



A Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034 which protects workers and promotes investment, social justice and just transition

Adopted at the Executive Committee meeting of 19 – 20 November 2025

In July 2025, the European Commission presented a set of proposals to profoundly reform the MFF's structure, mission, and governance. The ETUC expresses its deep concern that these proposals reduce the resources available to workers, undermine the effectiveness of social policies, fail to address investment gaps, and diminish the relevance of social dialogue. The ETUC also regrets that greater discretionary powers have been granted to national governments at the expense of regions and local actors. Concerns have also arisen regarding the increased allocation of military expenditure to the detriment of social cohesion and sustainability objectives. This will harm the social and public services with potential impact on employment levels.

The MFF is at the core of EU policy action. If the single market is conceived as the economic engine of the European economy, the MFF is surely associated with solidarity and cohesion. Prosperity and competitiveness together with solidarity and social justice are themselves drivers of competitiveness, cohesion and sustainability. Unfortunately, if the EU proposals are adopted as currently planned, they will continue to prioritise economic growth over social justice — and may even further diminish both.

That is why, when advocating for a reformed MFF, the ETUC bases its demands on the principle that an increased EU budget should significantly enhance the Union's potential for solidarity and cohesion. We expect an EU budget that is gender-responsive, inclusive of younger generations, and firmly oriented towards supporting workers through just labour transitions.

The proposal for the MFF will undergo extended negotiations among EU lawmakers. It is important that the MFF does not serve corporate interests but instead reflects the EU's ambition for a sustainable economy and social progress. The ETUC and its affiliates will act in a coordinated way to focus their advocacy, negotiation, and lobbying efforts on:

- **ESF as a dedicated, identifiable fund.** The ETUC demands that the ESF+ be maintained as a distinct and identifiable fund, with guaranteed and increased resources, beyond the current 14% share of allocations to social spending in the NRP regulation. The ETUC therefore demands that, in addition to maintaining the ESF as a distinct and well-resourced fund, the 14% social spending requirement be firmly applied both to National Partnership Plans and to the European Competitiveness Fund, thereby ensuring a significant overall increase in resources dedicated to social policies. The 14% of resources allocated to “social spending” leaves a significant



margin of manoeuvre in their destination and effective amount, while EU programmes can ensure full alignment with the EPSR Action Plan—including its poverty eradication and social inclusion targets—and the Quality Jobs Roadmap. Social measures in MFF regulations should be reviewed to better address labour market challenges, with specific focus on promoting genuine collective bargaining and extended coverage of collective agreements signed by representative social partners.

- **Social conditionalities.** The ETUC calls on lawmakers to introduce strong social conditionalities across all instruments financed under the MFF, preserving what exists today in the CAP and extending it to the European Competitiveness Fund. Horizontal social clauses, comparable to the rule of law mechanism, must also be introduced. Social conditionalities should promote quality jobs and collective bargaining and ensure respect for fundamental rights, collective agreements, and decent working conditions. ([Industrial policy for quality jobs - Social conditionalities for social progress | ETUC](#)).
- **Volume of the MFF and own resources.** The ETUC calls for a substantial increase in the overall size of the MFF, with spending on social, territorial, and economic cohesion clearly reinforced and stable over time. The ETUC urges Member States to be ambitious in adopting the Own Resources Decision as proposed by the Commission and insists that all parts of society (including businesses and the wealthiest individuals) must bear a fair share of the financial burden. In this respect, the ETUC welcomes the CORE proposal. If consensus cannot be reached in the Council, the Commission should present credible alternatives such as a digital services tax or a windfall profits tax, to secure a sustainable financing of the EU budget. New own-resource tax instruments must systematically anticipate sectoral and employment impacts and integrate just transition measures from the outset, while ensuring that the revenues they generate are directly reinvested in the objectives they are designed to support, including industrial transformation and decarbonisation.
- **More investment.** Investment requires a greater financial effort, including through a more structured use of EU-issued common debt, following the example of the SURE mechanism. The ETUC welcomes the possibility of EU borrowing to provide financial assistance to Member States in the form of the new loan instruments “Catalyst Europe” and the “Crisis Response Mechanism,” but stresses that their scope remains insufficient to meet the EU’s investment needs. The ETUC therefore proposes the establishment of a genuine EU Investment Facility financed by common debt, encompassing the investment functions of the ECF.
- **No to centralisation.** The ETUC firmly opposes the current plan to merge resources for cohesion policy, the CAP, fisheries, migration, and security into a single fund, as such a merger could create major distributional conflicts, with cohesion, social, and rural development objectives potentially being crowded out by short-term security and migration priorities. A thorough revision of the NRPPs must ensure the autonomy and predictability of cohesion funds.
- **More solidarity and social progress.** The ETUC calls for the removal of the “money for reform” approach linking the disbursing of MFF financing with reforms stemming from the reformed Stability and Growth Pact. While the ETUC continues to argue and push for the Semester to contribute to social progress and quality jobs, the fiscal rules impose limits and policy trade-offs that push Member States into reforms that penalise workers and the link with the MFF must be avoided. Expenditure should be based on the principles of solidarity and needs, with greater resources allocated to regions and groups most in need. Regions in transition should receive specific support.
- **Fairness in the ECF.** The ECF’s de-risking strategy shifts risks from private investors onto the public budget through blended finance and guarantees. The ETUC warns that this could lead to the privatisation of public infrastructures and services. In the absence of the JTF and the EGF, the ETUC calls for at least 14% of ECF resources to



be dedicated to the Just Transition, supporting retraining and upskilling of workers affected by industrial change. The ECF must apply convergence criteria, not only excellence criteria, so that all regions can access funding and competitiveness also serves local industrial renewal. This approach must reflect Enrico Letta's idea of the "right to stay", enabling workers and communities to build a sustainable future in their own regions.

- **Social dialogue is overlooked.** The ETUC insists that the future MFF must:
 - Ensure full involvement of trade unions in MFF governance and funded programmes.
 - Acknowledge the specific value and democratic role of social dialogue and provide that at least 1% of social spending are earmarked for the capacity building of social partners in every Member state.
 - Guarantee trade union representation within the ECF Stakeholder Advisory Board.
- **The ETUC also demands that the involvement of social partners—which has not been satisfactory in the current cycle—be further strengthened. A stronger and more effective partnership principle is necessary, especially in the proposed framework, which risks becoming highly fragmented.**



Annex I

ETUC roadmap to influence the Post-2027 MFF

To guide ETUC action during the MFF 2028–2034 negotiations, the Confederation will coordinate a structured advocacy and amendment process aimed at strengthening the social dimension of the future EU budget.

1. Ad-hoc Working Group

An ad-hoc ETUC Working Group will be established to steer this work throughout the negotiation period. It will:

- support the Secretariat in drafting and validating amendment proposals to MFF-related regulations;
- map Member States' positions and maintain contacts with key EU institutions;
- coordinate advocacy and mobilisation activities.

2. Timeline and Advocacy Plan

The ETUC will develop a detailed timeline of actions aligned with the institutional calendar and negotiation milestones (2025–2027), including:

- targeted advocacy towards the European Parliament, Council and national governments;
- joint initiatives with the EESC, CoR and allies such as the Spring Alliance;
- regular reporting to the Executive Committee and the relevant ETUC bodies.