Open letter: Investing in people and regions in the next EU budget

To: The Heads of State or Government of the European Union

Cc: António Costa, President of the European Council; Micheál Martin, Taoiseach (Irish Presidency of the Council)

Brussels, 24 November 2026

Dear Heads of State or Government,

Ahead of the European Council of 26–27 November, we write on behalf of the EUFunds4Social Coalition, which brings together European networks and national organisations including NGOs, social services, public health and service providers, lifelong learning and social economy actors, workers, and social partners. This letter is supported by 280 organisations: 52 European networks and 228 national organisations from 23 EU Member States and 7 other countries.

We welcome the work of President Costa and of the Irish Presidency to move the negotiations on the 2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework forward, and we recognise the difficult context in which you are preparing the next EU budget; however, Europe must deliver on the Treaty objective of economic, social and territorial cohesion.

We therefore reiterate our call on you to support strong EU social funding and in particular:

1. **Agree an overall budget in line with the European Parliament's position** of 1.27% of EU GNI.
2. **Secure adequate resources for Heading 1,** and place NextGenerationEU repayments outside the ceilings, as the European Parliament proposes.
3. **Preserve what the ESF and the ERDF guarantee**: stand-alone funds with €124bn for the ESF, as the European Parliament proposes, or at the very least dedicated, ring-fenced envelopes with their own objectives in every national plan, at least at current levels adjusted for inflation.
4. **Raise the social spending target from 14% to at least 25% of the National and Regional Partnership Plans,** to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights and respond to today's pressing social challenges, and introduce realistic co-financing rates.
5. **Earmark direct EU funding for social innovation**, capacity building and transnational cooperation of civil society organisations and social partners, and social economy actors within the EU Facility.

The negotiating box President Costa presented on 21 November puts social and territorial investment under further pressure. It reduces the overall budget to €1.582 billion, around 10% below the Commission proposal. Heading 1, which funds cohesion and social policies, is cut again while still absorbing the repayment of NextGenerationEU. Quality employment is now among its objectives, a commitment

that requires adequate resources, while the National and Regional Partnership Plans lose €7.7 billion compared with the Irish Presidency Negotiating box presented in October. The 14% social spending target now applies to a smaller fund, and the EU Facility still sets no amount aside for social innovation, capacity building or civil society.

Social and territorial investment is key to helping Europe respond to the major challenges of our time: rising inequality and polarisation, underinvestment in public services, the urban–rural divide, demographic ageing, skills shortages and a high need of upskilling and reskilling, high youth unemployment and inactivity, and the digital and climate transitions. The European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund, both grounded in the EU Treaties, support quality employment, foster social cohesion and protect rights in every region of the Union. In doing so, they strengthen the foundations of our societies, our democracy and Europe's competitiveness.

We want an EU budget that continues to invest in people, communities, quality services and the social economy, with strong social funding and effective guarantees for inclusion. That means protecting people-centred support and minimum spending for social inclusion, child poverty, homelessness, health, youth employment and material deprivation, and keeping enabling conditions linked to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the European Pillar of Social Rights. It also means giving social partners, civil society and people with lived experience a real role in the design, governance and monitoring of programmes, and keeping EU funding accessible to not-for-profit organisations, for example by exempting them from co-financing requirements when they support groups facing heightened vulnerabilities or pursue social inclusion priorities, in the NRPP Regulation. This is how Europe's social market economy can remain a source of resilience in an uncertain world.

We stand ready to work with you, the Irish Presidency and the European Parliament towards an EU budget that delivers for people and regions.

Yours sincerely,

The EUFunds4Social Coalition

Drafted by the EUFunds4Social Coordinating Committee:

Disability Support Europe

Caritas Europa

Eurodiaconia

European Disability Forum (EDF)

European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU)

European Network of Work Integration Social Enterprises (ENSIE)

Lifelong Learning Platform

Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)

Social Economy Europe

Social Platform

Social Services Europe (SSE)

Red Cross EU Office

Co-signed by the following European networks:

Association de Recherche et de Formation sur l'Insertion en Europe (ARFIE)

Association for Supported Employment Europe (ASEE)

Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe (AAATE)

Autism-Europe

CEC – Acting for social inclusion

COFACE Families Europe

Confederation of European Firms, Employment Initiatives and Cooperatives (CEFEC)

Dynamo International

Emmaüs Europe

Eurocarers

Eurochild

EuroHealthNet

European Ageing Network

European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)

European Blind Union

European Confederation of Industrial and Service Cooperatives (CECOP)

European Council of Associations of General Interest (CEDAG)

European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)

European Federation of Ethical and Alternative Banks and Financiers (FEBEA)

European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH)

European Food Banks Federation (FEBA)

European Microfinance Network (EMN)

European Network on Independent Living (ENIL)

European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR)

European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network (ERGO Network)

European Union of the Deaf (EUD)

European Youth Forum

Housing Europe

Impact Europe

Inclusion Europe

Lumos

Make Mothers Matter

Mental Health Europe

Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU)

Philanthropy Europe Association (Philea)

Réseau Européen des Villes et Régions de l'Économie Sociale (REVES)

Reuse and Recycling European Union Social Enterprises (RREUSE)

SOLIDAR

SOS Children's Villages International

YES Forum

National organisations

Albania

Down Syndrome Albania Foundation

Roma Active Albania

Armenia

Bridge of Hope NGO

Austria

arbeit plus – Soziale Unternehmen Österreich

CONCORDIA Social Projects

Dachverband berufliche Inklusion Austria (dabei-austria)

Hilfsgemeinschaft der Blinden und Sehschwachen Österreichs

Sozialwirtschaft Österreich

TAFIE GmbH

Belgium

BRUXEO

ConcertES – Concertation des Organisations représentatives de l'Economie sociale

Gammes ASBL

Groep Gidts (including Mariasteen and Dominiek Savio)

Konekt vzw

Morgenmakers (vzw WEB SW WEB)

Section belge du CIRIEC (Centre international de recherches et d'information sur l'économie publique, sociale et coopérative) ASBL

Solidaris

UNIPSO

Bulgaria

Integro Association

Croatia

Association of Persons with Disabilities of the City of Opatija

Croatian Association of Societies of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

Croatian Union of Associations of Persons with Disabilities – SOIH

Health Life Academy

RAJSKA PTICA – Udruga za osobe s intelektualnim teškoćama Karlovačke županije

Social Cooperative Humana Nova

Udruga osoba s intelektualnim teškoćama Istre

Cyprus

Saint Lazarus Centre for Adults with Disabilities (Kentro AmeA "Agios Lazaros")

Czech Republic

NGO RomanoNet

Estonia

Social Enterprise AMANITA (Solve et Coagula OÜ / AMANITA NGO)

Finland

Tukena Foundation

France

Association des Professionnels d'ACcompagnement du Handicap dans l'Enseignement Supérieur (APACHES)

CRESS Grand Est

ESS France – Chambre française de l'Economie Sociale et Solidaire

Institut Fédératif de Recherche sur les Aides Techniques pour personnes Handicapées (IFRATH)

Mutualité Française

Germany

Amaro Drom e.V.

Barka e.V.

Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Inklusionsfirmen e.V.

Deutscher Caritasverband – Caritas Germany

Diakonisches Werk der evangelischen Kirche in Württemberg e.V.

ESTIA Agios Nikolaos Public Benefit Foundation

Greece

ALMA Panhellenic Association of Adapted Activities

Association of Parents and Friends of People with Autism in Rethymno

Autism Association of Larissa

Caritas Hellas

Center for Special Education of Children & Adults with Disabilities (K.E.E.P.E.A.) "Horizons"

Cerebral Palsy Greece / Open Door

Child and Adolescent's Center

Civil Non-profit Company "AMALTHEIA"

ELEPAP Rehabilitation for the Disabled

Ergastiri Eidikis Agogis MARGARITA

ESTIA Agios Nikolaos Public Benefit Organisation

Hatzipaterio Foundation for Social Work

Limited Liability Social Cooperative KoiSPE "Diadromes"

Organization for the Protection of Persons with Autism – Pervasive Developmental Disorders of Kastoria

Panhellenic Association of Parents, Guardians & Friends of Multiply Disabled Visually Impaired People "AMIMONI"

Panhellenic Confederation of Social and Solidarity Economy Unions

Parents' Association for Supported Living People with Mental Disabilities – Petagma

PLOES EPSYME – Psychosocial Research Organisation

Society of Social Psychiatry P. Sakellaropoulos

SYZOI – Association of Parents, Guardians & Friends of Visually Impaired People with Additional Disabilities

THE NET

Theotokos Foundation

To Ergastiri – Association of Parents, Guardians and Friends of Disabled People

Hungary

SignCoders

Ireland

Ability West

Disability Federation of Ireland

Irish Social Enterprise Network

Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre

Social Justice Ireland

Italy

AIAS Bologna ETS

AIAS Nazionale ETS

Alleanza delle Cooperative Italiane

Anffas Nazionale

ANGSA

Anziani e non solo soc. coop. soc.

Associazione Generale Cooperative Italiane – AGCI

Associazione Scuola Viva ETS

Banca Popolare Etica

Betania Società Cooperativa Sociale onlus

Circle Association for International Cooperation and Development

Città Azzurra Social Cooperative

Confederazione Cooperative Italiane

Consorzio di Cooperative Sociali EVT

Consorzio Idea Agenzia per il Lavoro scs

Consorzio Nazionale Idee In Rete

Consorzio Sociale Abele Lavoro S.C.S. – Impresa Sociale

Cooperativa sociale CEFF Francesco Bandini

Duemilauno Agenzia Sociale

Fondazione Paideia

GLIC – Rete Italiana dei Centri di Consulenza su Ausili Tecnologici

Legacoop

Tikvà coop soc

UCRI – Unione delle Comunità Romanes in Italia

Latvia

Latvian German Association (Latvijas Vācu savienība)

Latvijas Autisma apvienība

NGO Delve

Social Enterprise “Visas iespējas”

Social Entrepreneurship Association of Latvia

Lithuania

Lithuanian Social Business Association (LiSVA)

Public Institution Roma Community Centre Vilnius (RVC)

Moldova

CCF Moldova – children, communities, families

Keystone Moldova

Partnerships for Every Child / Parteneriate pentru Fiecare Copil

Roma Women Platform ROMNI

Netherlands

SOFT tulip

New Zealand

Fast Track Inclusion Trust (Dr Robin Janson)

Now & Next (Dr Annick Janson)

Poland

Fundacja Imago

Fundacja Inicjatyw Społeczno-Gospodarczych KOMES (KOMES Foundation for Socio-Economic Initiatives)

Fundacja Jaw Dikh

Microfinance Centre (MFC)

National Auditing Union of Cooperatives (NAUWC)

Portugal

APPACDM do Porto – Associação Portuguesa de Pais e Amigos do Cidadão Deficiente Mental

Humanitas – Federação Portuguesa para a Deficiência Mental

Iris Inclusiva – Associação de Cegos e Amblíopes

Romania

AFIN – ADV Group – SFA

Asociatia Curtea Culorilor

Asociația Inceptus Romania

Asociatia Nevo Parudimos

Bucovina Institute Association (Asociația Institutul pentru Parteneriat Social Bucovina)

DUTY SOCIAL

Emozionecakes by Florina Delia

Impact GYM Work Integration Social Enterprise

OPHORI Group

RISE Romania – Romanian Network of Social Economy

Slovakia

Caritas Slovakia

Civic Association Odyseus

Komora opatrovateliek Slovenska (Chamber of Caregivers of Slovakia)

Nezávislá platforma SocioForum (Independent Platform SocioForum)

Platform of Families of Children with Disabilities

Rada pre poradenstvo v sociálnej práci (Social Work Advisory Board)

Roma Advocacy and Research Centre

TENENET NGO

Slovenia

Center ponovne uporabe

EKO

EKO-TCE

Okoljsko raziskovalni zavod

Spain

A Mariña-COGAMI – Asociación de Persoas con Discapacidade da Mariña Lucense

A Xanela – Asociación de discapacitados Activos de As Pontes

ACADAR – Asociación de Mulleres con discapacidade de Galicia

ACEM Coruña – Asociación Coruñesa de Esclerosis Múltiple

ACEM Santiago – Asociación Compostelana de Esclerose Múltiple

ADISBISMUR – Asociación de Personas con Discapacidade da Bisbarra de Muros

AEMED – Asociación Empresarial de Entidades Madrileñas en Defensa de Colectivos con Especiales Dificultades

AERESS

AGL – Asociación Galega de Linfedema, Lipedema, Insuficiencia Venosa Crónica e outras Patoloxías Vasculares Periféricas

ÁGORA – Asociación de Persoas con Diversidade Funcional de Monforte de Lemos

AIXIÑA – Asociación de discapacitados Físicos, Parálise Cerebral e Terceira Idade Dependente

ALCER Coruña – Asociación para a Loita Contra as Enfermidades do Ril da Coruña

ALCER Lugo – Asociación para a Loita contra as Enfermedades Renais de Lugo

ALUCEM – Asociación Lucense de Esclerosis Múltiple

AMARAI – Asociación de Persoas con Discapacidade de Arzúa e Terra de Melide

AMICO – Asociación de Persoas con Discapacidade de Compostela e comarca

APROM – Asociación Prominusválidos de Cariño

ASEM Galicia – Asociación Gallega contra las Enfermedades Neuromusculares

Asociación de colaboración y promoción del sordo – ACROPOS

Asociación de Crohn e Colite Ulcerosa de Ourense

Asociación de Enfermos de Artrite de Pontevedra

Asociación de Enfermos de Crohn e Colite Ulcerosa da provincia de A Coruña

Asociación de Fibromialxia e Fatiga Crónica de Ourense

Asociación de Pais e Nais de Nenos con Minusvalía de Narón

Asociación de Persoas con Discapacidade da Comarca de A Limia

Asociación de Persoas con Discapacidade da Comarca de Pontevedra

Asociación de Persoas con Discapacidade da comarca de Valdeorras

Asociación de Persoas con Discapacidade das Comarcas do Condado e Paradanta

Asociación de Persoas con Discapacidade Vontade

Asociación Galega de Fibrose Quística

Asociación Galega de Hemofilia – AGADHEMO

Asociación Galega de Lupus

Asociación Íntegro – Persoas con Diversidade Funcional da Costa da Morte

Asociación Ourensá de Esclerose Múltiple, Párkinson e Enfermidades Raras

Asociación para a Loita Contra as Enfermidades do Ril

Asociación para a loita contra as enfermidades renais de Ourense

Asociación para la comprensión fácil de entornos y edificios

Asociación Párkinson Galicia-Coruña

Asociación Viguesa de Esclerose Múltiple de Pontevedra

Asociación Viguesa de Espondilíticos de Pontevedra

ASOTRAME – Asociación Gallega de Personas Transplantadas de Médula Ósea y Enfermedades Oncohematológicas

ASPAMITE – Asociación de Pais de Persoas con Diversidade Funcional de Teo

Associació Alba

Autismo Burgos

Autismo España

AVANTE – Asociación de Persoas con Discapacidade do Val do Dubra

Caritas Spain

CEGASAL – Asociación Empresarial Galega de Centros Especiais de Emprego sen Ánimo de Lucro

CERMI Galicia – Comité Español de Representantes de Personas con Discapacidad – Galicia

CIRIEC-España

ConArtritis Santiago – Delegación en Santiago da Coordinadora Nacional de Artritis

Confederación Española de Cooperativas de Trabajo Asociado (COCETA)

Confederación Española de Personas con Discapacidad Física y Orgánica

Confederación Galega de Persoas con Discapacidade (COGAMI)

Dano Cerebral-Galicia

Dincat

Dow Galicia

EAPN Galicia – Rede Europea contra a Pobreza e a exclusión social

FADEMGA – Plena Inclusión Galicia

FAGAL – Federación Alzhéimer Galicia

FEAFES – Saúde Mental Feafes Galicia

Federación Autismo Galicia

Federación de Asociaciones Empresariales de Empresas de Inserción

Federación de Asociaciones Gitanas de Cataluña (FAGiC)

Federación de Asociacións de Persoas con Discapacidade da Provincia de A Coruña

Federación de Asociacións de Persoas con Discapacidade da provincia de Pontevedra

Federación de Asociacións de Persoas con Discapacidade de Lugo

Federación de Asociacións de Persoas con Discapacidade de Ourense

Federación de Asociacións de Persoas Xordas de Galicia

FEICAT empreses d'inserció de Catalunya

Fundació AMPANS

Fundació Support-Girona

Fundación INTRAS

Fundación Secretariado Gitano

GRUMICO – Grupo de Persoas con Discapacidade da Coruña

Grupo Social ONCE

Impulsa Igualdad-Galicia

IN-RED – Galician Business Association of Non-profit Entities for Disability

LIREGA – Liga Reumatológica Gallega

MISELA – Asociación de Persoas con Discapacidade das Comarcas de Noia e Muros

PROYECTIZABLE

Red Acoge

RED ISEM – Plataforma de entidades para la promoción e inclusión social de personas con enfermedad mental

Sareen Sarea – Tercer Sector Social de Euskadi

Som – Fundació de Suport a Persones amb Discapacitat

Spanish Confederation of Social Economy Enterprises (CEPES)

UGADE – Unión Galega de Epilepsia

Turkey

Zero Discrimination Association

Ukraine

Odesa Regional Society of Roma Culture “Romani Zbora”

United Kingdom

Money Carer