

EU extends summit to Sunday after deadlock over COVID recovery plan



Brussels, July 19 (RHC)-- Leaders of the European Union have extended until Sunday their summit after failing to agree on a massive stimulus fund to revive their coronavirus-hammered economies after two days of fraught negotiations, Reuters news agency reported.

As the 27 leaders scurried back to their hotels after a late Saturday night, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron stayed behind in the EU's headquarters in Brussels to haggle with the Dutch-led camp of thrifty countries demanding cuts to the 1.8 trillion euro (\$2.06 trillion) package.

"The negotiations were heated," said Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte of Italy, one of the EU countries most affected by the coronavirus crisis that are seeking generous aid from the bloc. "Europe is under the blackmail of the 'frugals'."

"We have to do all what is possible to reach a deal tomorrow," Conte said. "Further delays are not useful to anybody."

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