

Public consultation on the next MFF: EU funding for the single market, and cooperation between national authorities

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Introduction

The current multiannual financial framework – the EU's long-term budget – runs until the end of 2027. In 2025, the Commission will submit comprehensive proposals for the post-2027 multiannual financial framework and for the next generation of financial programmes that will receive funding. These programmes /funds provide financial support to hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries such as public authorities, non-governmental organisations, businesses, farmers, students, scientists and many others.

Following President von der Leyen's [Political Guidelines for the 2024-2029 European Commission](#), the Commission will work together for a simpler, more focused and responsive long-term budget that reflects the EU's strategic priorities with the ambition to be an 'investment Commission'. This approach aims to align budget/funding with the strategic goals, priorities and policies. The multiannual financial framework for the period after 2027 must reflect this.

The Commission's proposals will be designed to make it possible for the EU to deliver on the policies that matter most, in areas where it can achieve more than Member States acting alone. This requires a careful assessment both of what has worked well in the past and what could be improved in the future. The next EU budget will draw lessons from the current budget – notably in terms of simplicity and flexibility, speed and strategic focus.

As an integral part of the process, the Commission is launching a series of public consultations to gather views from all interested parties on how to make the very most of every euro of the EU budget.

To deliver on the abovementioned objectives, this consultation covers several policy areas, including the single market (networks, digital tools and interoperability,

skills, market surveillance, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) and competitiveness, standards, consumer protection, effective enforcement of EU competition policy, food safety), European statistics, customs (protection of the single market, supervision of the EU's international trade, customs controls, collection of customs duties), taxation (indirect taxes, direct taxation) as well as anti-fraud (fight against fraud, corruption and other illegal activities). The decision to cluster issues serves to support the preparatory work and does not pre-empt the architecture of future programmes.



Many challenges require a coordinated response and supporting services at EU level to improve the functioning of the single market, including by strengthening cooperation between national authorities. These policy areas aim to improve competitiveness across the EU to ensure sustainable prosperity.

The questionnaire consists of three parts. Part 1 collects some information about the respondent, while Part 2 contains questions related to EU funds addressing the single market and cooperation between national authorities. Part 3 contains two closing questions.

It should take about 9 minutes to complete the survey. You can save your replies as a draft and finish them later. Please limit your additional comments on the questions in the free text box. You can upload a document stating your views at the end of the survey.

Part 2 - Questions related to EU funds addressing the single market and cooperation between national authorities

The Commission has identified relevant challenges linked to a well-functioning single market and cooperation between national authorities. How important are these challenges?

	Very important	Important	Moderately important	Not at all important	Don't know/not applicable
Empowering national authorities, citizens, consumers and businesses by addressing knowledge and data gaps and overcoming barriers					
Improving cooperation and collaborative efforts and integration among Member States and between Member States and the Commission					
Harmonising Member States' approach in addressing gaps in financing, especially for SMEs, to stimulate growth and scaling up					
Ensuring that rulemaking, standard-setting and enforcement at EU level remains evidence-based, effective and tailored to evolving needs					
Addressing a fragmented and complex digital environment					
Addressing regulatory fragmentation					
Addressing differences in the interpretation of EU law					
Optimising technical and administrative capacities for Member States, including civil society, to ensure a level playing field					
Addressing disparities in the digitalisation of public administration					
Challenges related to the effective protection of EU funds against fraud, corruption and other illegal activity					

Other (please specify below)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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If you have identified other policy challenges linked to a well-functioning single market and cooperation between national authorities, please specify and include the policy area you are referring to:

500 character(s) maximum

Interoperability is crucial for the single market and effective cross-border cooperation. With the Interoperable Europe Act in force since 11 April 2024, strong collaboration across all levels of governance is essential for effective public service delivery. As the Letta Report stresses, the Single Market must deliver shared prosperity support the 'freedom to stay'. This demands accessible, affordable, quality Service of General Interest in all EU regions, supported by EU action and funding.

To what extent do the current policies address these challenges?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/not applicable
Empowering national authorities, citizens, consumers and businesses by addressing knowledge and data gaps and overcoming barriers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improving cooperation and collaborative efforts and integration among Member States and between Member States and the Commission	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Harmonising Member States' approach in addressing gaps in financing, especially for SMEs, to stimulate growth and scaling up	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Ensuring that rulemaking, standard-setting and enforcement at EU level remains evidence-based, effective and tailored to evolving needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Addressing a fragmented and complex digital environment in the EU	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Addressing regulatory fragmentation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Optimising technical and administrative capacities among the Member States, including civil society, to ensure a level playing field	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Addressing differences in the interpretation of EU law	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strengthening the digitalisation of public administration and addressing differences	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

To what extent do you see the following as obstacles to the EU budget achieving its objectives?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/not applicable
Too many programmes with overlapping policy goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of coordination or synergies between programmes	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Different and often complex fund-specific rules on access to funding and compliance	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administrative capacity at national, regional and regional level	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administrative burden for beneficiaries, regional and national authorities	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of flexibility to adapt to new and unforeseen developments	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Insufficient alignment with national policies	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus is on reimbursing costs rather than on achieving results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
National regulatory environment makes EU funding less effective	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fraud, corruption and other illegal activities affecting the EU's financial interests	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify below)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you have identified other obstacles, please specify:

500 character(s) maximum

Ensure Coherence Across EU Funding

The RRF undermines EU budget objectives by operating outside traditional rules. Through its performance-based approach, it lacks transparency, and sidelines LRGs from shaping spending -undermining efficiency. Restoring coherence and impact requires aligning all funding tools under common principles with full involvement from all tiers of government. This will help further the aims of the Single Market across the EU.

To what extent do you agree that the following options could help the EU budget become more effective and efficient?

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	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/not applicable
Applying common rules, timelines and eligibility criteria to all relevant EU funds	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fewer, clearer and simpler rules	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reducing the number of EU funding programmes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Introduce more flexibility into resource allocation to react to crises and emerging needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use funds to promote both reforms and investments	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Simplifying access to and information about funding for beneficiaries	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Place greater focus on achieving results, including via performance-based funding (such as financing not linked to costs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify below)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you have identified other options that could help the EU budget become more effective and efficient, please specify:

500 character(s) maximum

It is not sufficient to simplify access to and information about funding. It is also crucial that access to information about EU budget beneficiaries continues to be transparent. Public administrations and citizens must have access to this information in real time. Lessons from the RRF need to be learnt where insufficient information about beneficiaries has been available to all tiers of public administrations and citizens. This has important implications for the efficiency of EU budget spending.

The current EU budget supports the single market and EU customs union, tax cooperation and anti-fraud measures, including transnational and cross-border benefits and economies of scale for businesses, consumers, citizens and national authorities. The Commission has identified the following intervention areas. How important are these to you?

	Very important	Important	Moderately important	Not at all important	Don't know/not applicable
Supporting businesses to strengthen competitiveness in a fast-changing business environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting fair competition	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Supporting EU economic security through a customs union acting as one	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting fair taxation and reducing the tax gap	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting the protection and empowerment of EU consumers	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting capacity building, supervision and joint enforcement of EU rules	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Deploying common and/or interoperable digital solutions, including portals and tools	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting standardisation efforts (i.e. development of common standards)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ensuring a high level of health and safety for people, animals and plants in the areas of plants, animals, food and feed	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting the development, production and dissemination of timely and comparable European statistics and data	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Upgrading EU customs with common governance and powerful central digital solutions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting the prevention and combating of fraud, corruption and other illegal activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify below)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

To what extent do you believe that actions at EU level would bring added value compared to actions at national level?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know /not applicable
Remove discriminatory, unjustified or disproportionate obstacles to the free movement of goods, services and capital within the single market	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Prevent unsafe or non-compliant products and services available in the single market					
Strengthen the competitiveness and sustainability of EU businesses					
Improve access to funding for SMEs and other beneficiaries					
Promote entrepreneurs and strengthen skills					
Ensure a level playing field and empower businesses by enforcing and modernising competition rules					
Ensure a high level of product standardisation					
Ensure high-quality financial and non-financial reporting and auditing standards					
Ensure a high level of consumer protection					
Ensure a high level of health and safety related to people, plants and animals, food and feed					
Provide timely and comparable European statistics and close data gaps					
Modernise and streamline the functioning of the EU customs union by strengthening its governance mechanisms and digital solutions					
Prevent and combat fraud, corruption and any other illegal activities (including money laundering, tax fraud and illicit trade) affecting safety and security of citizens					
Prevent and combat fraud and any other illegal activities affecting the EU budget					
Ensure optimal revenue collection and reduce tax gaps in the EU between the tax revenue collected and what should have been collected					
Facilitate trade with non-EU countries					
Strengthen the digital transition to smarter data-driven approaches in public administration (including the judiciary)					
Increase EU-level coordination to streamline capacity building efforts across the EU					
Support cross-border/multi-country projects and cross-border cooperation					
Address transnational challenges					

Which other strategic areas could be covered as part of a well-functioning single market, EU customs union, tax cooperation and anti-fraud measures, and cooperation between national administrations?

500 character(s) maximum

Empower Local and Regional Governments to strengthen the Single Market

The EU rightly invests in SMEs, but to fully unlock single market potential, local and regional governments must also be supported. Rooted in territories, they create conditions for businesses to thrive and provide essential services that respond to the needs of all. Investing in their capacity boosts efficiency, drives regional growth, and ensures the EU budget delivers results where policies meet people.

In your opinion, which of the following aspects is the most important in providing support to improve the administrative and institutional capacity of national authorities in Member States? Please rank the three preferred options:

Use drag&drop or the up/down buttons to change the order or accept the initial order.

⋮	Possibility to support a wide variety of beneficiaries in public administrations at different levels
⋮	Flexibility to address a wide variety of needs from Member States
⋮	Sustainability of actions over time
⋮	Predictability of the programming associated with investments financed by the EU
⋮	Assist Member States in identifying the areas where technical support would be more impactful, taking into account national and EU priorities
⋮	Focus on key EU priorities where they bring more EU added value

Part 3 - Closing questions

If you would like to add further information – within the scope of this questionnaire – feel free to do so here.

2000 character(s) maximum

Building a stronger Single Market with Local and Regional Governments

A truly competitive and resilient Single Market depends not only on strong enterprises but also on access to affordable and high-quality essential public services for economic operators and the entire population – such as transport, broadband, health, and education. These services often rely on local and regional governments (LRGs) and on capable, efficient public administrations across all levels of governance. LRGs rooted in their communities are essential partners in delivering public services, implementing EU legislation, managing EU funds, and creating the enabling environment for businesses and communities to thrive.

However, many public administrations still face persistent barriers: inadequate and fragmented legal frameworks, misaligned implementation timelines, and inflexible rules. These challenges undermine coherence and weaken the Single Market. CEMR's national associations warn that without clear and consistent legislation, adequate resources, and targeted capacity-building, public administrators cannot deliver the quality services or stable regulatory conditions that businesses rely on. In short, the foundations of the Single Market are at risk when its frontline implementers are under-resourced.

The EU budget must step up its support for LRGs to strengthen administrative capacity and enhance SME competitiveness. Strategic investment in essential services to inhabitants and digital services, interoperable infrastructure, and targeted skills development—tailored to local and regional needs—will ensure better implementation of EU rules and more responsive support for local communities and businesses. It will also foster better coordination across governance levels, crucial to ensure the effectiveness of the Single Market. Empowered local governments foster a more cohesive Digital Europe and a Single Market that drives sustainable, inclusive growth for all.

Attach any relevant documents to support your replies.

Only files of the type pdf,txt,doc,docx,odt,rtf are allowed

[CEMR Position on the future of the MFF](#)

Contact

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