

INVESTEU E LA SFIDA DELLA PRODUTTIVITÀ E DELL'INNOVAZIONE

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InvestEU and the challenge of productivity and innovation

The explicit choice of the new European Commission is to address the challenge of innovation and change. Ursula von der Leyen expressed this idea claiming that she will not accept a budget that does not have at least 25% destined to fight climate change. The InvestEU program recently presented by the Commission is focused on the idea of carbon neutrality in 2050, digital economy and innovation as priorities. It could appear, as the instruments adopted, a mere follow-up to the Juncker Plan but it is something much more demanding in terms of objectives. The basic problem is that the launch of InvestEU itself confirms the difficulties of the European economy and its very weak prospects for investments and growth (Eurozone in particular). What are the economic policy choices to be associated to InvestEU program and adopted in this context? Beyond the assessments on the quantitative adequacy of the program, the crucial problem of this policy address concerns its effects on productivity. The issue of total productivity and its determinants is a central question because growth depends on it. This is true whether it is believed productivity is influenced by investment and demand, or whether one looks at the role of human capital and skills, or at the effects of technological change. What is needed, in general, for growth is using economic policy to mitigate the climate of uncertainty that affects investment choices, when the prospects for increased aggregate demand are modest and problematic. The climate of creeping stagnation must be eliminated. In this perspective, macroeconomic policies supporting aggregate demand and based on a robust fiscal basis (such as the proposed tax on CO2) count, although it is undoubtedly important to activate public and private investments through the mechanisms provided by InvestEU.

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