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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto
on behalf of the European Commission
(17.1.2025)

In the Political Guidelines for 2024-2029, the Commission's President proposed a more focused, impactful and simpler budget, and a strengthened cohesion and growth policy with regions at the centre. This policy will be designed in partnership with national, regional and local authorities in order to ensure all citizens have an effective right to stay in the place they call home. The Commission is analysing the situation of the eastern border regions within this context.

The eastern border regions in all concerned Member States benefit from substantial cohesion policy funding in the period 2021-2027. Therefore, Member States have room to direct these funds to the areas most affected by Russia's aggression, addressing new challenges and supporting the reorientation of their economy. For example, the programme 'European Funds for Eastern Poland 2021-2027'¹ assists all Polish regions neighbouring Russia, Belarus and Ukraine in addition to the dedicated Polish programmes for each region. In Finland, the Commission in cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and local and national authorities is preparing transition strategies for national Eastern and Northern Finland programmes. In the Baltic States, the Commission in cooperation with the World Bank, local and national authorities works to support the reorientation of local businesses and to ensure that the workforce has the necessary skills.

Finally, EUR 150 million from the European Regional Development Fund, initially allocated for Interreg programmes with Russia and Belarus, have been reallocated to internal Cross-Border Cooperation programmes to expand cooperation between the EU regions bordering Russia and Belarus and other EU regions.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/in-your-country/programmes/2021-2027/pl/2021pl16rfpr003