



Trends for cities in EU energy and climate policies

Mélanie Bourgeois

17 April 2026



WHO ARE WE?

Energy Cities is the european learning community for future-proof cities

We work with our direct members and our collective members, who act as multipliers of our community in more than 30 countries in Europe and beyond.

**+1,000
CITIES**



- Local governments / energy agencies
- 📍 Collective members (NGOs, networks, associations)

HOW DO WE WORK?

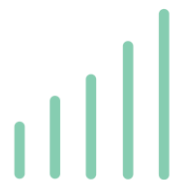
The Hubs are our community spaces to **activate, empower** and **inspire** local leaders for a **climate-neutral Europe**



Join Energy
Cities' Hubs



FUTURE-PROOF
LOCAL GOVERNANCE



FOSSIL FREE DISTRICT
& BUILDINGS



COMMUNITY-LED
ENERGY FOR MASSIVE
RENEWABLE
PRODUCTION



FUTURE-PROOF FOOD
SYSTEM & LAND
POLICIES



RESOURCE-WISE &
SOCIALY JUST
LOCAL ECONOMIES

Big trends for cities in the EU climate and energy Agenda





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Cities are starting to implement the measures from the Green Deal



- **Buildings:** Renovation of at least 3% of the total floor area per year for public buildings
- **Buildings:** Zero Energy Building for new public buildings...
- **Buildings:** 1 one stop shop for every 80 000 inhabitants
- **Heating:** Local heating and cooling plans for cities above 45k.
- **Renewable:** Public building equipped with solar panels (starting from 200m² in 2028 to 250m² in 2031)
- **Mobility:** SUMP's + Equip buildings with EV. And bike parking



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Transposition Tracker for the Local heating and cooling plans

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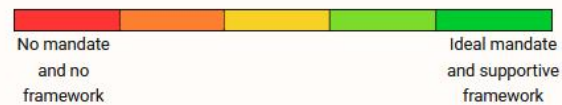
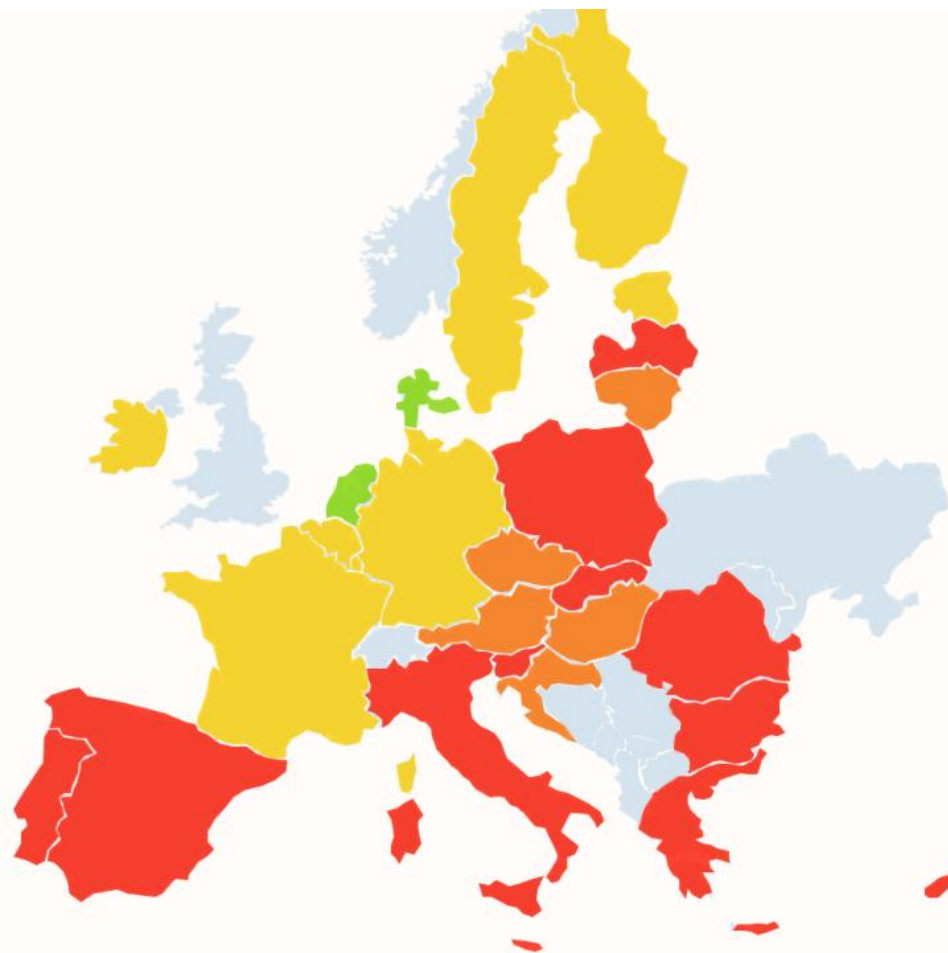
Overall Assessment

Legal Framework

Support Framework

City case studies **NEW**

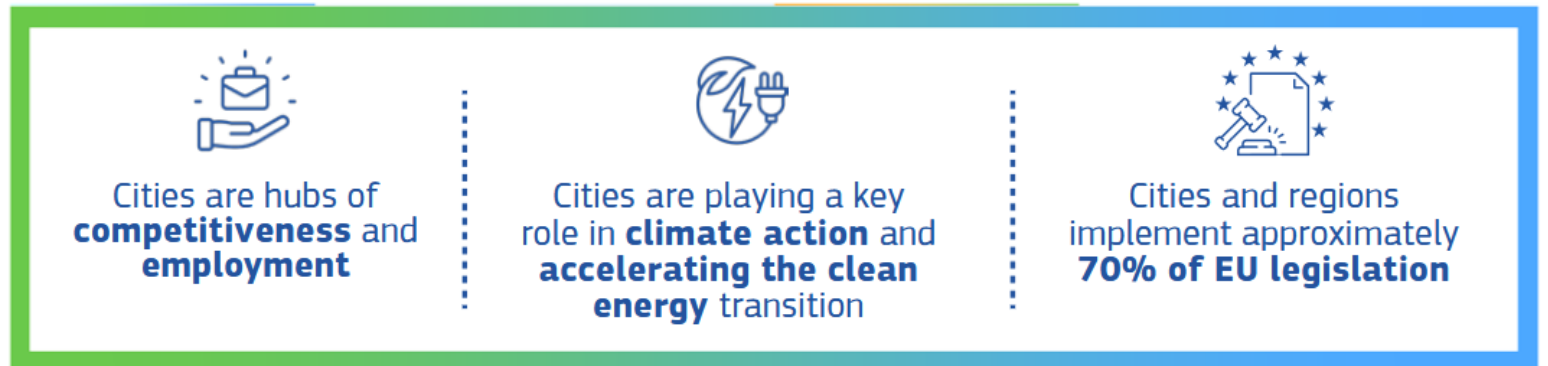
EU Countries Transposition Tracker





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The EU is recognising the importance of cities



The environment is very constrained for cities



Local democracy under pressure

Budget austerity & eroding local capacities



Access to resources under systemic stress



A changing perspective of cities



Growing climate risks





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The EU is changing narratives

European Commission outlines plan to tackle energy crisis in the EU amid war in Middle East

Tuesday, 14 April 2026

By Mose Apelblat



Green & digital transition



Competitiveness
security
resiliency

- **Simplification, cutting Red Tape**
- **Renewable → Electrification**
- **Just and place based transition are disappearing from the agenda → Industry focus**



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What we are looking at

Analysis

Dependence on fossil fuels, not on the United States, is Europe's worry

The US has replaced Russia to a great extent as an energy supplier to the European Union, but this has not so far created a new vulnerability

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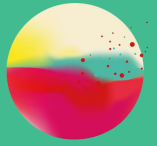
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OUR MAIN MESSAGE 2026-2027

Europe's energy independence can only be achieved locally.



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What we are looking at

- Give capacity to cities as actors of competitiveness and change → The EU Budget
- Home grown = local energy → The Governance Regulation, the Heating and cooling strategy, the electricity grids

OUR MAIN MESSAGE 2026-2027

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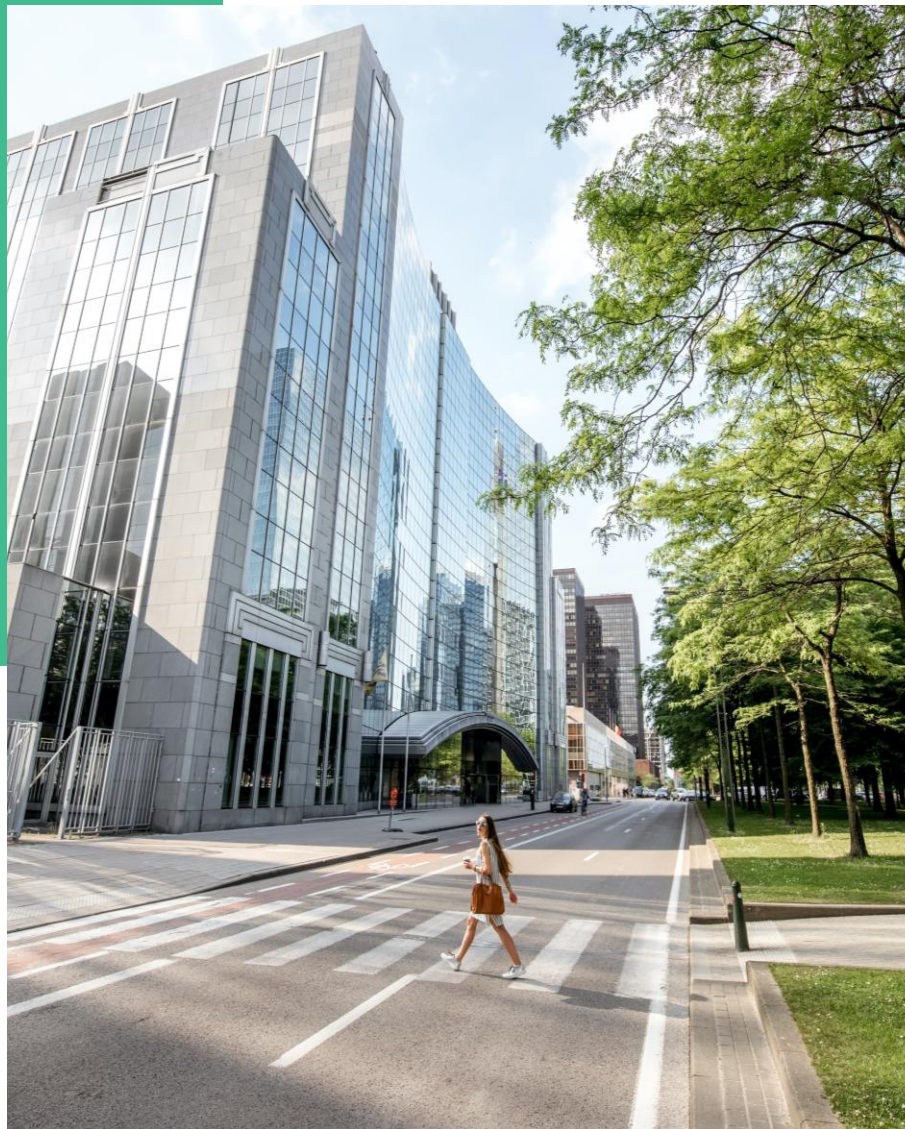
Questions? Reactions ?

My questions for you :

- **Energy crises:**
 - Do you feel your city is in a crises mode?
 - Has your city implemented energy savings measures?
 - Acelerated it energy transition/ electrification?
- **Competitiveness:** How is the competititveness narratives talking to you ? How do you see the role of your cities ? Any examples of projects leading to clean tech boosting ?



The next EU budget for cities





What is the Multiannual Financial Framework ? Why is it important for the local level ?

- The multi-annual Financial framework in the EU long term budget for the period 2028-2034 (7 years)
- Sets Financial priorities as well as political direction
 - Covers all European funds and programmes
 - Structural funds (CAP, ERDF, ESF+, etc.)
 - Sectoral funds (Horizon, LIFE, ERASMUS, etc.) and programmes (Missions, Urbact, INTERREG, etc.)



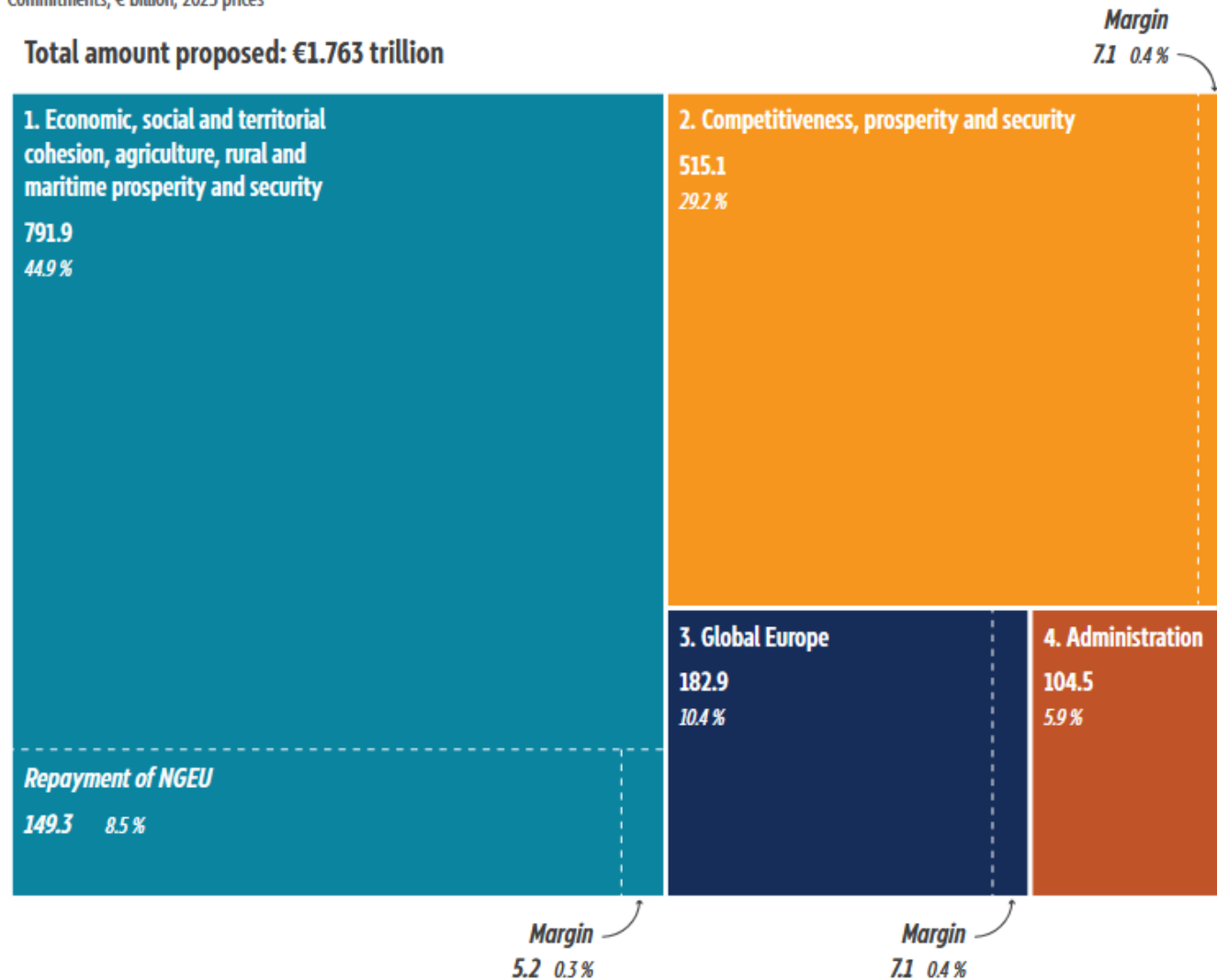
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Proposal of the European Commission for the next period (July 2025)

- A bigger budget which includes reimbursement of the Post Covid Recovery debt
- 4 headings
- A focus on simplification, reducing the number of programmes (52 to 16), increasing flexibility
- A performance focus budget (Performance framework)

2028-2034 MFF overview
Commitments, € billion, 2025 prices

Total amount proposed: €1.763 trillion

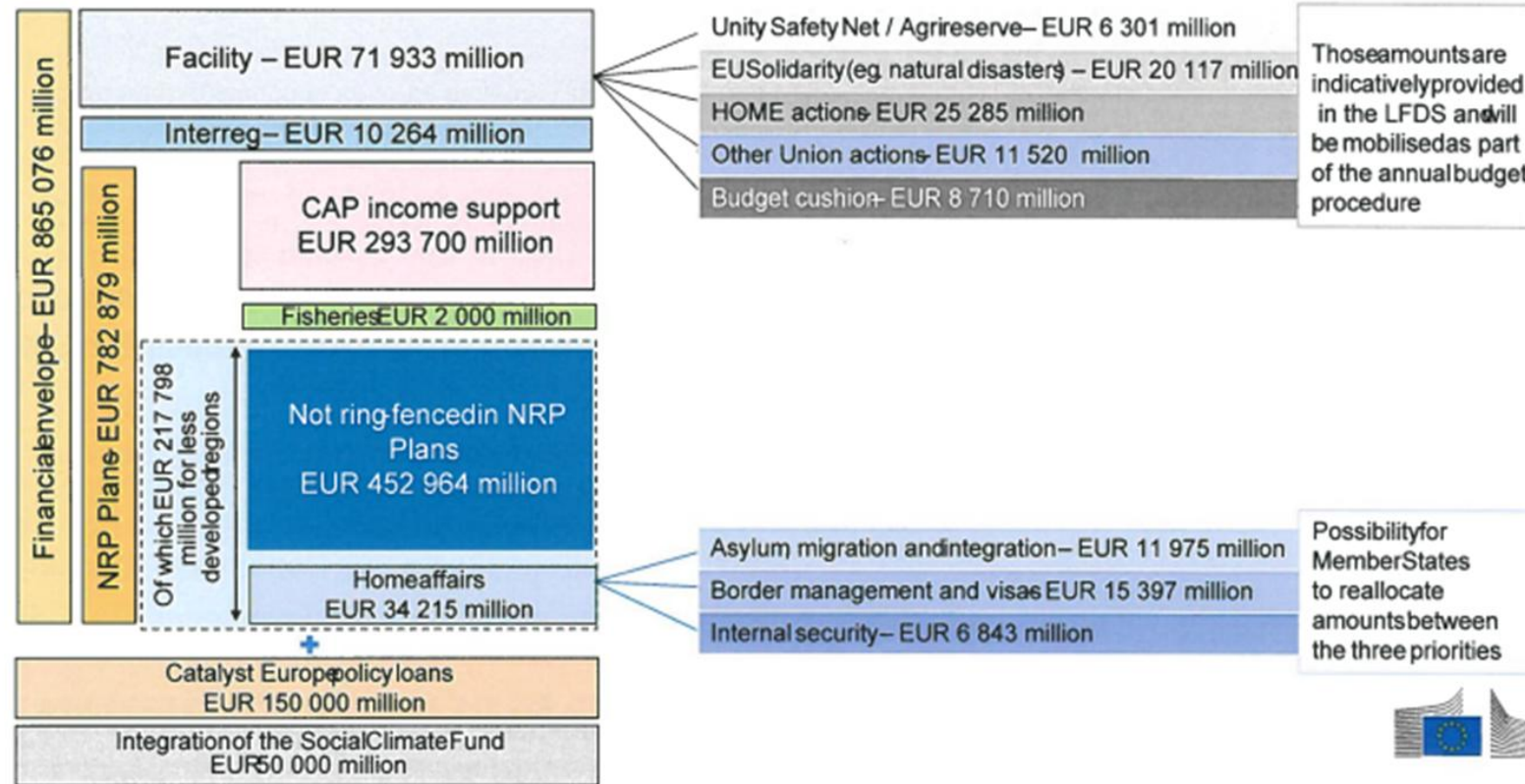


Pillar 1: Economic, social and territorial cohesion; agriculture, rural and maritime prosperity; and security” “the Fund”

44% of the total MFF amount, operated by:

- ✓ 27 National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRP Plans) (€771.3billion)
- ✓ An INTERREG plan (€10 billion)
- ✓ The EU Facility (€66 billion).

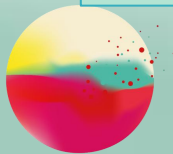
Financial framework



Key Takeaways On National and Regional Partnership plans

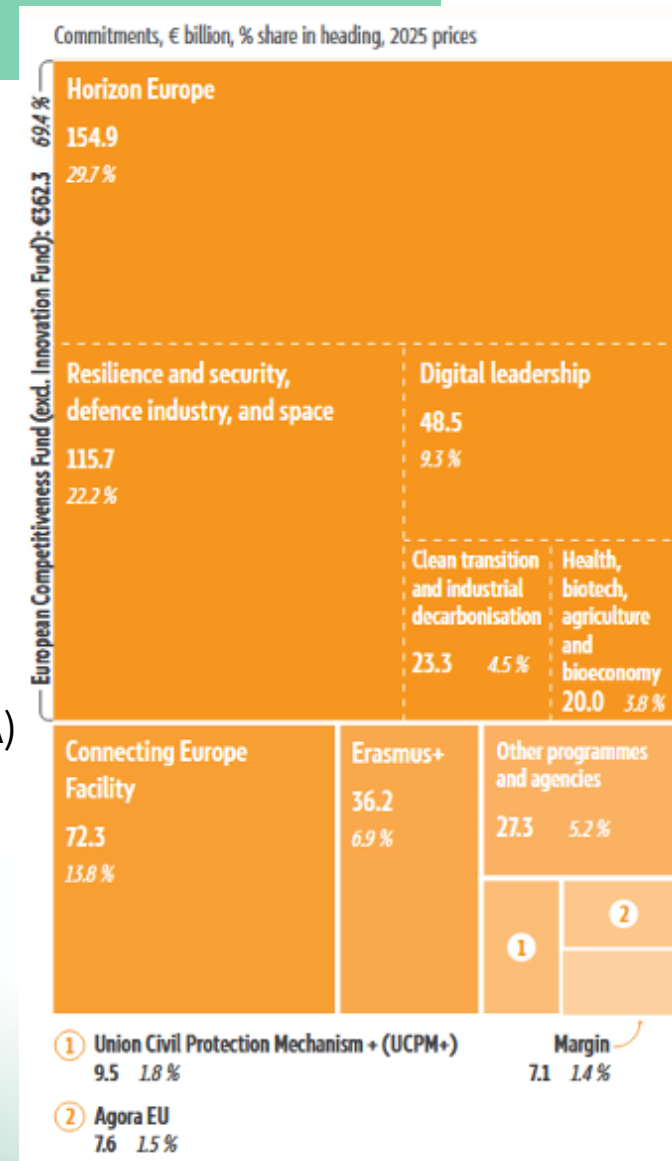
- ✓ EU budget with important focus on clean energy & energy security
- ✓ Simplification and flexibility in the proposed budget
- ✓ Reduction of the number of Programmes
- ✓ A performance framework to track results

- ✗ For local level, less guarantees and safeguards (nationalisation of the Fund, no obligation for regional or territorial chapter, no earmarking for urban developments/ programmes or territorial tools)
- ✗ Uncertainties about the programmes that will be proposed (needs to be defined) and necessity for local governments to be involved in the governance of the funds



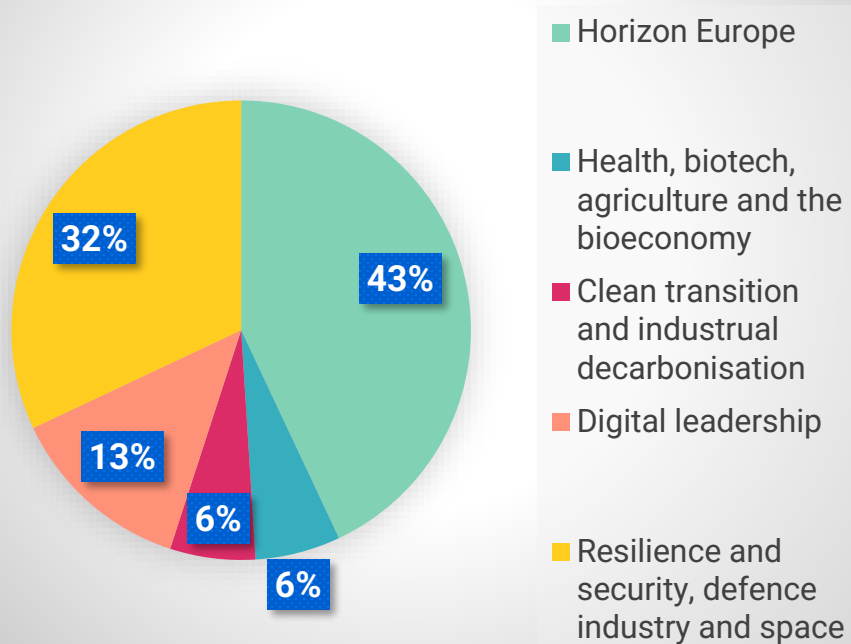
Pillar 2: The European Competitiveness Fund & Horizon Europe

- The ECF is designed to be a major financial and coordination instrument to strengthen EU competitiveness, with an emphasis on strategic sectors and technologies.
- The ECF would bring together 14 EU programmes a single fund
 - Horizon Europe* (the only one that will remain as a stand-alone programme)
 - Innovation Fund
 - Digital Europe Programme
 - Connecting Europe Facility - CEF Digital
 - European Defence Fund
 - Act in Support of Ammunition Production (ASAP)
 - InvestEU
 - Defence Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA)
 - European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP)
 - EU4Health
 - European Space Programme
 - IRIS
 - Single Market Programme (SME strand)
 - **LIFE Programme***



Pillar 2 : the EU competitiveness Fund

ECF distribution of the MFF funding



- Horizon Europe remains a stand-alone programme
- The rest of ECF would be structured in four policy windows that reflect the EU's strategic priorities for increasing competitiveness and resilience (all values in 2025 prices):
 1. Clean transition and industrial decarbonisation, €23.2 billion ;
 2. Resilience and security, defence industry and space, €115.7 billion;
 3. Digital leadership, €48.5 billion;
 4. Health, biotech, agriculture and bioeconomy, €20 billion.

What about the LIFE Program?

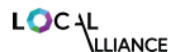
- Current LIFE program is being split:
 - "LIFE Activities" in the ECF: which is primarily geared towards industrial policy and aims to boost competitiveness across sectors such as defence, space, health, digital, biotech and industrial decarbonisation. You will find here post of the previous LIFE CET
 - Funding for LIFE Activities could cover up to 100% of eligible costs and 25% of indirect costs.
 - Other elements, notably concerning nature-based (nature restoration, biodiversity) projects: in the EU Facility without any ring fencing

What was previously found under the scope of the energy and climate transition are now relabelled under competitiveness

Key Takeaways

- No clear territorial approach is proposed within the ECF or Horizon Europe
- Competitiveness is the key word – previous green transition points now in competitiveness
- LIFE Programme split amongst ECF(Life Activities) & EU Facility (biodiversity and nature-based initiatives)
- Governance – local and regional authorities missing
- How will look like? Don't know yet

Tools developed by cities networks



MEMBERS' MOBILISATION KIT

For an EU budget 2028- 2034 for cities & towns

MAIN MESSAGES

- The **double centralisation** (EU and national levels) of the proposed MFF is dangerous for our democracy. If cities are deprived of their connection to Europe, so will be their citizens. This centralisation has proven ineffective (RRF plans were not highly spent).
- Local governments are **orchestras of competitiveness in their territory**. What they develop as services and infrastructures shape their territory and the possibility for businesses and industries to set up in Europe. For the EU to be competitive, it needs to trust and reinforce its local and regional levels.
- The proposal for the EU budget is **sidelining local authorities**, while together with regional authorities, they implement and apply approximately 70% of EU legislation.

MAIN DEMANDS

1. REINFORCE THE TERRITORIAL APPROACH ACROSS THE MFF

1. By having a **mandatory regional, territorial or urban chapter** in each national and regional partnership plan, and a territorial approach in the sectoral chapters of these plans.
2. By having a **territorial approach in the clean transition and decarbonisation industry** window of the European Competitiveness Fund. "LIFE activities" and other activities of this window must fund LRAs' investments and capacities.
3. By having a **target in the budgets for the territorial tools**, such as the Integrated Territorial Investments.



MEMBERS' MOBILISATION KIT

For an EU budget 2028- 2034 for cities & towns

OUR RESOURCES

MODEL OF LETTER FOR YOUR MINISTRIES ON THE NRPP

MODEL OF LETTER FOR YOUR ITRE MEPS ON THE ECF

LIST OF KEY INFLUENTIAL MEP

LIST OF ENC AND LOCAL ALLIANCE AMENDEMENTS TO THE NRPPS AND TO THE ECF.



The Local Alliance — a coalition of local and regional governments made of ACR+, CEMR, Climate Alliance, Energy Cities, Eurocities, FEDARENE, ICLEI Europe and POLIS, — is an informal coalition aiming at ensuring that our constituencies have the competencies and resources to implement the European Green Deal and reinforce Europe's resiliency.

THE MFF & YOU
WEBINAR SERIES

Next Webinar 8th June
14:00



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Questions? Reactions ?

My questions for you :

- **What kind of EU funding is working the best for you ?**
- **What big obstacles do you face ?**
- **What is one rule you would change if you had a magic wand**

- **Any examples of competitiveness/ economic clusters developed with the help of the regions/ city ?**



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Thank You



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