brothers of Italy attempted to delegitimise any pro-European initiative taken by the Government.

To sum up, the COVID-19 crisis is building a solid foundation for sovereigntist parties to gain more power in Italy. Although Prime Minister Conte and his government are still enjoying around 64% approval, their longevity will depend on the capacity to help the country overcome the pandemic and lead it throughout the coming recession.

The event will take place via Zoom on **Wednesday 13 May from 11:00 to 12:30** and will feature presentations by the following experts:

- **Eleonora Poli**, Researcher, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)
- **Nicoletta Pirozzi**, Head of the EU program and Institutional Relations, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)
- **Carolina Plescia**, Assistant Professor, University of Bologna
- Chair & Moderator: **Ilike Toygür**, Analyst, Real Istituto Elcano

Please be aware that this Zoom event will be recorded.

BACKGROUND

This discussion will take place in the framework of the presentation of the TEPSA book ["Euroscepticism and the Future of Europe: Views from the Capitals"](#), edited by Michael Kaeding, Johannes Pollak and Paul Schmidt. This book sheds light on how the increasing prominence of Eurosceptic and nationalist parties is having an impact on the thinking of mainstream parties, their representatives in the European Parliament, and the future of Europe. The book provides perspectives on the future of the European project from authors in all the EU Member States, as well as neighboring European countries and potential applicant nations.

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