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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto
on behalf of the European Commission
(28.1.2026)

While the Commission proposal[1] does not prescibe which partners in Members States should be involved in preparing and implementing the national and regional partnership plans - thus respecting the institutional, legal and administrative arrangements of each Member State, Article 21(2) of the proposal sets out that each Member State shall prepare and implement the plan in partnership with partners, including regional and local authorities. Article 6 of the proposal also requires to organise and implement a comprehensive partnership taking into account the specificities of the chapters concerned and that partnership must include a balanced representation of relevant partners.

The next EU budget will continue to provide strong support to northern sparsely populated regions, taking into account their specific needs and challenges such as natural or demographic handicaps, especially regarding connectivity and accessibility. Member States are obliged to indicate in the plans the total estimated costs of such support, including the EU contribution[2]. Further, Annex VII of the proposal sets out that Member States shall allocate resources to tackling economic, social and territorial disparities taking into account specific needs and challenges of Northern Sparsely Populated Areas. The corresponding allocation can be programmed by the Member State within the flexibility embedded in the proposal. Furthermore, the Commission[3] suggested to consider specific safeguards to ensure continuity in transition and more developed regions.

[1] COM(2025)0565 - Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Fund for economic, social and territorial cohesion, agriculture and rural, fisheries and maritime, prosperity and security for the period 2028-2034 and amending Regulation (EU) 2023/955 and Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025PC0565.
[2] Article 22(2)(f)(iii) and Annex VII of the Commission proposal.
[3] In relation to the meeting under Article 324 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which took place on 10 November with President von der Leyen for the European Commission, President Metsola for the European Parliament and Danish Prime Minister Frederiksen, for the presidency of the Council of the EU.