With regard to the article and video published on Wednesday, March 12, entitled “Bridge to Sicily: Strategic Asset for Italy and Europe or Waste of Resources?”, Stretto di Messina wishes to provide the following clarifications.

The **EU co-financing** for the project amounts to more than “just” €25 million. Stretto di Messina secured this funding by successfully participating in Connecting Europe Facility for Transport, an EU-wide infrastructure financing program awarded through a tender process, open to all the Union’s countries. The European Commission recognized the project’s strategic importance based on its contribution to the four TEN-T corridor objectives: cohesion, efficiency, sustainability, and enhanced user benefits. The Bridge’s inclusion in the Scandinavia-Mediterranean corridor by the European Council, in addition to the financing provided, further reinforces its strategic significance. This designation also opens the possibility of additional EU funding for the Bridge, with a further reduction in costs for the Italian state.

Regarding concerns about **seismic activity** in the area, it is important to note that suspension bridges have been successfully built in regions with higher seismic risks than the Strait of Messina, such as Turkey, Japan, and California.
By design, a suspension bridge, like the Strait of Messina Bridge, is inherently resilient to seismic events, as its natural frequencies do not align with typical earthquake vibrations. Moreover, from the earliest Bridge design phases, extensive seismic studies have been conducted, particularly on land. The Bridge is engineered to withstand an earthquake comparable to the 1908 Messina earthquake. Under such conditions, the structure remains elastic, meaning it sustains no permanent damage, exceeding standard safety requirements. Decades of research on the 1908 earthquake and its originating fault have classified it as an extremely rare event with an estimated recurrence interval of 2,000 years.

Regarding the issue of water shortage in the area where work will be carried out, it should be noted that the water supply to the City of Messina and Villa San Giovanni will not be impacted in any way by the **requirements of the Strait Bridge construction sites**. Both during the construction phase and after the project’s completion, the area will benefit from water surpluses.

Any infrastructure project, at the approval stage, is subject to **conditions and recommendations**. On November 13, 2024, the Technical Commission for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA and SEA) issued a favorable opinion on the final design, imposing 62 conditions. Of these, 60 must be met before approval of the detailed design, while the remaining two apply after the Bridge becomes operational. The number of conditions should be assessed in relation to the project’s complexity, involving more than 10,000 documents. Moreover, most relate to enhancements in environmental monitoring as the work progresses and additional parameters to be tracked, a standard practice for projects of this scale.

In terms of **economic, social, and environmental impacts**, the Cost-Benefit Analysis, conducted in accordance with European and national guidelines, showed that construction of the Strait of Messina Bridge will significantly enhance collective welfare, generating substantial net benefits for the national community while improving both economic and environmental aspects. Key indicators show that, with an estimated investment cost of €13.5 billion, the

Economic Net Present Value (ENPV) is €3.9 billion (discounted to 2023), and the Economic Internal Rate of Return (EIRR) stands at 4.51%. One of the main socioeconomic benefits is time savings: 1 hour for light trucks, 1.5 hours for heavy trucks, and 2 hours for trains. At a broader level, considering shifts in favor of rail transport and accounting for emissions generated during construction, the project is expected to result in a net reduction of approximately 12.8 million tons of $CO_2$ over the 2024–2063 period.

CIPESS's approval of the final design will entail the approval of the financial plan, ensuring that the project is fully funded. This measure is specifically intended to prevent the **risk of unfinished work**, which often results from funding shortages during the construction process. In this regard, it is worth noting that the 2025 Budget Act has fully appropriated the €13.5 billion investment needed for the Bridge, including 40 km of road and rail connections (80% of which through tunnels), three new underground railway stations, and an operational headquarters designed by Libeskind.

Regarding infrastructure spending in southern Italy, the Ministry of Infrastructure's programs for the Strait regions include ongoing and planned investment totaling €70 billion for Sicily and Calabria, including new high-speed rail lines in Sicily and Calabria.

Stretto di Messina has always operated with the utmost **transparency** and in full **compliance with all applicable rules and regulations**.

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