

Report from Brussels

Merle Andraschko

Policy Officer Regional Policy, Social Affairs, Employment and
Tourism

Hot topic: the next MFF

- Commission proposal presented in July 2025
 - Key elements: increased flexibility, simplification (reduction of number of programmes), National and Regional Partnership Plans, stronger focus on competitiveness, innovation, digitalisation and defence, “money against reforms”
- EP adopted interim report in April 2026
- “Negobox” presented by Cypriot presidency in June 2026
- So-called “partial general agreements” reached under Cypriot presidency before summer on NRPPs, ECF, and Global Europe
- Irish presidency expected to present new negobox ahead of European Council in October
- Overall: ambitious timeline
 - In parallel: Member States and regions work on their NRPPs

NRPPs: work in progress despite uncertainties

- NRPPs in preparation depending on their respective institutional set-up and in discussions between MS / regions and Commission
 - Country desks for MS at SG REFORM
- Timeline:
 - From June 2026: Policy reference frameworks made available by COM
 - July 2026: Draft Guidance shared with the MS
 - By Q2 2027: mandatory stakeholder consultations
 - Summer 2027: update of policy reference framework where necessary
 - As of June 2027: start of formal submissions of NRPPs
 - Q3&Q4 2027: assessment by COM, proposal for Council adoption
 - 31 January 2028: deadline for NRPP submission
 - End of July 2028: Legal deadline for the approval of the plan in order to benefit from the prefinancing 2028; Adoption of the Commission Decision afterwards

NRPPs: policy reference framework

- European Semester, notably the relevant CSRs, including the ones with a regional dimension
- Relevant documents adopted/assessed by the Commission related to the specific objectives of the Regulation
 - CAP national recommendations, Digital Decade recommendations, Rule of Law reports+recommendations
- Region-specific strategic documents, where applicable:
 - Communication on eastern border regions (February 2026), first-ever EU strategies for islands and coastal communities (June 2026), Outermost region package (September 2026)
 - Forthcoming: Arctic strategy, Right to stay strategy



State of the Union 2026

- **Competitiveness first:** less bureaucracy, faster approvals, lower energy costs
- **Strategic autonomy:** reduce dependencies on China & critical raw materials
- **Electrification:** double electricity share by **2040**; accelerate grids, renewables & storage
- **Climate resilience:** new framework for Europe's most vulnerable regions + climate insurance alliance
- **AI as strategic priority:** balance frontier-AI risks with economic opportunities
 - Focus on **5 sectors:** healthcare, transport, agri-food, advanced manufacturing, defence & space



State of the Union 2026

- **European security:** new strategy against hybrid threats + proposed emergency security protocol
- **Ukraine:** continued support, air defence, energy assistance & tighter Russia sanctions
- **Canada:** “Alliance for the Future” + ambition for first EU “**associated member**”
- **Strategic connectivity:** Middle Corridor + up to **€12bn Global Gateway** investment
- **Broader agenda:** migration, KIDS Act, digital fairness, Quality Jobs Act, European Care Deal, European Pillar of Social Rights anniversary in 2027

Many thanks for your attention.

merle.andraschko@hanse-office.de