

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001735/25
to the Commission
Mika Aaltola (PPE)
(30 April 2025)**

Subject: Multiannual financial framework support for EU regions bordering Russia

Russia's war against Ukraine has had far-reaching consequences, not only for Ukraine but also for many EU Member States, particularly those sharing a border with Russia. The economic and geopolitical impact on these border regions has been substantial.

Currently, the allocation of EU Cohesion Fund financing is primarily based on gross domestic product, a metric that does not adequately reflect the specific challenges faced by countries such as Finland. Given Finland's 1 350 km border with Russia, the repercussions of the conflict have been especially acute, in terms of economic, social and security concerns.

1. In the light of these challenges, could the Commission consider an alternative mechanism for allocating funds to support regions bordering Russia in the upcoming multiannual financial framework?
2. Additionally, given the security risks posed by Russia in the region, how does the Commission plan to ensure adequate investments in security measures?

Submitted: 30.4.2025

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto on behalf of the European Commission
(31 July 2025)**

1. As underlined in the recent Commission Communication on 'The road to the next multiannual financial framework' ⁽¹⁾ (MFF), a strengthened, modernised cohesion and growth policy is needed to address the diverse challenges of Member States and regions. The eastern border regions face the dual challenge of strengthening security while revitalising their economies. The Commission is engaging with the EU institutions, including the European Parliament, Member States and stakeholders in preparing the proposal for the next MFF, which it presented on 16 July 2025.

2. EUR 150 million, initially allocated for Interreg programmes with Russia and Belarus, has been reallocated to internal Cross-Border Cooperation programmes for the benefit of regions in Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.

For programmes covering regions that have borders with Russia, Belarus or Ukraine, the Commission's proposal for the mid-term review of cohesion policy ⁽²⁾, which is now under discussion by the co-legislators, proposes a one-off additional 9.5% pre-financing when at least 15% of their allocation is redirected to investments in defence, competitiveness, housing, water resilience and energy transition. This would come on top of the increased pre-financing and co-financing rates applied to the amounts programmed under the above-mentioned priorities.

Furthermore, in March 2025 the Commission presented the ReArm Europe Plan ⁽³⁾ which will boost defence funding by giving Member States more financial flexibility.

⁽¹⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/6d47acb4-9206-4d0f-8f9b-3b10cad7b1ed_en?filename=Communication%20on%20the%20road%20to%20the%20next%20MFF_en.pdf.

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025PC0123>.

⁽³⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/topics/defence/future-european-defence_en.