

Dear comrade,

The **European Committee of the Regions (CoR)** is the European Union's assembly of local and regional representatives that provides sub-national authorities (i.e. regions, counties, provinces, municipalities and cities) with a direct voice within the EU institutional framework. Through our advice on legislation and resolutions, we defend the interests of sub-national authorities.

We are your voice in the EU.

The PES Group in the CoR, consists of **95 members (out of 329)** and represent socialist, social-democrats and progressive leaders. Together with our partners in the S&D Group and the PES Party, we are committed to a Europe that delivers for all its citizens, leaving no region behind.

The world is changing rapidly, and Europe's influence is at risk, not only because of external forces, but because of self-imposed weaknesses. **The Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028-2035 is a defining moment.** It proposes the budget allocations for the action of the EU for the period 2028-2035.

And the Commission's current proposal fails to rise to the challenge. Allocating money through national plans reinforces a fragmented 'Europe of Nations' instead of a strong, federal Europe. Local and regional authorities (LRAs) are sidelined, with their role no longer guaranteed in decision-making or budget allocation. Cohesion policy is under threat, with no assurance of dedicated funding for all regions, risking widening inequalities and abandoning the principle of solidarity.

For this reason, we have produced a sheet that will allow you to raise the concerns of LRAs with national and regional party leaders in your country in order to make them aware of the issues at stake. It is essential to take position for more Europe, beyond the patchwork of national interests, to **defend the role of regions, cities and municipalities in the EU governance** and to ensure fair and needs-based funding for all territories. Only this way we can guarantee solidarity, subsidiarity and cohesion for all regions.

The time to act is now. 2026 is the year of negotiation. The Commission must change course, and your leadership is critical to making this happen.

Yours sincerely,



Luca Menesini
President of the PES Group
in the European Committee of the Regions

Next multiannual financial framework (MFF):

DEFEND OUR EUROPE

BY DEFENDING OUR REGIONS AND CITIES

What is the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)?

The **Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)** is the EU's long-term budget plan. It covers seven years and sets out how much the European Union (EU) can spend each year on key areas like agriculture, regional development, or social policies. Proposed by the European Commission, it is approved unanimously by the European Council with the consent (yes or no) of the European Parliament.

On 16 July 2025, the European Commission proposed a new MFF (2028 - 2034).

This proposal has major flaws that could harm the future of the EU.

Why does it matter?

The MFF decides how much money the EU has and how it is spent. It affects:

 Who pays	 Who benefits	 What gets funded
The MFF affects how much each country contributes to the EU budget.	It also affects how much money flows back to countries, regions and cities.	As well as how much funding will be available for local projects, infrastructures and public services.

In short: the MFF shapes Europe's future and directly impacts your community.

What is at stake?

Under the European Commission's proposals, there will be **LESS** money, **LESS** predictable and **HARDER** to access with competition between cohesion funds, common agricultural policy funds, European social funds, and so on.

Your region or city may get less money from the EU and it won't be guaranteed.

- **Regions, cities and municipalities will lose influence,** as decisions are centralised in Brussels and national capitals.
- **EU funds will be tied to controversial reforms,** risking cuts to public services and local democracy.

- › **It will be austerity in disguise,**
with cuts to cohesion, housing, and social programs, even though these are more needed than ever.
- › **Not all regions may qualify for funding,**
deepening inequalities and leaving some communities behind.

This is a **step backward** for a united Europe. At a time when the EU should be stronger, this proposal **risks creating a 'Europe of Nations'** instead of a Europe for all.

This is why the upcoming MFF is a battle for the soul of Europe. It's about choosing between a Europe that works for everyone and a Europe that only serves a few.

What do we demand?

We call for a fair, democratic and cohesive MFF that:

1. **Keeps the budget strong,**
equivalent to the current budget, including pandemic recovery plan (or 1.38% of the EU GNI).
2. **Reverses the cuts**
to cohesion, social policies and agriculture.
3. **Gives regions, cities and municipalities a real say:**
a legally binding role in MFF with regional programs and shared management.
4. **Guarantees cohesion for all regions,**
with dedicated budgets for every region.
5. **Protects our rural areas:**
no cuts for rural development instruments such as the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and LEADER.
6. **Supports regional innovation ecosystems:**
a bottom-up approach to competitiveness, tailored to regional needs.
7. **Funds inclusion, not just security:**
cities must lead on migration, integration, and human security.

What can you do?

Time is running out. The MFF will define Europe's priorities for the next decade. As local and regional leaders, **your voice matters**:

 Pressure your national government	 Demand a reality check	 Mobilise your networks
Lobby your national government to drastically change the current MFF proposal and demand a fair, democratic, and cohesive alternative.	Push for a "reality check" to expose and withdraw Commission's unrealistic measures.	Share this sheet, organise national actions, and influence your Member State's position.

You have the **power to influence** your **national government's and national party's position**, particularly within your local and regional associations.