

FOUR KEY POINTS

For an EU budget 2028- 2034 for cities & towns

This two-pager sets out the key mission and vision behind the **Local Alliance 10-Point Action Plan**.

The policy asks laid out in the Action Plan are **not an end in and of itself, but serve the bigger purpose of enabling every city, town and region in Europe** to advance their sustainable, prosperous and fair future.

The Action Plan has one clear objective: ensure that the next EU budget, and every Euro spent in it, contributes to **building trust in Europe's democracy, foundation and strength**, by enabling the **delivery of concrete place-based solutions and results** for Europeans in the places they call home -their cities, towns and regions.

Why the next EU budget matters for towns, cities and regions

The EU is preparing its 2028-2034 budget. While decision-makers in Brussels are debating it, **the actors who implement more than 70 % of EU legislation – local and regional authorities – are sidelined in the negotiations**.

The Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) is the EU's seven-year plan that guarantees financial stability and directs money to priority areas such as cohesion, innovation and sustainability. It is drafted by the European Commission and then negotiated with the EU Parliament and the Council of the EU.

The 2028-2034 budget will be **crucial for meeting the EU's 2030 climate targets and the 2050 climate-neutrality goal**, which requires massive local investments.

What the Commission proposed

The Commission proposes merging several EU funds into 27 National Plans, **giving national governments broad discretion over priorities and funding distribution**—with no binding requirements to involve cities or regions.

This risks **fewer opportunities, weaker territorial balance, and reduced decision-making power for local and regional governments** at the moment they need it most.



WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO ENABLE CITIES, TOWNS AND REGIONS IN THE NEXT EU BUDGET

1 - TRUST: A Europe people can believe in

Europe's future is built locally, not imposed centrally.

- The EU Budget isn't just about distributing funds – it's a **contract of trust** between Europe and its citizens.
- People trust Europe when they see tangible improvements in their daily lives, and that happens through **local investment**.
- Transparency and accountability grow when **all levels of government share responsibility** for managing funds.

MAKE IT HAPPEN



Ensure **genuine multilevel governance mechanisms** are defended across the MFF to guarantee **transparency, ownership and trust**.

2 - UNITY: A Europe that stands strong, together

Europe is only as strong as each of its parts.

- Securing Europe's future in times of uncertainty and crisis means **building unity within**, not just defending borders from without.
- Europe's strength lies in **its diversity**. From its largest cities to its smallest villages, every place and person contributes to the unique cultural, social, and economic fabric of our continent.
- A stronger budget for a stronger Europe recognises that we are only **as resilient as our most vulnerable** groups, economic sectors and regions.

1. Reinforce the **Partnership Principle** across the EU budget.
2. Strengthen **support for accession cities and regions** to anchor European cohesion.



MAKE IT HAPPEN



3 - DEMOCRACY: A Europe that stands strong on democracy

In times of global democratic backslide, local democracy is Europe's first line of defense.

- Europe was built on a dream of peace and democracy — and must remain the democracy's safe harbors in the world.
- A Europe that stands strong with its local governments, defends freedom, trust, and participation where they begin: in every community.
- Local and regional governments are **closest to citizens** and the most trusted by citizens.
- A democratic Europe is one that **equips its cities, towns and regions** to deliver democracy daily with a budget of the people, for the people.

MAKE IT HAPPEN



1. Link **performance indicators** to EU law implementation and territorial delivery.
2. Create **safeguards ensuring direct access** of local and regional governments to EU funds.

4 - PURPOSE: A Europe that improves daily life everywhere in Europe

Europe's purpose and that of its budget is to improve lives in every street, school, and home across all Europe.

- Regions, cities and towns are **co-pilots of Europe's transformation** – driving the clean energy transition, providing affordable housing, promoting sustainable mobility and building resilience to climate change.
- Policies only work when designed with **those who deliver them**. Local and regional governments turn European ambitions into **tangible improvements** in people's lives.
- Undermining their capacity to lead a just transition that benefits everyone **risks breaking public trust** and fueling euroscepticism.

1. Make **regional and territorial chapters** mandatory, with a dedicated section for cities.
2. **Earmark investments** for just transition and affordable living.
3. Create a **real EU programme for cities of all sizes** under the proposed EU Facility.



MAKE IT HAPPEN



MEMBERS' MOBILISATION KIT

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MAIN MESSAGES

- The **double centralisation** (EU and national levels) of the proposed MFF is dangerous for our democracy. If cities are deprived of their connection to Europe, so will be their citizens. This centralisation has proven ineffective (RRF plans were not highly spent).
- Local governments are **orchestras of competitiveness in their territory**. What they develop as services and infrastructures shape their territory and the possibility for businesses and industries to set up in Europe. For the EU to be competitive, it needs to trust and reinforce its local and regional levels.
- The proposal for the EU budget is **sidelining local authorities**, while together with regional authorities, they implement and apply approximately 70% of EU legislation.

MAIN DEMANDS

1. REINFORCE THE TERRITORIAL APPROACH ACROSS THE MFF

1. By having **a mandatory regional, territorial or urban chapter** in each national and regional partnership plan, and a territorial approach in the sectoral chapters of these plans.
2. By having **a territorial approach in the clean transition and decarbonisation industry** window of the European Competitiveness Fund. “LIFE activities” and other activities of this window must fund LRAs' investments and capacities.
3. By having a **target in the budgets for the territorial tools**, such as the Integrated Territorial Investments.



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2. IMPROVE THE RULES OF LAW MECHANISMS

Improve the rules of law mechanism to ensure that local authorities are not “hostages” of their national governments, breaching the rule of law, and ensure local authorities still have access to specific EU funds.

3. A 4-BILLION PROGRAMME FOR CITIES IN THE EU FACILITY

Have **a real programme of €4 billion for cities in the EU facility** to implement the key objectives of the EU agenda for cities.

4. MAINTAIN JUST TRANSITION SUPPORT

Maintain just transition support for regions and local authorities that are in the middle of a shift towards a cleaner economy.

5. MAKE THE PARTNERSHIPS AND MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE SOLID

Strengthen the principles of partnerships and multi-level governance to ensure local authorities and regions remain at the centre of the EU budget.

READ ALL OUR DEMANDS IN THE LOCAL ALLIANCE'S 10-POINT ACTION PLAN

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MAPPING OF KEY PLAYERS

Below is a **list of stakeholders** that you could contact to pass on the messages on the next MFF and how this will affect cities. **The Local Alliance is ready to support you, please reach out!**

When should you contact them?

Negotiations will run until the end of 2026, with finalisation expected by March 2027 at the latest. Member States are moving very quickly to define their positions in the Council. The European Parliament is slightly behind schedule, as it will appoint its rapporteur only in December 2025. **This makes the first months of 2026 absolutely crucial for active engagement.**

AT NATIONAL LEVEL

- **Ministries working on the next EU budget:** These contacts are essential. They are typically found in the Ministry of Budget and Finance, the Ministry of European Affairs, the Ministry of Energy ... They shape your country's position in the Council negotiations. It is therefore **key to share our messages**—adapted to your national context—with them.
- **Managing Authorities for Cohesion Policy:** We should work together to shape the regional, territorial and urban chapters. **Get in touch and start building these synergies!**
- **National associations of cities and municipalities:** It is important to mobilise them. If you are a member, raise the issue internally and encourage them to **use their influence to shape your country's position.**



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AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

- **MEPs from your constituency in the ITRE, BUDG and REGI committees :**
 - ITRE - Industry, Energy & Transport committee;
 - BUDG - Budget committee;
 - REGI - Regional Development committee.

Reach out, request meetings (online or in person), and share our messages adapted to your national context—**highlighting how the MFF impacts your municipality in particular**.

- **Key influential MEPs.** These include rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs for the main EU files (e.g., ECF, NRPP, ERDF), and the Rapporteur for the MFF regulation, MEP Mureşan & MEP Tavares.

The Local Alliance will also meet them, but if they are from your constituency or you have existing contacts, **joint meetings can be very effective**.

- **Your country's Permanent Representation in Brussels:** The energy attaché works on the Competitiveness Fund, while the budget, cohesion and agriculture attachés follow the national and regional Partnership Plan. Most representations also have a dedicated person for the MFF negotiations. Here again, it is **essential to share our messages tailored to your country**.

Let us know if you take action.



If you mobilise, **please inform us**. It is essential for our advocacy work to understand what is happening in each country and how positions are evolving.



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OUR RESOURCES

MODEL OF LETTER FOR YOUR
MINISTRIES ON THE NRPP

MODEL OF LETTER FOR YOUR ITRE
MEPS ON THE ECF

LIST OF KEY INFLUENTIAL MEP

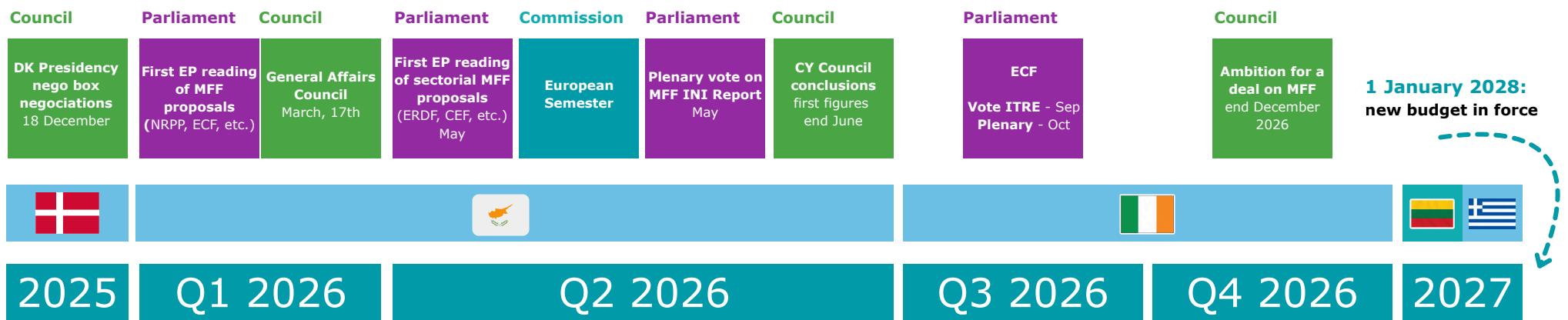
LIST OF ENC AND LOCAL ALLIANCE
AMENDMENTS TO THE NRPPS AND TO
THE ECF.



The Local Alliance — a coalition of local and regional governments made of ACR+, CEMR, Climate Alliance, Energy Cities, Eurocities, FEDARENE, ICLEI Europe and POLIS, — is an informal coalition aiming at ensuring that our constituencies have the competencies and resources to implement the European Green Deal and reinforce Europe's resiliency.

Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)

The Local Alliance Advocacy timeline



Note: dates are indicative and they could change as the negotiations go on