

Civil Society to European Leaders: Deliver a Budget that is Up to the Challenge!

Letter to the leaders of the European Council

Dear President Costa, dear Presidents, dear Prime Ministers,

We are civil society organisations, non-profit organisations, organisations and institutions working in education, research and culture, philanthropic organisations/actors, federations of actors of the non-profit sector, federations of non-profit social services, and actors of the social economy from across Europe: our members, our workers and volunteers represent millions of people, are active in local communities and are trusted actors to advance the common good. Ahead of the European Council of the 18th and 19th June, we are writing to you to call you to be up to the challenge and deliver a future-proof multiannual budget for the European Union.

The Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) provides a unique opportunity for our Union to have a collective discussion on the trajectories of our priorities and investments for the next decade: the previous exercise of negotiation, in 2020, was marked by the Covid-19 pandemic: this common emergency made it evident that only a common European approach would have allowed European countries to have a viable way out of the pandemic. Since then, the crises have multiplied: from the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine to the energy crisis, from the acceleration of the climate-related disasters to the rise of artificial intelligence, from the structural change of posture of the US administration to the multiple conflicts in our neighbourhood and beyond, longstanding pillars of EU's political, economic and security model have been shaken to the ground. The magnitude of such challenges requires a collective approach to project our continent in the next decade.

That is why we invite you to use the next European Council to collectively discuss the direction of our Union and deliver a proposal for the MFF 2028-2034 that is up to the challenges we face. **We believe that the proposal of the European Parliament to use all the allocated budget in the Commission proposal (equivalent to 1.27% of EU GNI) to new investments (leaving the repayment of Next Generation EU to be discussed as a matter 'over and above ceilings', outside of the MFF itself) is the right way forward.** Europe cannot respond to today's multiple and interconnected crises with a constrained budget architecture that limits the Union's capacity to act decisively and uphold its values.

We need a strong budget that supports our social model, our regions and rural communities, and ensures the livelihood of farmers in providing sustainable food; we need a strong budget that promotes a new transformative industrial policy for Europe and which closes the investment gap to achieve the agreed environmental and climate objectives, that invests in research, in developing the skills and competences for the future, and its youth, and that acknowledges culture and civil society as core elements of its 'European model'; we need a strong and credible external action budget that enables the EU to remain a reliable partner for

poverty reduction, sustainable development, human rights and gender equality while upholding a rules-based international order and ensuring that development objectives are not sidelined by short-term geopolitical interests.

In parallel, the question of the sources to finance the budget is the necessary corollary to any credible proposal for a multiannual budget. The current discussion on the MFF among the Member States has been mostly based on 'how much my country pays vis à vis of what it receives'. We believe that a collective discussion on the next budget needs to go beyond that: not only because the budget has indirect benefits also for the 'net contributors', but also because the discussion on the sources of revenue should focus less on 'country contributions' (GNI-based) and more on common levies (new genuine own resources). In this regard, **we support the European Parliament position in calling for a comprehensive package of new and genuine 'own resources', including by exploring novel solutions not envisaged in the initial proposal by the Commission.**

Civil society is ready to support European leaders in the common reflection on the direction our Union should go: Europeans expect you to deliver on it.

Signatories:

European level:







International:



Austria:



Belgium:



Bulgaria:



Croatia:





Cyprus:





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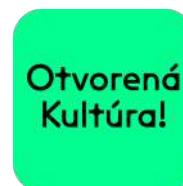
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