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Press release | 10.09.2025

Mid-term review risks turning EU Cohesion policy into “emergency toolbox”

EU Cohesion Policy

Today, the European Parliament approved changes to the EU’s Cohesion policy at its mid-term review. While the reform introduces new priorities such as affordable housing and water resilience, it also gives more power to central governments at the expense of regions and local communities.

Moreover, it weakens safeguards on climate and social spending, allows easier access for large enterprises and makes defence a new area of eligibility. The Greens/EFA Group warns that this sets a bad precedent for the future of Cohesion policy, undermining its role as an instrument of solidarity, sustainability, and citizen participation.

MEP Cristina Guarda, Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur on the regulation, comments:

“This agreement risks turning a policy of long-term solidarity into a short-term emergency toolbox. Instead of bringing in fresh resources, governments will simply reshuffle existing funds with weaker safeguards on climate, social spending, and rule of law. That means less money for people who need affordable housing, sustainable transport, or stronger water resilience in their communities, while large enterprises and even defence projects are given easier access.

“The whole procedure was rushed and left citizens without a say. We proposed clear alternatives: keeping dual-use but excluding industrial defence, restoring climate targets, protecting funds for SMEs and local actors, and closing rule of law loopholes. Since these proposals were rejected, the Greens/EFA Group cannot support this deal.”

MEP Vladimir Prebilič, Greens/EFA coordinator in the REGI committee, comments:

"Defence spending should not come at the expense of regional development. Defence budgets already have their own dedicated tools and Cohesion funds were never designed to bankroll military projects. By channelling regional development money into defence, we risk eroding trust in one of the EU’s most successful policies. Cohesion should mean investing in people, in communities, and in sustainable growth. Shifting resources away from citizens to subsidise the arms industry sets a dangerous precedent."

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