Name of the municipality / province / region

In its meeting held in... on...

RESOLUTION OF THE MUNICIPAL / PROVINCIAL / REGIONAL COUNCIL / ASSEMBLY

ON DEFENDING THE NEXT COHESION POLICY AND THE ROLE OF REGIONS AND CITIES IN THE MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK 2028-2034

Having regards to:

- Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union, which identifies economic, social and territorial cohesion as one of the objectives of the Union;
- Articles 4(2) and 5 of the Treaty on European Union, on respect for regional and local self-government and on the principle of subsidiarity;
- Articles 162 and 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union establishing the European Social Fund and reaffirming the commitment of the Union to reduce disparities between the levels of development of the regions.

Whereas:

- The European Commission's (EC) proposal of 16 July 2025 provides EUR 1,613.8 billion for the multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2028-2034 equivalent to 1.15% of EU gross national income (GNI), excluding Next Generation EU (NGEU) which was established to finance the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF).
- This proposal represents cuts of approximately 20% to cohesion policy funds;
- The European Parliament (EP) position, supported by the European Committee of the Regions provides a budget of EUR 1,788.86 billion for the next MFF equivalent to 1.27% of GNI, excluding NGEU repayments, reinstituting cohesion policy at its current amount;
- The Council of the EU, on the basis of the Irish negotiating box of 10 October 2026 provides a budget of EUR 1,472.7 billion for the next MFF equivalent to 1.02 % of GNI, excluding NGEU repayments, corresponding to a reduction of EUR 141 billion or 8.7% compared with the EC proposal;
- It is paramount to underline that cohesion policy includes the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the Cohesion Fund, the rural development and European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg);
- The European Committee of the Regions adopted in 2026 specific opinions on the MFF, the National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPPs), the ERDF, the ESF+, the CAP and the Performance Framework regulation for the next MFF;
- This proposal, merging cohesion policy, the common agricultural policy (CAP) and other key policies such as digital, environment, and rural development and security into a single centrally managed national envelope will centralize and nationalize all EU policies, reducing the budgets managed under shared-management for long-term projects, and eroding transparency and democratic accountability;

- This proposal undermines the role of regions in the future design and implementation of the NRPPs for cohesion policy and the CAP and weakens the participation of local and regional innovation ecosystems in the future European Competitiveness Fund (ECF);
- Competitiveness and cohesion are not alternative objectives but the two sides of the same coin: research, innovation, infrastructure and European production capacities also depend on the potential of all territories to be exploited; cohesion programmes being an enabler for European global competitiveness;
- The proposal currently under discussion in the European Council, the Council of the EU and in the European Parliament does not provide for a pre-allocation of EU funds to regions for a seven-year period, with worrying repercussions on the possibility for regions to design and implement cohesion policy for the long term in the best interest of their citizens, society and businesses;
- Cohesion policy has so far ensured that the allocation of European funds is guided by territorial needs and the quality of projects, protecting investments from the logic of political affiliation or influence and ensuring equal opportunities for development for all territories, regardless of the political color of the regional, provincial or local administrations;
- The European Committee of the Regions has called for effective involvement of regional authorities, a subsidiarity clause and at least 20% of national allocations to be devoted to integrated territorial development strategies;
- The EC proposal intends to strengthen the link between the delivery of funds and reforms that are unrelated to the investments, thereby possibly blocking resources allocated to regions, provinces or municipalities because of non-compliance by the national government on topics that are unrelated to regional or local competences.

The municipal / provincial / regional Council / Assembly:

- opposes any reduction in the MFF 2028-2034 that undermines the resources allocated to cohesion policy and territorial investment, as well as a centralization and nationalization of the programming and management of funds within national governments, reiterating the need to preserve the role of the regions as managing authorities;
- demands a future MFF with sound and ambitious own-resources;
- insists that the future NRPPs regulation define, at European and national levels, separate predetermined budgetary envelopes for the ERDF, the ESF+, the Cohesion Fund, Interreg, the rural development and the CAP, in order to avoid any competition between these funds;
- demands the reintroduction, for the future cohesion policy, of a European method, based on objective indicators, to pre-allocate to each and every European region an amount of money for seven years in order to preserve the long-term dimension of the cohesion policy;
- insists that all three categories of regions (less developed, transition and more developed regions) remain eligible for cohesion policy funding, with EU-level funding guarantees and a safety-net allocation compared with the 2021-2027 period, so that access to cohesion funds is not left solely to the discretion of national authorities;
- requests that mandatory regional chapters be implemented under the NRPPs wherever regional or local authorities hold relevant competences and expresses its support for binding legislative guarantees in the form of a 'multilevel governance assessment' and a

'subsidiarity clause' allowing regions to co-design and implement cohesion policy and the rural dimension of the future NRPPs;

- demands a dedicated and increased budget for the ESF+, with earmarking for social inclusion, the fight against child poverty and youth employment; underlines the need to make housing eligible for support under cohesion policy and the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF), in order to develop financial instruments that leverage private financing for the long-term provision of affordable housing;
- demands the inclusion of a new horizontal principle in the performance framework regulation for the next MFF: the 'do no harm to cohesion', so that the new European priorities and financial instruments of the MFF do not lead to an increase in economic, social and territorial imbalances;
- requests the national government to defend these positions in the next negotiations in the European Council and in the Council of the EU concerning the next MFF and the future NRPPs regulation.

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