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OPINION

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034
- Opinion of the Committee of the Regions

Delegations will find attached the Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028 – 2034, including the own resources package.

Please note that other language versions should be available at:

[Multiannual Financial Framework \(MFF\) post 2027, including own resources package | European Committee of the Regions](#)



COTER-VIII/006

170th plenary session, 4-5 March 2026

OPINION

Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) post 2027, including own resources package

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS (CoR)

- points out that key priorities such as competitiveness, security, the transition to a low-carbon economy, sustainability and reversing demographic decline are implemented at regional and local level. Competitiveness and cohesion are closely linked. Competitiveness largely depends on municipalities, cities and regions' ability to manage resources and policies according to their challenges and needs;
- supports the European Parliament's position as expressed in the draft interim report published in December 2025 that the overall funding available for EU programmes (excluding NGEU repayments) should amount to 1.27% of EU GNI;
- urges the Council to swiftly reach an agreement on a basket of new own resources;
- strongly calls for the 'do no harm to cohesion' principle to be applied across the board to all funds and programmes and recommends that territorial impact assessments (TIAs), including rural proofing be carried out systematically on all proposals with potentially asymmetric territorial impacts;
- proposes that the CoR and the EESC be involved in the new political governance mechanism;
- supports the ambition of the EP for an increase for National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPPs) as laid out in the draft interim report of the European Parliament on the MFF; calls for a dedicated budget for Cohesion Policy throughout the entire period to preserve the long-term dimension of this policy;
- calls on the Commission to provide detailed clarifications concerning each category of regions, and legal guarantees regarding its intention to introduce effective regional checks, to ensure that local and regional authorities are fully involved in preparing, implementing and evaluating NRPPs, and to create specific safeguards that take account of the development needs of all categories of regions.

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EN

Rapporteur

Sari RAUTIO (FI/EPP), Member of the Hämeenlinna City Council

Reference documents:

1. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A dynamic EU Budget for the priorities of the future – The Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034 (COM(2025) 570 final, part 1)
2. Proposal for a Council Regulation laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2028 to 2034 (COM(2025) 571 final, parts 1 and 2)
3. Proposal for a Interinstitutional Agreement between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management (COM(572) 2025 final, part 1)
4. Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council – Long-term forecast of future inflows and outflows of the EU budget (2026-2034) (COM(573) 2025 final)
5. Proposal for a Council Decision on the system of own resources of the European Union and repealing Decision (EU, Euratom) 2020/2053 (COM(574) 2025 final)

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**Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions – Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)
post 2027, including own resources package**

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS

Amendment 1

Proposal for a Council Regulation laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years
2028 to 2034, COM(2025) 571 final
New recital 1a

<i>Text proposed by the European Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
	<i>Contributions from the EU budget should take into account the following principles: strengthening the competitiveness and resilience of the economy, a successful internal market, climate and biodiversity guidelines, ‘do no significant harm to environmental objectives’, ‘do no harm to cohesion’, social policy, gender equality and gender mainstreaming, and non-discrimination. The multiannual financial framework should ensure stable, predictable and adequate funding for cohesion policy and common agricultural policy throughout the programming period, thereby enabling the planning and implementation of long-term regional and local investment strategies based on the needs and priorities of each category of region, while fully respecting the principles of subsidiarity, partnership and multi-level governance;</i>

<i>Reason</i>
To include the ‘do no harm to cohesion’ principle as a cross-cutting principle. To remind that the focus of cohesion is on the regions. To pay attention to the economy as a key pillar of the EU’s prosperity. To enhance the need for predictable financing for both cohesion policy and common agricultural policy. To clarify the reference to equality by also mentioning the gender perspective.

Amendment 2

Proposal for a Council Regulation laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years
2028 to 2034, COM(2025) 571 final
New recital 1b

<i>Text proposed by the European Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
	<i>Experience with the Recovery and Resilience Facility has demonstrated that highly centralised instruments, without the</i>

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	<i>involvement of local and regional authorities and without the use of established shared-management structures, cannot fully exploit the development potential of all regions. Future crisis-response instruments must be planned and implemented separately from cohesion policy, in order to further reinforce its role as the Union's main long-term investment pillar.</i>
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<i>Reason</i>
Fleshing out the principle that ‘cohesion policy is not a crisis response instrument’. The long-term nature of cohesion policy and the resources available for it must not be used for short-term crisis response.

Amendment 3

Proposal for a Council Regulation laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2028 to 2034, COM(2025) 571 final
New recital 16

<i>Text proposed by the European Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
	<i>Considering that Article 174 of the TFEU recognises that island regions suffer from severe and permanent structural handicaps, it is essential to ensure a cross-cutting consideration of the insular condition linked to geographic discontinuity across all Union policies and financial instruments.</i>

<i>Reason</i>
Self-explanatory.

Amendment 4

Proposal for a Council Regulation laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2028 to 2034, COM(2025) 571 final
New Article 5a

<i>Text proposed by the European Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
	<i>Adjustment following new rules or programmes under shared management</i> <i>1. In the event of the adoption after 1 January 2028 of new rules or programmes under shared management for Heading 1 of the MFF 2028-2034, the amounts corresponding to the allocations not used in 2028 shall be transferred in equal proportions to each of the years 2029 to 2032 in current prices, and the corresponding</i>

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	<i>MFF ceilings shall be adjusted accordingly.</i> <i>2. The Commission shall communicate the result of any adjustments under paragraph 1 to the European Parliament and to the Council.</i>
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<i>Reason</i>
The proposed amendment introduces an article similar to Article 7 of the Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027. It safeguards against loss of funding in the event of planning delays due to the late adoption of legislation and/or implementing acts and guidelines and/or in negotiations, as these risks will remain in the 2028-2034 period.

Amendment 5

Proposal for a Council Regulation laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2028 to 2034, COM(2025) 571 final
New Article 5b

<i>Text proposed by the European Commission</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
	<i>1. When preparing and implementing programmes and instruments financed from the Union budget that are expected to have significant territorial impacts, the Commission shall ensure that a comprehensive territorial impact assessment is carried out, including impacts on regional development disparities as defined in Article 174 TFEU, particular attention shall be paid to rural areas, areas affected by industrial transition, and regions which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps such as the northernmost regions with very low population density and island, cross-border and mountain regions. The Commission shall also ensure that the specific characters of the outermost regions are taken into account, as laid down in Article 349 TFEU.</i> <i>2. The Commission shall ensure that new or amended Union programmes and instruments financed from the Union budget do not undermine the objectives of economic, social and territorial cohesion, and keep a balanced support across all categories of regions in the just transition towards a green, digital and inclusive economy.</i>

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<i>Reason</i>
References to be added to Articles TFEU 174 and TFEU 349 that define the areas requiring special attention. To be added the principle for supporting balanced development across all categories of regions.

Amendment 6

Proposal for a Council Regulation laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years
2028 to 2034, COM(2025) 571 final
Annex 1

<i>Text proposed by the European Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
1. Economic, social and territorial cohesion, agriculture, rural and maritime prosperity and security 2. Competitiveness, prosperity and security 3. Global Europe 4. Administration --- 1. Economic, social and territorial cohesion, agriculture, rural and maritime prosperity and security 2. Competitiveness, prosperity and security 3. Global Europe 4. Administration	1. Economic, social and territorial cohesion, agriculture, rural and maritime prosperity and security <i>1.1 Economic, social and territorial cohesion including INTERREG and rural development</i> <i>1.2 Agriculture and maritime prosperity</i> <i>1.3 Security</i> 2. Competitiveness, prosperity and security 3. Global Europe 4. Administration --- 1. Economic, social and territorial cohesion, agriculture, rural and maritime prosperity and security <i>1.1 Economic, social and territorial cohesion including INTERREG and rural development</i> <i>1.2 Agriculture and maritime prosperity</i> <i>1.3 Security</i> 2. Competitiveness, prosperity and security 3. Global Europe 4. Administration

<i>Reason</i>
Create 3 separate subheadings and 3 separate budget lines, specifically for ‘Economic, social and territorial cohesion including INTERREG and rural development’, for ‘Agriculture and maritime prosperity’, and for ‘Security’ within Heading 1, including specific yearly values and totals for each.

Amendment 7

Proposal for a Interinstitutional Agreement between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management, COM(2025) 572 final

New Article 17

<i>Text proposed by the European Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
	<i>When establishing a new political governance mechanism whereby a larger share of Union funds is allocated annually through interinstitutional negotiations, the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission shall establish a structured dialogue with the European Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee. This dialogue shall ensure that territorial considerations, cohesion impacts and the experience of local and regional authorities are duly reflected when setting orientations for the allocation of funds</i>

<i>Reason</i>
This ensures the involvement of the CoR and the EESC in the new governance mechanism and anchors territorial and cohesion aspects in funding decisions. COM(2025) 572) Part III Interinstitutional cooperation in the annual budgetary procedure.

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS (CoR)

1. recalls its positions expressed related to the Commission's proposals for the MFF, as expressed notably in the opinion 'EU budget and place-based policies: proposals for new design and delivery mechanisms in the MFF post-2027' on November 2024, and in its 'Resolution in view of the next MFF adopted at its plenary on 15 May 2025' and its 'Resolution on the proposal for the Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034' adopted at its plenary on 15 October 2025;
2. takes note of the ongoing European Parliament Draft Interim Report on the proposal for a Council regulation laying down the Multiannual Financial Framework for the years 2028 to 2034;
3. takes note of the set of opinions that the European Court of Auditors has recently published on the MFF 2028 -2034 package of proposals (including own resources);
4. recalls that many reports (Letta, Draghi, Niinistö) have underlined that the EU suffers from a huge investment gap to deliver on its increasing ambitions and regain some competitive

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advantage. is convinced that the EU must equip itself with sufficient financial means in order to meet its highly important new objectives in a challenging political context without putting in danger its long standing Treaty goals;

5. examines, in this opinion, the general policy guidelines of the 2028-2034 MFF, and issues relating to how the MFF is structured and own resources managed. The Committee will look into funds specific regulations and sector-based aspects in subsequent opinions;
6. stresses that the financial and legal frameworks of the 2028–2034 MFF must be aligned with the full 2028–2035 programming period to avoid interruptions in programming and implementation and to minimise delays in launching new programmes; strongly supports the intention expressed by both the European Council and the European Parliament to reach an agreement by the end of 2026 on the MFF package;

Policy guidelines and strategic decisions

7. recalls that the promotion of economic, social and territorial cohesion enshrined in Article 3 TEU is a fundamental objective of the EU and that the whole MFF 2028-2034 should maintain this as a central pillar of European solidarity. Urges that, in accordance with Article 174 TFEU cohesion policy must not be dismantled or merged with other centrally or nationally managed instruments;
8. supports the proposal's objective of ensuring stability and predictability in resource allocation by providing a reliable financial framework, with sufficient flexibility needed to strengthen the capacity to respond to unforeseen circumstances, enabling exceptional measures to be taken where necessary to respond to crises, emergencies and substantial changes to the socio-economic context;
9. points out that key priorities such as competitiveness, security, the transition to a low-carbon economy, sustainability and reversing demographic decline are implemented at regional and local level. Competitiveness and cohesion are closely linked. Competitiveness largely depends on municipalities, cities and regions' ability to manage resources and policies according to their challenges and needs. This is particularly important for areas undergoing conversion processes, island, cross-border and mountain regions, remote and sparsely populated areas. Success in delivering on the European-level priorities depends heavily on effective multi-level governance – that is, on how efficiently national, regional and local actors coordinate their actions to achieve a common goal;
10. calls for the principles of partnership and subsidiarity to be placed on a firmer footing as a binding element of legislation and for the active and mandatory role of local and regional authorities. This will ensure participatory multilevel governance that is conducive to efficient use of funds and guarantee that development strategies designed at regional level are included when setting priorities and implementing funds; calls therefore for the systematic use of multi-level governance assessments of programmes under the MFF throughout their entire policy cycle such as those for a just industrial and energy transition, to ensure that development strategies developed at subnational level are properly reflected in priority-setting and the implementation of these programmes;

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11. recalls that the post-2027 MFF legislative package is a set of different legislative proposals, which are closely linked to each other. They are especially linked in strategic policymaking, as well as financial planning and implementation. Only this holistic approach and the full respect of the above-mentioned principles can guarantee an effective delivery and greater European added value of the EU budget which are two of the main objectives of the Commission's proposal;
12. supports making funding conditional on respect for the principle of the rule of law and compliance with the Conditionality Regulation. Binding measures must ensure that final beneficiaries, particularly regions, municipalities and cities, are not penalised directly or indirectly for failure by national authorities to comply with the conditions;
13. demands the establishment of a robust safeguarding mechanism within the governance framework of the future MFF to ensure that regional and local authorities retain direct access to EU resources when national governments fail to comply with horizontal or rule-of-law conditionalities, and insists that, in such cases, resources be reallocated directly to regional and local governments in line with their legal competences and responsibilities, thereby upholding democratic legitimacy, protecting final beneficiaries, and ensuring continuity in the implementation of the EU's long-term strategic objectives, including cohesion, competitiveness, and the green and digital transitions;

Scope and structure of the budgetary framework

14. notes that the proposal gives the Commission and Member States an increasingly central role in development and investment activities and that the overall amount of the proposed MFF (in constant prices 2025) – EUR 1 763 billion – is only slightly more than the 2021-2027 budgetary framework (excluding the NextGenerationEU (NGEU) repayments of interest and capital amounting to around EUR 150 billion). The overall size of the budget does not significantly increase the investment capacity to take the measures needed to combat and adapt to climate change and to meet the new challenges set by the Commission, in particular strategic autonomy, comprehensive security and more robust competition; the envisaged centralisation jeopardises these structures and the established procedures that form the basis for increasing investment capacity and for sound regional development in the face of numerous new challenges, including tackling the consequences of climate change;
15. supports the European Parliament's position as expressed in the draft interim report published in December 2025 that the overall funding available for EU programmes (excluding NGEU repayments) should amount to 1,27% of EU GNI;
16. supports the ambition of the European Parliament for an increase for National and Regional Partnership Plans as laid out in the draft interim report of the European Parliament on the MFF; calls for a dedicated budget for Cohesion Policy throughout the entire period to preserve the long-term dimension of this policy; for it must be kept at least at the current level, taking into consideration the inflation adjustments and cover all regions since the implementation of cohesion policy is key also to achieving the objectives of competitiveness, prosperity and security, which are also contemplated in heading 2, where the Commission is expanding its

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powers; points out that, unless local and regional authorities are involved, the Commission will not be able to achieve its objectives;

17. calls for all of the NGEU components to be removed from the budget headings, as they constitute the repayment of a loan and do not provide new resources for development;
18. stresses that any reduction in the financial framework compared to the proposal must not reduce the overall amount of heading 1; underlines that the reduction in jointly managed funds (cohesion policy and common agricultural policy) will have a significant negative impact on regions, cities and rural areas, on the achievement of the targets set by the Commission and on the future of the European Union; this is particularly true for regions facing significant challenges due to multi-faceted structural change, and funding should therefore be provided specifically for a just transition – funding that also takes the performance of the regions into account;
19. welcomes the changes to heading 1 proposed by the Commission on 9 November; however, calls on the Commission to provide detailed clarifications concerning each category of regions, and legal guarantees regarding its intention to introduce effective regional checks, to ensure that local and regional authorities are fully involved in preparing, implementing and evaluating national and regional partnership plans (NRPPs), and to create specific safeguards that take account of the development needs of all categories of regions. According to the CoR's interpretation, regional checks are part of the assessment of how multi-level governance and the partnership principle are implemented, and provisions for them should be included in the relevant regulation. The CoR proposes also a new 'subsidiarity clause' to make sure this issue is properly taken into account;

Own resources

20. supports the Commission's proposal to find new sources of EU revenue (own resources). Increasing the share of own resources will strengthen the capacity to respond flexibly to unforeseen challenges and might help to find solutions to climate and digitalisation challenges without undermining competitiveness, while ensuring sufficient resources for the long-term development of the Union; urges the Council to swiftly reach an agreement on a basket of new own resources;

Role of regions

21. points out that the tried and tested and well-established procedure for allocating cohesion funds can be further developed, but should not be abandoned entirely. Eligibility must be defined for all categories of regions, so that the allocation of funds is not left to the sole discretion of the Member States, but is based on shared management, partnership and multilevel governance, with the involvement of the local and regional levels, guaranteeing an initial pre-allocation of cohesion funds for all categories of regions to enable strategic planning and provide long-term financial stability so that they can take on and deal with their own local challenges; Regional and territorial managing authority should be responsible for the design, programming,

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management and implementation, including auditing and payments applications, interacting directly with the Commission;

22. proposes that the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee be involved in the new political governance mechanism. Under these arrangements, a greater share of EU funds will be decided each year in negotiations between the European Parliament and the Council on the basis of territorially blind reporting (e.g. under the European Semester or the new Competitiveness Compass);

Cohesion, a place-based approach and a focus on results

23. notes that the Commission proposal focuses on sector-specific challenges, but overlooks the role of cohesion policy as a common long-term investment strategy; strongly calls for the ‘do no harm to cohesion’ principle to be applied across the board to all funds and programmes and recommends that territorial impact assessments (TIAs), including rural proofing be carried out systematically on all proposals with potentially asymmetric territorial impacts;
24. stresses the importance of European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg) and welcomes the Commission proposal for the dedicated funding and the consistent implementation of simplification measures, to strengthen cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation including interregional and mission cities’ investments in innovation, speed up the reduction of regional imbalances, and boost the implementation of joint needs-oriented solutions; emphasises the importance of preserving and further developing community-led local development (CLLD), integrated territorial investments (ITI) and other integrated territorial tools during the period 2028-2034; considers these instruments essential for effective implementation of cohesion policy in urban, peri-urban, rural and cross-border areas, as they facilitate stakeholder involvement and tailor investments to specific territorial needs, support joint strategies for climate adaptation, the green and digital transitions and crisis resilience;
25. points out that competitiveness and a strong single market depend on an understanding of regional strengths and how to make the most of them. Cohesion policy for all regions is a prerequisite for the EU’s prosperity and a more robust internal market. Cohesion policy is an important source of funding for research and innovation in developing strong regional innovation ecosystems. Therefore the European Commission should support the creation of European value chains based on those Smart specialisation strategies and the optimisation of regional innovation ecosystems. Attention should be paid to assessing social, economic and territorial needs and to the anticipated social impact, including inclusion and accessibility. For example, the swift advancement of the Capital Markets Union – also called for in the Draghi report – would be a step in the right direction to provide the desired flexibility for financing investments, particularly through private capital;
26. underlines the need to combine the global approach on competitiveness as defined in the Draghi report and mirrored in the various centrally managed multi annual programmes under the heading ‘Competitiveness, prosperity and security’ with a place-based approach that unlocks the growth potential throughout the EU;

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27. recalls that upholding European values within the Union is included in the Strategic Agenda 2024 – 2029 and that the promotion of our cultural diversity and heritage should be considered an investment but not a cost given the intrinsic, but also the social and economic value of these sectors;
28. points out that the experience of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) has shown that, without local and regional know-how and effective governance that includes all territorial levels, EU investments do not meet their objectives; underlines that ensuring effective multilevel governance mechanisms between the regional, national and European levels is essential for democratic legitimacy and the effective achievement of the objectives of the MFF;
29. highlights the importance of private funding for carrying out investments and developing ecosystems that support local entrepreneurship. Recalls that cohesion policy investments are cofinanced by regional and territorial authorities, public bodies and private funding;
30. supports a stronger results-based approach, and stresses the need of administrative capacity, transparency and accountability; underlines that the measurement of the impact of the actions must truly reflect territorial needs and disparities, integrate qualitative elements and must not lead to further centralisation at the cost of territorial cohesion; considers that, in line with the general objective of performance orientation, audits and checks within the multilevel system should in the future clearly concentrate on the achievement of objectives, milestones, targets and results; they shall be designed in a manner that reflects the distribution of legislative, administrative and financial competences across levels of government within the Member State; sees a clear need to ensure that all players involved have the framework conditions for leaner, faster and more efficient processing, for a tangible reduction in red tape and, above all, for a high level of legal certainty;

A more flexible approach and streamlined regulation

31. supports the objective of simplifying the structure and reducing the administrative burden. Simplification should serve the beneficiaries first and foremost, lowering barriers to accessing the EU budget and making spending more efficient. It must not be a pretext for undermining the partnership principle, as ensuring the proper application of the partnership principle and taking regional realities into account will increase the effectiveness of EU spending and will be essential for the success of the EU's MFF;
32. welcomes the proposals to make the MFF more flexible to respond to unforeseen needs via *ad-hoc* mechanisms, as well as the new exceptional mechanism proposed in the own resources proposal, which would lower the risk of using long-term investment funds for adjustments; underlines that in exceptional cases and in full compliance with the restrictions imposed by the Treaty and relevant EU legislation, loan-financed instruments could be an option to raise the necessary resources;

Support for local democracy and civil society

33. calls for the principle to be upheld that decisions are taken as closely as possible to citizens. It is essential to have inclusive, transparent and interactive governance involving local authorities,

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civil society and economic and social partners in order to strengthen public trust in and ownership of EU policies. The MFF is not only about financial resources, but also democracy, European unity and the EU's added value. Excluding cities, regions and municipalities from the actual decision-making process means that the local level will be passed over and Europe's security and values undermined;

34. considers it important to bear in mind the need for flexibility when carrying out measures, particularly in policy areas that fall under national responsibility, while ensuring meaningful involvement of local and regional authorities. It is necessary to maintain consistency, efficiency and respect for the institutional competences of each level of government.

Brussels, 4 March 2026.

*The President
of the European Committee of the Regions*

Kata TÜTTŐ

*The Secretary-General
of the European Committee of the Regions*

Petr BLÍŽKOVSKÝ

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III. PROCEDURE

Title	Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) post 2027, including own resources package
Reference documents	COM(2025) 570 final (part 1) COM(2025) 571 final (parts 1 and 2) COM(2025) 572 final (part 1) COM(2025) 573 final (part 1) COM(2025) 574 final (parts 1 and 2)
Legal basis	Article 307 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
Procedural basis	RoP Rule 41(b)(i)
Date of Council/EP referral/Date of Commission letter	
Date of Bureau/president's decision	2 September 2025
Commission responsible	Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget
Rapporteur	Sari Rautio (FI/EPP)
Discussed in commission	7 October 2025
Date adopted by commission	2 December 2025
Result of the vote in commission	Majority
Adopted at plenary	4 March 2026
Previous Committee opinions	Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) post 2027, including own resources package
Subsidiarity reference	

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