

Resolution endorsed by members of the CEMR Executive Bureau

CEMR calls for a strong MFF and a cohesion policy that actively involves local and regional governments

In view of the December Council meeting where heads of state and government will discuss the next long-term budget for the EU, CEMR and its member associations would like to reiterate the key points for local and regional governments in matters related to the future budget of the cohesion policy.

1. Local and regional governments count on a timely agreement on an ambitious MFF for a strong cohesion policy

Local and regional governments in the European Union call upon the Member States to achieve a timely agreement on the MFF and fully support the European Parliament's REGI committee reports on the Structural and Investment Funds. It is necessary to start the programming of the funds and thus allow a smooth transition to the upcoming funding period for beneficiaries and managing authorities alike.

The European Union has set ambitious objectives in terms of sustainable development, climate action (Green Deal), social inclusion and demonstrating its added value to European citizens. All of these objectives can only be delivered through an appropriate long-term budget that allows local and regional governments to implement the necessary measures for territorial development. CEMR rejects the recent proposal presented by the Finnish Council Presidency that would result in an additional cut of about 12 billion euros compared to the European Commission's proposal (which itself already represented a 7% cut compared to the budget allocated for the current period). CEMR also opposes the cuts proposed by the European Commission on rural development which are highly detrimental to the goals mentioned in the EU Treaty.

2. A "just transition fund" will need additional budget allocations

CEMR welcomes the proposal from the incoming President of the European Commission for a new Just Transition Fund (JTF) and other related measures, given their goal of fostering territorial cohesion. However, the introduction of these new funds must not affect EU regional policy adversely but provide for additional measures through additional funds. The budget allocation foreseen for the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) must not be used to finance other measures.

3. A strong Partnership with local and regional governments

CEMR calls on the Member States to not endanger the EU-wide applicability of the Partnership Principle by striking out the obligation to draft partnership agreements for a number of Member States (Art. 7 CPR). The partnership agreement and the partnership principle are crucial pillars of the EU's cohesion policy, ensuring a stable link between beneficiaries and managing authorities, and must be maintained. All Member States must work together with the representatives of local and regional governments in drafting the operational programmes and monitoring their implementation, in line with this Principle. This is particularly important, given that Policy Objective 5 "A Europe closer to citizens" can only be achieved through close cooperation with local and regional governments, which are the level of public administration that is closest to citizens.

CEMR welcomes the fact that the Commission proposal for European Territorial Cooperation (INTERREG) 2021-2027 explicitly foresees the possibility of the UK financially contributing and enabling its local and regional governments to participate into these programmes in the event of UK withdrawal, in the same capacity as other countries such as Iceland or Norway. CEMR urges the Commission to allow for a preparatory dialogue with UK local and regional governments to help draft the cooperation programmes.