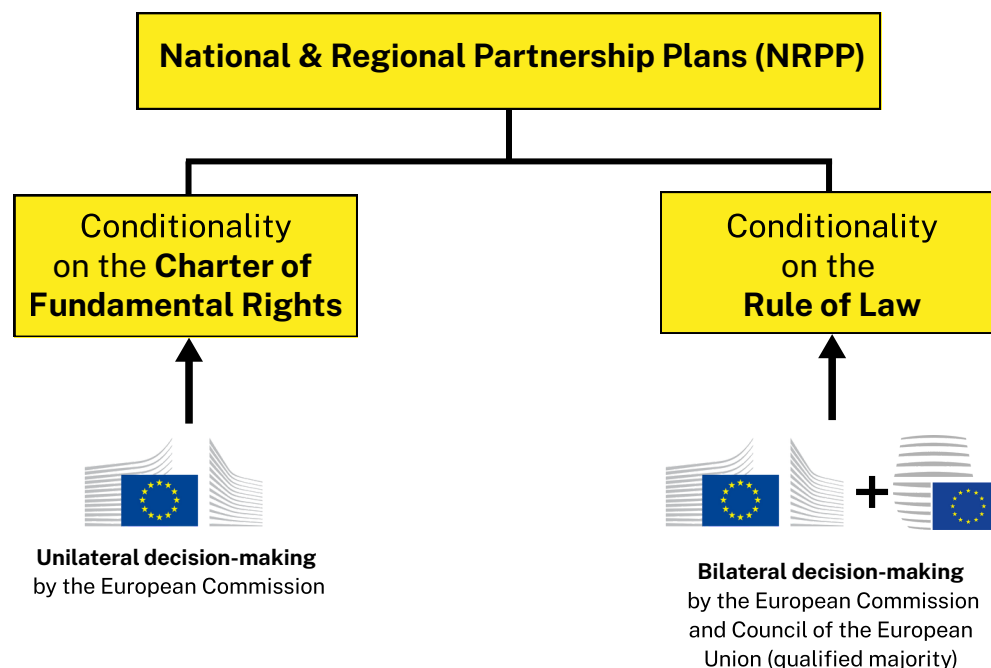


Protection of the EU budget MFF 2028-2035

THE FACTS

With the European Commission's proposal of the Multiannual Financial Framework (2028-2035), the European Union is reshuffling the way it gives funding to Member States. The Commission has proposed the creation of a new instrument, called the National & Regional Partnership Plans, bringing together all funding for Member States (MS), including cohesion and agriculture. Negotiations will start now. MS and the European Parliament can amend this regulation.

This new instrument has a new system to protect the EU budget:



3 New Handrules on Conditionality

1 Self-Assessing

National & regional authorities applying for EU funding need to conduct a self-assessment explaining how their actions will not violate the RoL and the Charter of Fundamental Rights (at the beginning of the MFF).

2 Reprogramming

Decommitted funds will not reduce annual Member States' contribution to the EU budget. Instead, unspent funds will go back to the EU budget and may be reallocated to any other programme (e.g., AgoraEU).

3 Repurposing

The Commission proposes more flexibility for Member States to adjust their NRPP during the MFF. Up to 30% of frozen funds can be reprogrammed.

Recommendations to Strengthen Democracy and Fundamental Rights & Protect the EU Budget

Safeguard the AgoraEU Programme

AgoraEU is a new EU programme to protect democracy, media freedom, and the rule of law. It must remain a core part of the MFF 2028–2035, and its budget must not be cut. By supporting resilience against anti-rights movements and foreign interference, it ensures EU funds defend Europe's core values when they come under attack.

Keep Conditionality Linked to EU Values

The new National & Regional Partnership Regulation must include the safeguarding of democracy, the rule of law, and fundamental rights as part of its core objectives. Without this safeguard, the Commission will lack a clear legal basis to act when these values are violated.

Strengthen the Self-Assessment Tool

The Commission's proposal for national self-assessments of compliance lacks credibility and enforceability. Assessments must be subject to joint review and approval in trilogue by the Member State, the Commission, and the European Parliament. The Regulation should spell out binding benchmarks for the Self-Assessment Tool to ensure uniform standards and legal certainty.

Redirect Frozen Funds to Democracy Programmes

The Commission rightly proposes that decommitted funds stay in the EU budget instead of reducing national contributions. This safeguard must be kept and strengthened by requiring that such funds are redirected to programmes that advance democracy, fundamental rights, and resilience — i.e. AgoraEU.

No 30% Repurposing of Frozen Funds in NRP

Frozen funds must stay frozen as long as violations occur. The rule to repurpose 30% of frozen funds should be deleted. Letting countries use 30% anyway would reward bad behaviour and remove pressure to comply.

Ensure Proper Complaint Handling

The Regulation should give monitoring committees the power to review complaints and ensure all cases are forwarded to the Commission for mandatory review. It must also list the competent complaint authorities, so the mechanism is clear and usable.

Remove Loopholes in Oversight

The draft says the Commission “shall obtain reasonable assurance” that Member States have control systems in place. This is too weak — rules must require the Commission to verify compliance directly, with clear and enforceable standards to prevent politicisation.