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Subject:	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 - Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee

Delegations will find attached a copy of the above-mentioned opinion.

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OPINION

European Economic and Social Committee

EU Fund for cohesion, agriculture and rural, fisheries and maritime, prosperity and security

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 (COM(2025) 565 final - 2025/0240 (COD))

ECO/683

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Legislative procedure Referral	EU Law Tracker European Commission, 17/7/2025; Council, 16/9/2025, European Parliament, 6/11/2025
Legal basis	Articles: 42, 43(3), 46(d), 91(1)(d), 149, 153(2)(a), 164, 175, 177, 178, 192(1), 194(2), 209(1), 212(2), 294, 322(1)(a), 349 and 304 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
European Commission documents	COM(2025) 565 final - 2025/0240 (COD)
Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Goal 8 - Decent work and economic growth Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
Section responsible	Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion
Adopted in section	7/1/2026
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Plenary session No	602
Outcome of vote (for/against/abstentions)	197/1/7

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

Governance and partnership

- 1.1 welcomes the Commission's desire to simplify and to ensure more flexibility, but believes that the simplification provided for requires concrete guarantees in order for it to be effective. In order to safeguard the distinct identity and core mission of the EU's key policies, their identity, visibility, predictability and long-term objectives must be preserved, ensuring that flexibility does not come at the expense of the regions, communities, sectors and the most vulnerable groups that rely on them most;
- 1.2 is concerned that grouping a diverse set of investment needs such as agriculture, fisheries, cohesion and security under one umbrella could create competition between priorities and weaken long-term guarantees; strongly opposes this approach since it risks diluting resources, impairing efforts to achieve the climate and digital transitions, weakening accountability and leaving farmers, fishers and vulnerable regions and groups without the stable support they urgently need as well as reducing ownership over and possibly trust in the EU; suggests limiting the grouping of funds. Only those funds with closely related objectives should be grouped;
- 1.3 also expressly warns that the architecture of the multifunds might fuel distributional conflicts. Both at the beginning and during the course of the future funding period, there is a risk of structural competition between the social dimension, regional and rural development, and security and migration policy objectives. Funds originally earmarked for cohesion, participation and equal living conditions might increasingly be reallocated in favour of short-term security priorities;
- 1.4 opposes the shift in responsibility from the regional to the national level, as this undermines the subsidiarity principle, territoriality, multi-level governance and trust in the EU and could affect the implementation of Article 3 TEU (Union objectives on territorial cohesion and solidarity). Regions should not lose their direct link to the Commission, and the 'shared management' principle needs to be more inclusive and adapted to this new reality;
- 1.5 stresses that the effective functioning of the national and regional partnership plans (NRPPs) will require the strong and effective involvement of local and regional partners, the social partners and civil society organisations, as well as of representatives of sectors and industries, both in the programming phase and when it comes to implementation, management, monitoring, evaluation and control; stresses that the partnership must be reflected in each chapter of the NRPP and emphasises the need for a balanced representation of relevant partners in the monitoring committees; propose that the NRPPs should include an integrated regional chapter or a chapter for each region, with a dedicated monitoring committee;
- 1.6 calls on the European Commission to carry out, without delay, the revision of the European Code of Conduct on Partnership, taking into account the different and complementary role of the partners and institutional representatives, since there is risk of weakening the partnership

principles; considers it necessary to have a minimum European standard for consultation and to make the lives of beneficiaries easier;

- 1.7 suggests introducing a penalty system for cases of a lack of effective, meaningful and cross-cutting involvement of the social partners and civil society organisations;

Social and territorial dimension

- 1.8 considers that cohesion policy should be further consolidated, since it is weakened by the proposal; calls for guarantees to protect regions and cities, especially where Member States may exclude them from the fund. Cohesion funding must remain available to all territories, in accordance with Article 175 TFEU on cohesion and for regions defined in Articles 174 and 349 TFEU, regardless of national-level failures to uphold EU principles;
- 1.9 stresses that more imperative rules are needed to guarantee the involvement of local actors and cities and that subnational interests must not be penalised in the event of rule-of-law breaches at national level;
- 1.10 calls for specific thematic concentrations on food security, inequality, ageing with dignity and civic engagement, with support for vulnerable groups, volunteers and social economy actors. The Committee sees a need for additional funding to be specifically directed to the EU's eastern border countries and regions bordering Russia and Belarus, in order to strengthen their economic, social, and security resilience. This should include measures to retain and attract the population, as well as support for dual-use infrastructure serving both civilian and security purposes;
- 1.11 warns that social objectives must be clearly defined, and stresses that the social spending target of 14% should exclusively target ESF objectives such as qualifications and training as well as support for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups; therefore proposes a revision of the performance regulation: social spending must be defined in a more specific and narrow sense, in line with the priorities of ESF+ Regulation;
- 1.12 recommends that the NRPPs should promote high-quality jobs, fair pay, safe conditions and poverty reduction, integrating cohesion and competitiveness in a balanced and sustainable manner; therefore suggests that EU funding under the Multifund Regulation be conditional on social criteria to be developed together with the national social partners;
- 1.13 proposes increasing the allocation from 14% to 20% of the financial envelope dedicated to meeting the EU's social objectives and introducing social conditionalities as a cross-cutting objective of the multifund, building on existing practice in the CAP, in order to ensure that EU funds reduce, rather than exacerbate, poverty and inequality, in accordance with the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan;
- 1.14 proposes introducing territorial conditionalities and insists that territorial balance be respected when selecting operations and allocating resources, taking into account Article 174 TFEU on reducing disparities, the Territorial Agenda 2030 and the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities, Ljubljana agreement and EU's long-term Vision for Rural Areas towards 2040;

- 1.15 strongly criticises the absence of a dedicated Just Transition Fund and warns against merging the just transition with the clean transition. The concept of ‘just transition’ needs to be consolidated, not blended with the clean transition, since the twin transition is more than a technological challenge;
- 1.16 recommends that the just transition be consolidated, with dedicated financial coverage of up to 6% of the financial envelope, to ensure the transition process is fair and that no region is left behind;
- 1.17 recommends that investments that are significantly harmful to the environment be banned, in line with the objectives of the Green Deal;

Monitoring and transparency

- 1.18 calls for monitoring committees to be strengthened through adequate technical assistance, as well as for increased and consolidated transparency, meaningful involvement and mechanisms that enable and facilitate the a properly functioning civil society and better and balanced participation of the social partners and civil society organisations. The social partners and civil society organisations should have at least 50% of the votes in each monitoring committee established;
- 1.19 recommends establishing a monitoring committee at national level and for regionalised Member States also on regional level for each management authority, and that monitoring committees meet at least twice a year and be involved in decisions on transfers between chapters and the development of the implementation process;
- 1.20 stresses that committees should also be informed of financial correction procedures initiated by the Commission and of the phased implementation;

Financial architecture

- 1.21 notes the proposal to use up to EUR 150 billion in loans and calls for safeguards to ensure that loans complement, rather than replace, grants and do not increase inequalities between Member States;
- 1.22 believes that phased implementation should be limited to a maximum of 5% of national allocations to avoid regional disparities and fragmentation of investments;
- 1.23 supports the strengthening of integrated territorial investment (ITI) and community-led local development (CLLD/LEADER) instruments, calls for explicit inclusion of urban areas in CLLD and supports the ring-fenced financial allocation for CLLD/LEADER;
- 1.24 believes that investments in security should contribute to the consolidation of convergence and complementarity, as well as protecting cohesion, and that these elements should not be in competition;

Allocation and the European semester

- 1.25 calls on the European Commission to protect complementarities with other EU policies, build a social and economic multiplier effect and ensure proper use of funds, since the cohesion dimension is not in competition with, but rather is complementary to, the EU's strategic priorities;
- 1.26 requests that the Commission explain clearly the method of making allocations to the Member States, especially changes in volume between programming periods, and that it promote the critical priorities in order not to create competition between various priorities at the Member State level, since instruments such as the current ERDF or Common Fisheries Policy need to be better illustrated in the proposal. Calls on the Commission to establish a mechanism for allocation of NRPP budget among the Member States that ensures fairness and reduces disparities in agricultural payment levels, by providing additional CAP support to those with greatest needs – such as lower direct payments, higher poverty risks, or lower GNI per capita;
- 1.27 opposes any form of macroeconomic conditionality in relation to the European semester. The disbursement of EU funds should not be linked to unrelated structural reform proposals. The role of the European semester in the guidance of the investments should be clarified; considers that the link to the SDGs, especially SDG 8, 10,11,13, 14, 15 and 16, should be further consolidated and in addition to national social indicators, the European social convergence framework should be applied.

2. EXPLANATORY NOTES

- 2.1 As part of the proposal for the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034 (MFF), the European Commission proposes creating a comprehensive and integrated fund (European Fund for Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion, Agriculture and Rural, Fisheries and Maritime, Prosperity and Security) to replace the 14 existing funds that currently cover the relevant areas.
- 2.2 The fund covers traditional cohesion policy and Common Agricultural Policy and Common Fisheries policy areas, with the addition of asylum, migration and visa policy, border protection and home affairs. The fund is a comprehensive set of guaranteed national envelopes earmarked for individual EU Member States. In this regard, the MFF proposal assumes that approximately 44% of its total allocation will be redistributed in the form of guaranteed national envelopes (currently approximately 63%).
- 2.3 With a financial envelope of EUR 865.1 billion, the fund is the largest component of the MFF and enables the financing of the NRPPs (EUR 782.9 billion), which complement another new MFF instrument, the EU Facility (EUR 71.9 billion) and the traditional Interreg programme (EUR 10.3 billion). The budget allocation is not enough to tackle the multitude and increased diversity of risks at the regional level. The EESC considers that the budget should be increased by at least 5% and that the budget for the CAP should be increased to a level of 0.5% of EU GDP by introducing a dedicated rural envelope and a ring fenced financial architecture for the Treaty-based policies and needs further improvements.

2.4 The EESC suggests that explicit provisions are needed concerning the implementation of the partnership principle and the involvement of the social partners and civil society organisations in the design, implementation, monitoring, management, evaluation and control of the NRPPs. The constant and cross-cutting involvement of the economic and social partners is a key factor for success, since the increased flexibility and centralisation delivered in the proposal could weaken trust in the EU, the place-based approach and multi-level governance and could negatively affect the balanced approach between strategic objectives. Cohesion policy's place-based approach and the CAP's stability mechanisms prevent fragmentation and, without them, risks include centralisation, reduced legitimacy and loss of trust. In the EESC's view, the Multifund Regulation does not establish proper, mandatory mechanisms for effective stakeholder involvement. A complaint mechanism for stakeholders should be established. In the event that governments fail to involve stakeholders effectively, adequate conditionalities and safeguards must be implemented to improve participation. In the EESC's view, the 'regional check' proposed by the European Commission is not sufficient to ensure effective stakeholder involvement because it only focuses on the involvement of governmental authorities at different governance levels (regional, local etc.), ignoring the social partners and civil society organisation, and merely proposes to report on the involvement, without proposing any consequences in cases in which involvement is considered to be ineffective. This is why, the EESC is proposing to have a social partners and civil society organisation check alongside a regional check.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.2

2.5 The EESC considers that the NRPPs should include an integrated regional chapter or a chapter for each region and that the proposals need further guarantees in this regard. The problem of responsibility needs to be approached in a consistent way, especially the impact on cities or subnational interests where there is a failure in the 'rule of law' principle, for example at the national level, in a context in which no eligible region can negotiate with the European Commission.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.2

2.6 Transparency is recognised as a problem in centralised systems and the progress requires investments and reforms that involve national and regional governance structures. Increasing the number of meetings per year will consolidate the 'partnership' and 'multi-level governance' principles and will contribute to proper communication on the progress in implementation.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.3

2.7 The EESC considers that the NRPPs should include territorial impact assessments for major investments and reforms, showing effects on regional disparities and territorial cohesion, along with a section demonstrating how investments will balance rural and urban development, including peri-urban areas, this being important in preventing an over-concentration of funds in metropolitan areas and ensuring rural areas (including depopulating and ageing regions) remain supported based on specific rural proofing. NRPPs should also ensure that investments are made in functional territories (islands, mountainous regions, sparsely populated areas and outermost regions), as defined in Articles 174 and 349 TFEU, and according to Cohesion Policy practice.

Arguments in support of recommendations 1.4 and 1.5

2.8 The NRPPs must demonstrate the effective involvement of the social partners, civil society organisations and local and regional authorities in governance and monitoring committees, with a binding role in decisions affecting their territory, this being in line with the promotion of ownership and multi-level governance. The EESC stresses that this partnership should be reflected in each chapter of the NRPP and emphasises the need for a balanced representation of relevant partners.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.5

2.9 The relation with the most important societal challenges in a context of increased flexibility needs be tackled through an architecture of thematic concentrations such as food security, inequality, ageing with dignity and civic engagement in order to protect the directions of the funds. The EESC proposes ensuring explicit and dedicated financial resources for the thematic concentrations mentioned, this being necessary in order to consolidate the link with the SDGs, especially SDGs 8, 10, 11, 13 and 16 on strengthening social and territorial justice.

Arguments in support of recommendations 1.6 and 1.7

2.10 Ownership over the plan should also include national and subnational partners in the control phase, since the fund should go beyond the formality of the partnership principle and the involvement of the partners should be inclusive and integrative. In addition, legitimacy and granularity are essential in order to manage needs in line with a place-based approach.

Arguments in support of recommendations 1.8, 1.9 and 1.10

2.11 The EESC suggests that concrete guarantees need to be delivered to the regions, the social partners and civil society organisations in order to ensure the proper implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, guarantee sufficient investment in the well-being of the workers and EU citizens, consolidate the social dimension of competitiveness and finance the social aspects of the twin transition.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.13

2.12 The EESC suggests that the disbursement of money from the multifund should be conditional on social criteria, as provided for under EU and national law, while taking into account the specificities of the Member States. In order to be applied, these social criteria must be developed and agreed by the national social partners and might include site retention and employment guarantees, qualification and training measures or respect for collective agreements. Different examples already exist in some Member States. Such social criteria should respect the varieties of social dialogue in the Member States and not lead to undue discrimination against certain types of companies or Member States. What is more, these social criteria should not put unnecessary bureaucratic burdens on companies. National examples have shown that linking public funding

to social criteria can support the necessary transformation of the economy, helping gear it towards creating and maintaining high-quality jobs, thus increasing acceptance of the green transition.

Arguments in support of recommendations 1.4 and 1.14

2.13 The EESC regrets that the proposal no longer includes the just transition process in an appropriate form and that the proposal completely fails to earmark explicit financial resources for this purpose, despite the just transition being cited as an objective of the fund. The EESC considers that the concept of ‘just transition’ needs to be consolidated, not blended with the clean transition, since the twin transition is more than a technological challenge. An allocation of 6% for regions in transition, i.e. those regions particularly affected by the green transition, is proposed. In the EESC’s view, the proposed new safeguard is too weak and will not effectively prevent cuts for regions in transitions compared to the current funding period. Ring-fencing a certain amount of money is the best way to adequately address the funding needs of regions in transition.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.14

2.14 The EESC considers that the territoriality of the NRPPs should be an obligation and not an option for the Member States, as in the case of the Competitiveness Fund, which needs to be territorially balanced, since there must be a compromise between aggregate productivity and territorial cohesion. Enough power should be given to the Commission to maintain the synergy between the dynamic of the implementation and critical EU objectives and development needs.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.13

2.15 Social conditionalities are already integrated into the CAP; to ensure a more consistent and balanced implementation process, social conditionalities should be recognised as a cross-cutting conditionality. Social investment, particularly in education, skills, childcare and healthcare, strengthens the labour force and supports the green and digital transitions. A 20% allocation therefore not only constitutes social spending, but is an investment in productivity and growth.

Arguments in support of recommendations 1.15, 1.16 and 1.17

2.16 Consolidation and the proper involvement of the monitoring committees are crucial for effective implementation, since there is a risk of the conflict between various interests being transferred from the EU level to the national level. It is important to have transparent procedures for the involvement of members, including from the civil sector. Further guarantees could be delivered through monitoring committees by involving them in, among other things, transferring of a significant amount of the funds between and also within the chapters, consolidating a balanced territorial approach, including through consolidation of the principle of the place-based approach, and providing proper information on the interests represented in the committees.

Arguments in support of recommendations 1.18, 1.19 and 1.20

2.17 Investing in improving the capacities of the social partners and civil society organisations and ensuring access to technical assistance are crucial in order to guarantee the effective application

of the partnership principle in a context of increased flexibility at the national level and the need to deal with highly complex development needs and asymmetric risks. Grouping needs into a small number of funds and moving the negotiations to the Member State level could generate losses for some interests and potentially lead to conflicts between interests. It would also require high levels of administrative capacity at the subnational level to manage the implementation process consistently and efficiently.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.20

- 2.18 The phased implementation should be an exception of the implementation, since it has a clear and tangible impact on the strategic objectives and the results of the fund, affects the ‘competition’ principle, and could create regional disparities and lead to unequal treatment of regions, as well as fragmenting efforts to tackle uncertainty and political risks.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.21

- 2.19 One of the reasons for creating a comprehensive and integrated fund was to support an integrated approach to the use of EU budgetary resources. The EESC considers that the traditional approaches on which the integrated approach is based (ITIs, CLLD, LEADER) are only very loosely and marginally emphasised in the proposal. In order to boost rural-urban complementarity, urban areas should be included in the CLLDs; this is already the case in some Member States and can deliver more efficiency. Unlike the CAP or cohesion funds, the rural vision lacks a standalone ring-fenced budget line and there is no clear framework to track how NRPPs contribute to the 2040 rural vision goals, making it hard to measure progress or enforce commitments. The ‘smart village’ concept should be also reinforced.

Arguments in support of recommendations 1.22 and 1.25

- 2.20 The EESC also welcomes the proposal to make use of a loan, amounting to the relatively significant sum of EUR 150 billion, for the implementation of the NRPP, and considers that more clarity is needed concerning the conditions for repayment, avoiding debt bias between Member States, especially for countries with high levels of public debt. If well designed, loan instruments can significantly increase the fiscal space for Member States to implement growth-enhancing investments. The EESC asks the European Commission and the co-legislators to provide more information and clarification on these loan instruments and to design them in a way that makes them fiscally attractive for Member States.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.23

- 2.21 The EESC supports complementarity between the European semester, the national energy and climate plans and the fiscal-structural plans, provided that cohesion and territorial balance remain the guiding principles. Noting that there is a risk of overlapping, especially from the dual-use perspective, the Committee stresses that any overlap with SAFE needs to be avoided.
- 2.22 The EESC opposes any form of macroeconomic conditionality in the NRPPs. The requirement that NRPPs effectively address the challenges identified in the context of the European semester,

as designed, is therefore inadequate and needs to be clarified. The disbursement of EU funds must not be linked to unrelated structural reform proposals. The obligation to reform should be related to the policy objective of the fund and should be conducive to the effective management of the fund.

Arguments in support of recommendations 1.26 and 1.27

2.23 Taking into account the asymmetrical impact of different risks, the evolution of the implementation process and the increased role of the Member States, there is a strong need for clarity concerning the allocation method, this being different from the traditional method used in distributing EU budgetary resources.

3. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Amendment 1

Linked to recommendation 1.5

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Article 6</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Partnership and multi-level governance</p> <p>1. [...] That partnership shall include a balanced representation of the following partners:</p> <p>(a) regional, local, urban, rural and other public authorities or associations representing such authorities;</p> <p>(b) economic and social partners, including farmers, fishers and their organisations;</p> <p>[...]2. The partnership established in accordance with paragraph 1 shall operate in accordance with the multi-level governance principle and a bottom-up approach. The Member State shall involve partners referred to in each subparagraph of paragraph 1 in the preparation of the Plan and throughout the preparation, implementation and evaluation of chapters, including through participation in monitoring committees in accordance with Article 55.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Article 6</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Partnership and multi-level governance</p> <p>1. [...] That partnership shall include a balanced representation of the following partners:</p> <p>(a) regional, local, urban and rural authorities or associations representing such entities;</p> <p>(b) the social partners and civil society organisations, including farmers, fishers and their organisations;</p> <p>[...]2. The partnership established in accordance with paragraph 1 shall operate in accordance with the multi-level governance principle and a bottom-up approach. The Member State shall involve partners referred to in each subparagraph of paragraph 1 in the preparation of the Plan and throughout the preparation, implementation, monitoring, control and evaluation of chapters, including through participation in monitoring committees in accordance with Article 55.</p>

Reason
<p>The proposal relates to, and should be integrated into, Article 6, Article 8 and Article 21, by involving the social partners and civil society organisations in designing the plans; and Article 56 and Article 75, by creating a partnership with the economic and social partners for the implementation of the ITIs.</p>

Amendment 2

Linked to recommendation 1.19

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Article 6</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Partnership and multi-level governance</p> <p>6. At least <i>once</i> a year, the Commission shall consult organisations which represent partners at Union level on the implementation of the Plans.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Article 6</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Partnership and multi-level governance</p> <p>6. At least <i>twice</i> a year, the Commission shall consult organisations which represent partners at Union level on the implementation of the Plans. <i>This consultation shall also serve to assess the scope and quality of partner involvement. Where participation is found to be insufficient, the Commission, in cooperation with stakeholders, shall propose measures to ensure full and effective compliance with the partnership principle.</i></p>

Reason
<p>Ensuring an adapted and efficient implementation framework in the context of high flexibility at the Member State level requires holding at least two mandatory meetings per year in order to ensure proper communication and transparency. The number of meetings should be increased to ensure the proper involvement of the partners as well as proper monitoring activities with respect to implementation. The proposal relates to Article 54.</p>

Amendment 3

Linked to recommendation 1.16

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Article 10</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Budget</p> <p>2. The financial envelope shall be allocated as follows:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Article 10</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Budget</p> <p>2. The financial envelope shall be allocated as follows: <i>(e) up to 6 % of the financial envelope shall be allocated to the just transition as referred to in Article 3.</i></p>

Reason
<p>There is no dedicated budget for the just transition in the Regulation. Since this transition is a multi-decade process involving retraining, the repurposing of infrastructure and economic diversification, the amendment tabled introduced an obligation for a dedicated budget amounting to 6% of the financial envelope.</p>

Amendment 4

Linked to recommendation 1.13

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
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<i>Article 10</i> Budget	<i>Article 10</i> Budget
5. At least 14 % of the financial envelope referred to in paragraph 2 and of the amount referred to in paragraph 4 shall be dedicated to meeting the Union’s social objectives, calculated by using the coefficients referred to in Article 6(1) of Regulation (EU) [Performance Regulation].	5. At least 20 % of the financial envelope referred to in paragraph 2 and of the amount referred to in paragraph 4 shall be dedicated to meeting the Union’s social objectives, calculated by using the coefficients referred to in Article 6(1) of Regulation (EU) [Performance Regulation].

Reason
The actual social situation in the EU and the need for a balanced approach necessitates an increase in the allocation for the social objectives to 20%. This is also necessary in order to contribute to reducing inequalities and regional disparities.

Amendment 5

Linked to recommendation 1.18

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
<i>Article 13</i> Technical assistance at the initiative of the Member State	<i>Article 13</i> Technical assistance at the initiative of the Member State 6. The social partners and civil society organisations represented in the monitoring committee will have access to technical assistance.

Reason
This proposal is in line with the need to ensure the proper functioning of the monitoring committees, taking into account the structure of votes, the complexity of the monitoring committees’ activities and the quality of the action needed at the committee level.

Amendment 6

Linked to recommendation 1.13

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
<i>Article 22</i> Requirements for the NRP Plan 2. The NRP Plan shall: (p) Specify the way in which the Plan and its envisaged implementation ensure the respect of the Rule of Law horizontal condition referred to in Article 9 [RoL horizontal condition], including the follow-up given to the country-specific recommendations issued in the framework of the latest Rule of Law Report and European	<i>Article 22</i> Requirements for the NRP Plan 2. The NRP Plan shall: (p) Specify the way in which the Plan and its envisaged implementation ensure the respect of social conditionalities , the Rule of Law horizontal condition referred to in Article 9 [RoL horizontal condition], including the follow-up given to the country-specific recommendations issued in the framework of the latest Rule of Law

Semester, together with measures to address those identified country-specific challenges.	Report, targets of the European Pillars of Social Rights and the European Semester, the European social convergence framework together with measures to address those identified country-specific challenges.
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Reason
The fund should guarantee social cohesion, avoiding reforms or investments that worsen inequality, labour rights or social protection. Social conditionalities are already included in the CAP and the same approach should be integrated into the fund as a horizontal principle.

Amendment 7

Linked to recommendation 1.18

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
<i>Article 55</i> Composition of the monitoring committee 1. [...] Each member of the monitoring committee shall have a vote.	<i>Article 55</i> Composition of the monitoring committee 1. [...] Each member of the monitoring committee shall have a vote and the social partners and civil society organisations presented in Article 6 shall together have at least 50% of the votes.

Reason
A balanced and participatory approach <i>vis-à-vis</i> civil society requires, among other things, having the same percentage of votes in the monitoring committees.

Amendment 8

Linked to recommendation 1.20

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
<i>Article 56</i> Functions of the monitoring committee 2. The monitoring committee shall approve for the chapter(s) under its responsibility: (a) any proposal for the amendment of the chapter or chapters of the NRP Plan under its responsibility, except for amendments pursuant to Article 34 [Union actions, EU Facility].	<i>Article 56</i> Functions of the monitoring committee 2. The monitoring committee shall approve for the chapter(s) under its responsibility: (a) any proposal for the amendment of the chapter or chapters of the NRP Plan under its responsibility, including the transfer of funds from one chapter to another , except for amendments pursuant to Article 34 [Union actions, EU Facility].

Reason
The monitoring committee should be involved in changes pertaining to the chapters, including decisions on transfers of funds, given the increased flexibility at the Member State level and the significant increase in the diversity of needs.

Amendment 9

Linked to recommendation 1.14

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
<i>Article 56</i>	<i>Article 56</i>
<i>Functions of the monitoring committee</i>	<i>Functions of the monitoring committee</i>
2 (b) the methodology, criteria and procedures for the selection of operations, including any changes thereto. The criteria applied and procedures used shall be non-discriminatory, inclusive <i>and</i> transparent, ensuring accessibility to persons with disabilities, ensuring gender equality, and take account of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;	2 (b) the methodology, criteria and procedures for the selection of operations, including any changes thereto. The criteria applied and procedures used shall be non-discriminatory, inclusive, transparent <i>and territorially balanced</i> , ensuring accessibility to persons with disabilities, ensuring gender equality, and take account of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;

Reason
The principle of territoriality needs to be approached in a cross-cutting way to ensure the balanced distribution of operations, given the increased flexibility at the Member State level. The territoriality principle is important in ensuring balanced access to opportunities under the NRPPs.

Amendment 10

Linked to recommendation 1.20

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
<i>Article 68</i>	<i>Article 68</i>
<i>Financial corrections by the Commission</i>	<i>Financial corrections by the Commission</i>
3. Before taking a decision on a financial correction, the Commission shall inform the Member State of its conclusions and give the Member State the opportunity to present, within two months, its observations on the Commission's assessment. The deadline may be extended if mutually agreed. The Commission shall take into account all relevant information and observations provided by the Member State before taking a decision on the application of the financial correction.	3. Before taking a decision on a financial correction, the Commission shall inform the Member State of its conclusions and give the Member State the opportunity to present, within two months, its observations on the Commission's assessment. The deadline may be extended if mutually agreed. <i>The monitoring committee shall be informed about the Commission's intention and the plan proposed by the Member State.</i> The Commission shall take into account all relevant information and observations provided by the Member State before taking a decision on the application of the financial correction.

Reason
The role of the committee should be consolidated, given the flexibility provided by the Commission's proposal for a Regulation.

Amendment 11

Linked to recommendation 1.23

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
<i>Article 76</i> Community-led local development 1. Community-led local development shall: (a) focus on subregional areas, rural and coastal areas;	<i>Article 76</i> Community-led local development 1. Community-led local development shall: (a) focus on subregional areas, including urban , rural and coastal areas;

Reason
CLLD in some Member States already includes urban areas. The amendment tabled ensures more clarity in the implementation of this instrument.

Amendment 12

Linked to recommendation 1.22

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
<i>Article 79</i> Conditions for measures which include operations with phased implementation 1. Member States may support measures where the underlying operation(s) consist of the second phase of an operation already selected for support and started under Regulation (EU) No 2021/1060, provided that all the following conditions are met:	<i>Article 79</i> Conditions for measures which include operations with phased implementation 1. Member States may support measures up to a maximum 5 % of the budget allocated where the underlying operation(s) consist of the second phase of an operation already selected for support and started under Regulation (EU) No 2021/1060, provided that all the following conditions are met:

Reason
Fixing a percentage for the phased implementation protects the synergy with the actual challenges and risks and ensures the synergy between evolving needs and the implementation process.

Amendment 13

Linked to recommendation 1.20

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
<i>Article 79</i> Conditions for measures which include operations with phased implementation	<i>Article 79</i> Conditions for measures which include operations with phased implementation 1. (f) the operation is approved by the monitoring committee.

Reason
Phased operations should be approved by the monitoring committee, since this impacts competition and the territoriality principle and could affect the implementation process.

Brussels, 22 January 2026.

The President of the European Economic and Social Committee
Séamus BOLAND
