

Annex: Statements from Signatories

Hugh Coughlan, Acting President, ACR+

"Navigating the next budget period, the MFF 2028–2034 must at once bolster competitiveness, invest in sustainability, and restore stability to our economies, societies and ecosystems. At this critical junction, Europe needs cities and regions now more than ever. Successfully delivering for EU citizens requires the work of local and regional authorities — those on the ground who know their challenges best. Cities and regions are the theatre of the European project, indispensable to the twin green and digital transitions, and at the very centre of the circular economy. ACR+ endorses this letter to Heads of State and Government because these common goals require our cumulative strength and multilevel governance."

Arjen Gerritsen, King's Commissioner of Flevoland and CEMR Spokesperson on the EU Budget

"The next EU budget must deliver competitiveness, cohesion and trust in every territory. That means a budget with clear and predictable funding for cohesion, genuine multilevel governance, and a real role for local and regional governments in shaping and implementing the instruments that will carry Europe's priorities to the ground."

Andreas Wolter, Councillor and Former Mayor, City of Cologne, Germany

"Europe's ambitions on climate, sustainability and resilience cannot be achieved by Member States alone. Regions, cities and towns are key partners in delivering EU priorities on the ground. The European Council now has an opportunity to ensure the next EU budget reflects this reality through genuine partnership and adequate, predictable funding."

Mohamed Ridouani, President, Energy Cities, and Mayor of Leuven

"Local authorities turn Europe's competitiveness and cohesion goals into tangible results for businesses and citizens on the ground. Cities and towns are already building a more resilient energy future — through renovation, decarbonisation and local energy infrastructure projects, one building and one neighbourhood at a time. The next European budget should recognise this role by making us full partners in the design and delivery of EU programmes, and by investing directly in the place-based projects that strengthen our communities and economies."

Mathias De Clercq, President, Eurocities, and Mayor of Ghent

"Europe is at a decisive moment in the MFF negotiations. This is not only about the EU budget — it is about how Europe governs, invests and delivers. We support simplification through the National and Regional Partnership Plans, but it must not lead to centralisation or disconnect decision-making from local delivery. Cities and regions are where EU priorities become reality, from climate and innovation to housing, mobility and social inclusion. The European Parliament's position is moving in this direction, and national governments should take these messages into account."

Over the past year, together with 20 other Belgian city mayors, we have consistently called on the Belgian governments to ensure stronger recognition of cities and local governments in the next EU budget. We now urge the Belgian government, and all Member States in the European Council, to set a clear direction for a budget that delivers competitiveness, cohesion and trust across all territories."

Julije Domac, President, FEDARENE, and CEO, North-West Croatia Energy and Climate Agency (REGEA)

"It is essential that the Council, alongside the other co-legislators, strive for an MFF that truly enables implementors. Proven delivery mechanisms such as Coordination and Support Actions must be reinforced — they are indispensable to turning Europe's ambitions into tangible results on the ground."

Martin W. W. Horn, President, ICLEI Europe, and Mayor of Freiburg

"The credibility of the next EU budget will be measured not only by what it promises, but by whether it will work in practice. To build a more resilient, competitive and climate-neutral Europe, cities and regions need predictable investment, genuine partnership and a stronger role in shaping the programmes they are expected to implement. The European Council should ensure the next MFF empowers local and regional governments as full partners in Europe's future."

Dejan Crnek, President, POLIS, and Deputy Mayor of Ljubljana

"From sustainable mobility to climate adaptation, cities are where Europe delivers results for citizens. In Ljubljana, EU funding has helped us create safer streets, greener neighbourhoods and better public transport. These investments show what is possible when European priorities are matched with local action. The next EU budget must continue to empower cities as key partners in building a competitive, resilient and sustainable Europe."