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OPINION

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Opinion01

CEEP OPINION ON THE EU MULTI-ANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK (MFF) 2021-2027

Executive summary

- CEEP is convinced of the added value of the EU budget and believes that there are clear margins of manoeuver to make it more efficient and relevant. The financial discussions for the upcoming Multi-Annual Financial Framework should be linked with the debates on the Future of the EU. It is important to agree on the Europe we want for the future and attach corresponding resources to the established priorities.

- **Transversal principles**
    - **EU Added Value**: The EU added value should become one of the key criteria for the successful use of EU funds and thus also for the success of cohesion policy. A stable union means a stable economic and monetary union.
    - **Flexibility**: Funding committed should remain available in the budget and re-allocated to other programmes. This rule should be flexible enough to adapt to new political circumstances during the implementation of the MFF.
    - **Simplification and Administrative Barriers**: CEEP urges the EC to reduce the administrative burden of EU funds management. The EU budget is pressured by the need to be more efficient, to focus on areas where its impact is greatest and to ensure that burdensome rules and procedures do not hinder the achievement of its goals.
    - **Going beyond GDP**. The distribution principles of the EU structural funding should not be exclusively based on the GDP criterion but cover alternative indicators – such as poverty rate, youth and long-term unemployment or the activity rate of vulnerable groups – addressing other EU's most pressing concerns, in line with the principles proclaimed in the EU Pillar of Social Rights.

- **Our Priorities for the Future MFF**
    - **Strategic Infrastructure**: Public investment in key physical and social infrastructures are the main levers to foster growth. The MFF provides a key opportunity for reinforcing their financing. Tools such as the EFSI are also considered by CEEP members as critical.
    - **Circular economy:** it should be a key feature in future funds because of its transversal aspects and multiple effects for citizens. Fostering innovation through circular economic solutions could enable the EU to build a new way to make business, to promote industrial research and to create new jobs protecting the environment.
    - **European Economic and Social Governance:** CEEP favours greater technical assistance to all Member States in improving their institutional and administrative capacities for implementing structural reforms.
    - **Economic, Social, Territorial Cohesion and the ESF+**: CEEP members advocate for a pre-allocation of 25% of the cohesion funds to the future ESF+ and at least keeping the ESF+ budget at the level of the previous programming period (2014 - 2020), including the ESF, Youth Employment initiative and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived. The ESF should remain an EU Structural Fund, and not be expanded to cover priorities beyond its core goals (employment, education, social inclusion and the fight against poverty). CEEP members advocate for maintaining a pre-allocation of 30% of the ESF objectives of addressing poverty and social exclusion.
    - **Investing in Social Dialogue**: It is urgent to develop a mechanism for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Code of Conduct on Partnership by the Member States and make respect of its principles an ex-ante conditionality in the preparation and implementation of operational programmes.

General Remarks

- Europe is at a turning point. Whilst further efforts are still needed to overcome the legacy of the crisis, the European economy is expanding, and employment is finally rising. At the same time, there are clear downside risks: including the major threat of weak productivity which continues to severely drag on inclusive and robust growth, and inadequate levels of public and private investment since the 2008 financial crisis. We now need to ensure that the MFF contributes to building up resilience to future economic shocks and support a long-term perspective for the future.

- This post-crisis context has demonstrated its ability to hamper forward-looking investments both public and private. This situation led local enterprises and EU citizens to rely more than ever on European funding opportunities to compensate investment deficiencies at national level. The EU budget, through its essential instruments, has become in this context a crucial source of funding for the national level.

- The European Commission, in its Communication “A new, modern Multiannual Financial Framework for a European Union that delivers efficiently on its priorities post-2020”, highlighted the key issues which deserve more profound political and financial commitment from the Member States to respond to the strategic challenges Europe faces today and is preparing to face in the future.

- CEEP is convinced of the added value of the EU budget as a whole and believes that there are clear margins of manoeuvre to make it both more efficient and relevant. For this to happen, it will be essential to link the financial discussions for the upcoming MFF with the debates on the Future of the EU, and the main political priorities for the whole programming period, reflecting the EU’s international commitments, such as those stemming from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- It is also important to agree on the Europe we want for the future, and only after that establish the financial priorities and attach corresponding resources.

- With this approach in mind, CEEP presents what public services and SGI employers and providers believe should be the primary priorities for the period 2021-2027. This position builds upon previous ones, such as CEEP Opinion “Investing in Europe” and our response to the White Paper and Reflexion Papers of the European Commission on the Future of Europe.

Transversal principles

CEEP broadly agrees with the key principles identified by the European Commission as those that will enable to reinforce the efficiency of the funds, reinforce their relevance and address the administrative burdens which are often reported from the national, regional and local levels.

Beyond GDP

- The distribution principles of the EU structural funding should not be exclusively based on the GDP criterion but cover alternative indicators addressing the EU's most pressing concerns. These, inter alia, include unemployment, poverty rate and the risk of social exclusion.

- Within the current programming period, it has been observed that certain EU regions with high population and poverty rates are not receiving sufficient funds for effective social progress, whilst others with low population density and a lower GDP than the EU's average, receive more resources than they are able to absorb. This situation poses decommitment risks from the onset, and could lead to funding programmes and activities that would not necessarily be needed or would have little European added value.

- Alternative indicators to GDP are already voluntarily used across policies. Making this criteria available for funding distribution could become a valuable tool for flexibly connecting the available resources with actual regional needs, reflecting the Funds' priorities. These could likewise be linked to the EU added value principle as outlined below.

EU Added Value

- CEEP agrees that European Added Value should become one of the key criteria for the successful use of EU funds and thus also for the success of cohesion policy. A strong Cohesion policy is necessary for a stable European Union, as it contributes to strengthening the EU economy as a whole, including the Euro.

- So far, there is no uniform definition for the EU added-value. This would, however, be essential should the specific criteria to measure the European added value of EU funds be discussed and approved together with the funds' regulations.

- The setting of objectives and indicators to evaluate the European added value of EU co-financing must take place at EU and not at Member States' level, during the programming process. This also applies to the specific measures required for implementing strategies such as Europe 2020 at national, regional and local levels.

- The added value should be measured against objectives such as: to overcome socio-economic disparities, to stabilise growth and tackling crises through public investment, to address poverty and social exclusion in complementarity with labour market inclusion, to achieve common EU objectives and improve the quality of administrative capacities.

Flexibility

- CEEP agrees with the European Commission (EC) assessment that the EU should be able to react efficiently and quickly to unforeseen events like the current migration challenge or the aftermath of the financial and economic crises. Increasing the flexibility should be done in a way that does not harm the functioning of the budget.

- Flexibility instruments provided for by the MFF regulation were intensively used during the first half of the MFF 2014-2020. A long-term plan, such as the MFF, requires sufficient flexibility to cope with new challenges and priorities that arise during its implementation.

- As they proved efficient in the past few years, we believe that the current flexibility and special instruments must be reinforced in the next MFF, the purpose of those instruments being to provide additional means to new and unforeseen challenges.

- CEEP particularly supports the Commission's proposal for stricter de-commitment rules. Presently, if the sums committed to a programme have not been claimed by the end of the second year following the programme's adoption, any unpaid money ceases to be available. CEEP agrees that the funding committed and thus attributed to the EU budget should stay available in this budget and be re-allocated to another programme. This rule should be flexible enough to adapt to new political circumstances during the implementation of the MFF.

- CEEP supports the strong potential behind the EC proposal to put aside "a share, often called a non-programmed reserve, within each spending programme that remains unallocated and reserved for unexpected developments".

- The creation of a non-programmed reserve is an interesting option to address significant unforeseen challenges during the programming period and to facilitate the re-programming of operational programmes to adapt ESIF investments to the changing needs of each region, and also to address the effects of globalisation at regional and local level.

Simplification and Administrative Barriers

- CEEP urges the EC to reduce the administrative burden of EU funds' management. The EU budget is pressured by the need to be more efficient, to focus on areas where its impact is most significant and to ensure that burdensome rules and procedures do not hinder the achievement of its goals.

- It is essential to reduce the administrative burden for beneficiaries and management authorities, genuinely simplifying the use of the Funds. CEEP is concerned that EU funds could be jeopardising their own objectives, as the complexity of the management and control system is no longer proportionate to their added value.

- CEEP members benefitting from European co-financing have reported the following difficulties from the ground:
    - Difficulties to find relevant and sufficient information on the programming and call for tenders. Regional and local authorities face hindrances that make it harder to properly use the European resources available;
    - Administrative complexities of applications but also of the reporting which is very hard to deal with without additional human resources and expertise;
    - Burdensome audit, even for minimal expenditure, delays payments considerably;
    - The necessity to make substantial payments in advance impacts the budget of small and medium-sized enterprises and associations negatively;
    - Several of the issues treated by the REFIT Platform, in response to questions landed into the "lighten the load" tool, are directly or indirectly linked to administrative burden encountered within the application of cohesion policies on the ground. That is why the REFIT Platform will issue a horizontal opinion on interconnectivity, pointing out the combination of EU legislation currently laying down a heavy administrative burden which discourages potential beneficiaries of EU funding. This is intended as a concrete input to the MFF 2021-2027.

- The costs associated with programming, management and control should be assessed, to reduce the burden. They must also be adjusted in line with the scope of the programmes and projects, following the principle of proportionality.

- CEEP is in favour of any future reform process including a focus on removing administrative barriers, both about the design of the general EU policy rules as well as the implementation and carrying out of individual programmes and projects. The REFIT Platform can be of great support in this endeavour, as well as the finding from the High-Level Group of Independent Experts on Monitoring Simplification for Beneficiaries of the European Structural and Investment Funds.

When assessing decentralised programmes where funds are allocated by national, regional and local authorities, the principle of subsidiarity shall be applied in a more consistent way than before. CEEP recommends the High-Level Task Force on Subsidiarity and Proportionality to fully take this aspect into account when drafting its final report.

Our Priorities for the Future MFF

Strategic Infrastructure

CEEP always considered public investment in key physical and social infrastructures as the main lever to foster long-term growth for the benefit of citizens and enterprises in Europe. The EU funds provide vital opportunities for reinforcing their financing. Tools such as the European fund for strategic investment or EFSI are considered by CEEP members as critical for this endeavour.

Investing in critical physical infrastructures
The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) is the primary funding instrument to promote growth, jobs and competitiveness through targeted infrastructure investment at European level. It supports the development of high performing, sustainable and efficiently interconnected trans-European networks in the fields of transport, energy and digital services. For the period 2014-2020, the CEF had programme a budget of around €33.3 billion (26.3 billion for transport, 5.9 billion for energy, and 1.1 billion for digital infrastructure) in current prices. It is of prime importance to also link investments in critical physical infrastructures to the 2030 environmental goals, as investments in transmission and distribution electricity grid and investments aiming at a more effective and well-functioning pan-European transport system could have a positive impact on emissions affecting the global warming. Investing in physical infrastructure will therefore give both positive economic outcomes in rural regions and at the same time contribute to lower emissions having a positive effect on global warming.

- **An ambitious European energy policy**: Significant investments are needed in transmission and distribution electricity grids by 2030 to support the decarbonisation of the power sector and to realise a European electricity market that would benefit all consumers and businesses.[1]
  An analysis of all projected capital expenditures in the domains of electricity transmission, gas transmission, storage, oil supply connections, carbon networks and power-to-gas grid injections highlights an overall expenditure of EUR 229 Bln in the decade 2021-2030 in the EU 28 region. This adds to the EUR 67 Bln of infrastructure investments still pending for commissioning up to 2020.[2]

- **A new impetus for the digital agenda:** the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) should reflect the need to strengthen the EU position in the global digital landscape. Along with pro-investment regulation, EU funding for R&D and innovation is essential to support European innovators and tech leaders. The next MFF should stimulate future oriented digital technologies, solving individual and collective daily life challenges, improving public services, mobility, safety and ultimately the standard of living of the EU citizens.

[1] Open letter from the Electrification Alliance on the Multi-Annual Financial Framework – “Towards clean and smart infrastructure spending”: https://cdn.eurelectric.org/media/2479/the_electrification_alliance_on_the_mff-2018-030-0170-01-e-h-B635B965.pdf
[2] “Investment needs in trans-European energy infrastructure up to 2030 and beyond”, DG energy, Ecofys, COWI, Vito.

- **Digital Skills:** Public services employers need to re-skill and up-skill their workforce and to attract specific digital know-how. Not only because of the importance of structural impacts but also due the high stability of public services' workforce. As other ICT-using sectors our enterprises are not able to precisely predict future skills' requirements, which in any circumstances are likely to change fast. This requires highly innovative and flexible training solutions. In addition, many public services' enterprises are of micro, small and medium size. Hence, we need to support them as other SMEs in finding the right training solutions and partners. The European Social Fund is Europe's main financial tool for supporting jobs and investing in human capital, which is a prerequisite for a competitive workforce. A lot is already being done within ESF programmes to address the digital skills challenges, providing a wide and vivid source of information and a lot more can be done, by stressing these needs, analysing them more precisely, sharing experience and evidence, and disseminating solutions.

- **Developing Investments in the Transport sector:** Transport operators estimated at 500 billion euros of investments needed to complete Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T), whilst national investments in transport remain at a historic low (expected at 0.8% of GDP in the Western EU Member States and 1.2% in Central and Eastern Europe)[3]. Whilst the CEF will not be able to fill the whole investment gap, creative solutions could be found. As such, a combination of the CEF with some elements of the Cohesion Policy or other ESIF instruments, will help to decrease disparities both in road and railway infrastructure and to secure transport connectivity, which is crucial for "free movement" and will develop those regions in both their economic and social aspects.

- **Investing in R&D**: Investing in physical infrastructure must be combined with investments in R&D programmes, in order to increase the impacts and fallouts. Several programmes are already in place and should be extended and further developed. As such, an extension of the EIB funded programmes in R&D focused on development of "green technology" could have an positive effect on European competitiveness and stimulate productivity growth.

Investing in Social Infrastructures

CEEP believes that the European Commission in its communication "A new, modern Multiannual Financial Framework for a European Union that delivers efficiently on its priorities post-2020" did not sufficiently highlight the growing European needs regarding financing social infrastructures.

To raise the profile of this key issue in the next MFF, on 23rd January 2018, the High-Level Task Force on "Boosting Investing in Social Infrastructure in Europe"[4], chaired by Romano Prodi and Christian Sautter, presented a comprehensive report on investing in social infrastructures.

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[3] https://www.espo.be/media/More%20EU%20Budget%20for%20Transport_2016.06.pdf

[4] Established in February 2017 by the European Association of Long-Term Investors (ELTI), and including CEEP, the High-Level Task Force's mission was to raise political attention to the crucial role of social infrastructure and related services, aiming to enhance public and private investments in this field.

The report assessed that investment in social infrastructure, both private and public, is far from reaching the level needed to cater for the EU's current population, and is not always appropriate in view of changing needs and expectations over the coming decades.

- **Education:** Public investment in this sector has stagnated, losing 0.2 points of GDP between 2002 and 2015. Lack of investment in this field has led to further inequalities in educational attainment, as more deprived areas are not being provided with the same quality of education as more affluent ones.

- **Healthcare**: it is assumed that an average of 5 % of total annual health expenditure is spent on infrastructure and that for 2014 EUR 1.4 tn was the overall EU healthcare spend (Eurostat 2017), then around EUR 70 bn was spent on infrastructure. At the same time, as a result of ageing EU population, considerably faster growth in demand for healthcare is expected in the coming decades in the EU-13 compared to the EU-15 (2015 Ageing Report).

- **Long-term care** (LTC): The Report assessed an additional gap of EUR 50 bn p.a. The shift from informal to formal care and the converging of LTC coverage and costs for those countries that are below the EU average levels of care in this respect imply a substantial fiscal risk (2015 Ageing Report).

- Existing **affordable housing** stock is falling across Europe (except for France), and homelessness is rising. Therefore, measures must be taken to ensure there is enough affordable, accessible and energy efficient housing to meet demand. Public funding is also decreasing (especially in the EU-15) whilst demand increases. The social pressures created by this climate have increased inequality and migration, leading, in part, to an overburden rate of 11.3 %, and an overcrowding rate of 16.7 %. According to Housing Europe, approximately 450-500 000 new homes are needed, and 800 000 require renovation.

In conclusion, an investment gap of EUR 142 bn p.a. is identified. The total minimum estimate for the next 12 years (until 2030) represents an investment gap of around EUR 1.5 tn

To answer this infrastructure gap, the report identifies how to shift from the present scenario with a major social investment gap, towards a scenario we define as 'smart capacitating strategies', by focusing efforts on empowering people.
The report advances the following proposals for the next programming period of the MFF:

- In the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), establish a specific policy window for social investments including social infrastructure investments;
- During the annual European Semester, consider assessing EU countries' investment in social infrastructure and make country-specific recommendations for investment in social infrastructure;
- Focus cohesion policy more tightly on social investment and infrastructure and facilitate further blending of financial resources;
- Pilot the launch of some thematic and/or geographic investment platforms to bundle projects and boost initiatives for social sector investments;

- Strengthen the strategic role of the European Investment Advisory Hub's (EIAH) technical assistance through setting up a strong network with NPBIs and other national or regional agencies;
- Build the capacity of service provider organisations and local authorities .

European Economic and Social Governance

- There should be a balanced link between EU funds and the European economic governance in the European Semester. This link should be reciprocal whilst allowing for the necessary flexibilities. The latter are especially required for long-term priorities, particularly in the field of employment and social inclusion.

- CEEP often argued that greater recognition of the territorial dimension would be beneficial for the European Semester, i.e. economic governance and the policy objectives of economic, social and territorial cohesion, as well as of sustainable growth, employment and environmental protection should be considered in a fair and balanced manner.

- A reinforced territorialising of economic governance could strengthen the understanding of regional variation in economic, social or institutional development needs, and could help shape the reform proposals accordingly.

- CEEP also favours more significant technical assistance with certain conditions: In November 2015, the European Commission proposed to establish the Structural Reform Support Programme 2017- 2020, to provide the Member States with technical assistance in designing and implementing structural reforms.

- The objective of the Structural Reform Support Programme is to offer technical assistance to all Member States, aimed at improving their institutional and administrative capacities for the implementation of structural reforms and the development of strong economic foundations.

- CEEP advocates for strengthening the position of Member States in requesting, implementing and monitoring this kind of support. CEEP welcomes to this effect the recent development of national productivity boards which allow the Member States to design their own national boards either by setting up new institutions or adapting the mandate of existing bodies, provided they are independent.

Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion

- CEEP invites the Commission to present a comprehensive legislative proposal for a strong and effective post-2020 cohesion policy. The borders between social and territorial policies will diminish, with urban regions and metropolitan areas attracting the most productive labour, the most productive companies and creating large profits and high incomes. This is at the expense of rural regions that have had a negative development over the last decades, leading to calls for an increased and closer connection between regional and social fund.

- CEEP is convinced that the future of cohesion policy is inextricably linked to the future of the EU. The European cohesion policy is vital for a strong and effective European Union. CEEP is therefore also very much in favour of securing the vital role of cohesion policy in the EU beyond 2020 in line with the objectives of the Pillar of social rights.

- Although cohesion policy has mitigated the impact of the recent economic and financial crisis, regional inequalities and disparities in competitiveness remain high.

- The policy for strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion is one of the most critical and comprehensive EU policies. It is an essential component of the Treaties and a pillar of the European integration process, likewise the internal market or the Economic and Monetary Union.

- Cohesion policy creates a level playing field as an essential counterpart to the internal market rules, it helps to protect existing jobs and create new ones through investments in the real economy. It ensures that the less developed Member States, regions and municipalities can benefit from the advantages offered by EU integration. As a result, cohesion policy makes a significant contribution to strengthening the EU as a whole.

- CEEP calls for strengthened action to reduce these disparities and prevent the development of new inequalities in all types of regions (including outermost regions), whilst maintaining and consolidating support for territories to facilitate ownership of the policy in every region and to achieve EU objectives throughout the EU.

- Financial instruments can be a useful complement to grants, to increase the impact of the cohesion policy and to make it possible for the EU to face all the challenges ahead. Indeed, when appropriate, financial instruments are a way to leverage on European funds by crowding in private money.

- Given their mandate to carry out development or promotional activities, in the full respect of their different forms, and the fact that they are all solid financial institutions, NPBIs are natural partners of the European Union Institutions in enabling the roll-out of financial instruments.

ESF +: Investing in People and Social dialogue

- The modernised ESF + is considered already to be the primary tool for the implementation of the Pillar of Social Rights and of the relevant "Social" Country Specific Recommendations. As such it is an essential instrument for CEEP's membership which pointed out the following objectives to be accomplished in the next programming period:

- CEEP members advocate for a pre-allocation of 25% of the cohesion funds to the future ESF + and at least keeping the ESF + budget at the level of the previous programming period (2014 - 2020) which included the ESF, Youth employment initiative, and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived.

- The ESF must remain a Structural Fund. ESI Funds have proven to be the most effective financial instrument in the fight against social and economic inequalities. Unlike other policies, cohesion policy does not subsidize poverty; it acts upon the structural causes of socioeconomic exclusion.

- The European Social Fund must absolutely remain the preferred instrument for employment, education, social inclusion and the fight against poverty. Its core priorities should continue to be the promotion of employment and social inclusion, particularly through employment, targeting the most vulnerable groups, such as women, young people, immigrants, the long-term unemployed, older people, persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities, across all EU regions.

- CEEP members also advocate for maintaining a pre-allocation of 30% of the ESF objectives of addressing poverty and social exclusion. Furthermore, a wider perimeter for the project appears to be necessary as too many of them were mostly focused on integration into the labour market. This approach is essential but should be made complementary to social inclusion approaches in the future.

- CEEP members believe that the European Commission should provide managing authorities with guidance at national level to present ways to better foster synergies between the funds such as the ESF+, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI).

- Education and training systems also have a crucial role in fostering mutual understanding and respect between people. However, following the economic crisis, investment figures show that in many Member States investment in education and training has declined in real terms with significant consequences for national, regional, local and institutional budgets.

- The MFF can complement the national policy through the social fund. The proposed ESF+ should focus on being complementary to national policy in education, projects supporting long term unemployed, integrating newly arrived immigrants and working with reconversion (adaptation) of the labour market. Labour market will change and employers will face new demands from markets and customers, this will in turn lead to new demands on the labour force to adapt, educate themselves and make sure they are productive and employable, all due to technological developments and globalization.

CEEP members urge Member States:

- to ensure sufficient, sustainable and predictable investment in education and training systems both in their National Budget but also in the future EU budget.
- to guarantee that European funds are only an additional investment in the national education systems and they are not to compensate for the decline in national, regional and local budgets;
- to ensure that social investment, especially in education and training for all is prioritised in the review of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2017-20 and in the new programming period for 2020-2026;

The European Social Partners initiated a European project which was concluded by a final conference on the 9th of March on '*The European Social Fund: Supporting Social Dialogue at National, Regional and Local Level*'. Its purpose was for the European cross-industry social partners to take stock of the implementation of the Partnership Principle in the governance of the European Social Fund (ESF) and the use of ESF funding for social partner capacity building.

The following recommendations were made following the project conclusion to influence the next MFF.

The European Commission, the Member States and Managing authorities should:

- ensure a clearly defined role and status for social partner organisations in the context of ESF implementation, as part of a renewed code of conduct on Partnership;
- develop an approach whereby all national members of the European cross-industry social partner organisations are involved in helping to shape the priorities of the partnership agreements, in the preparation and implementation of operational programmes and are invited to participate in monitoring committees, as appropriate;
- provide social partner members of Monitoring Committees with training, expert input and advice and guidance, as necessary.
- develop a mechanism for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Code by the Member States;
- Make adherence to the principles of the Code of Conduct an ex-ante conditionality.

Conclusion

- Following Brexit there is much we need to take stock of in order to define new paths and instruments which will help us consolidate a Union with 27 Member States.

- We welcome the progress made by EU leaders in the discussion on the future of Europe at the Bratsilava and the Rome Summits . We are looking forward to further progress in Sibiu in 2019.

- CEEP and its members fully share the priorities defined by the European Commission in its 2nd of May package.

- The MFF negotiations already constitute a key momentum in this endeavour. Starting from the Commission's package, new solutions will be put on the table to address common key priorities , namely: security, migration, our investment policy and investing in people.

- CEEP stands ready to contribute to a swift agreement by the Council and the European Parliament on the MFF package, whilst enriching its content.

- CEEP core argument in the future negotiations will be to demonstrate and explain to the EU institutions how crucial Europe needs strong social and physical infrastructures to respond to the challenges Europe will face in the future.

- The future MFF must provide Europe with the tools it needs to face modern challenges whilst protecting EU citizens and enterprises.