



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Raffaële FITTO
Executive Vice-President for Cohesion and Reforms

Brussels, 13 December 2024

Dear Minister,

It is with great pleasure that I write to you, as a newly appointed Executive Vice President for cohesion and reforms.

I took up my duties with a strong commitment to fulfil, together with Member States, the mission I have been entrusted for the next five years. My task will be to ensure that the EU continues to support long-lasting reforms and investments that directly contribute to strengthening European growth. People in Europe's regions – whether in cities, coastal communities or rural areas – must have real opportunities to drive growth and productivity across Europe. I will work to ensure that Europe invests in and supports Member States, regions, local authorities and people in view of achieving upward economic and social convergence across the EU and that all citizens have an effective right to stay in the place they call home.

To this end, I consider it crucial to pay particular attention to dialogue with stakeholders and the involvement of regional and local authorities. It is also essential to mobilise our policies in key sectors for many of our regions. As part of my mission, I will work to strengthen the competitiveness, resilience and sustainability of the food and farming sector, and guide the work on sustainable mobility and tourism. I will also help ensure our fisheries sector becomes more resilient, sustainable and competitive in the global market and guide the work on boosting a competitive and sustainable blue economy.

Your role as Ministers is crucial in all these aspects. I am well aware of this given my previous experiences of Governor of Puglia, a region strongly beneficiary of cohesion policy, of Minister for Cohesion and European affairs, as a member of both the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions. Hence, I look forward to collaborating with all of you to ensure the full and effective implementation of Cohesion policies, the RRF and NextGenerationEU.

Since the 2021-2027 programmes were agreed with the Commission, absorption of cohesion funding has started but is progressing slowly in most Member States, while the EU has experienced turbulent changes. The upcoming mid-term review of cohesion policy programmes offers the opportunity to review the plans to ensure that funding is absorbed more rapidly while being focused on the most pressing priorities. This should also include a focus on the key initiatives put forward by President Von der Leyen in her Political Guidelines, such as the EU Agenda for Cities, access to affordable housing, and the New European Bauhaus.

Mr Jürgen LIGI
Minister of Finance
Estonia

I look forward to meeting you personally in the coming weeks to discuss how the mid-term review specifically, and the cohesion policy funding more generally, could be better aligned to the new and growing needs of a changed world, while also improving the quality and speed of cohesion policy spending. In the meantime, my services are ready to engage and help you develop programme amendments to align with the above priorities.

As concerns the organisation of a meeting, please be so kind to contact the office of my Head of Cabinet, Mr. Vincenzo Matano (email: Vincenzo.MATANO@ec.europa.eu, Tel. +32 229-86597).

Yours faithfully,



Raffaele FITTO