ROME, BUCHAREST, SOFIA, NICOSIA, ZAGREB, PRAGUE, TALLINN, ATHENS, BUDAPEST, RIGA, VILNIUS, VALLETTA, WARSAW, LISBON, LJUBLJANA, BRATISLAVA, MADRID

H.E. Micheál MARTIN
The Taoiseach of Ireland

Cc: H.E. António Costa
President of the European Council

2nd October 2026

Dear Taoiseach,

As the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2028–2034 enter a decisive phase, we are writing to you, in your capacity as President of the Council of the European Union, to share some considerations ahead of the forthcoming revision of the Negotiating Box.

We fully recognise that the European Union is facing a changing strategic environment, bringing new challenges but also new opportunities for common European action. The next MFF must enable Europe to seize these opportunities while responding to growing challenges, including security and defence, competitiveness, connectivity, energy security and resilience. At the same time, this must not come at the expense of treaty-based policies, which remain the backbone of European integration and themselves contribute to addressing these new challenges. Therefore, the total volume set in the Cyprus Presidency Negotiating Box remains the relevant basis to effectively address all these financial needs. This is not a time for Europe to lower its ambitions.

Cohesion Policy and the Common Agricultural Policy are long-standing policies, but their objectives are as relevant as ever. They promote convergence between Member States and regions, strengthen the Single Market and support rural, less developed areas. They also contribute to Europe's competitiveness and food security, while providing tangible support to millions of European citizens and demonstrating the added value of common European spending. Both policies have repeatedly adapted to new economic and social realities while remaining true to their Treaty objectives. They also generate direct and indirect benefits for economies across the European Union.

We therefore believe that the overall funding for Cohesion Policy and the CAP must be preserved in the next MFF. As highlighted in our Joint Declaration of 26 May, these policies already face reductions in real terms under the Commission's proposal, despite the overall increase in the size of the MFF. Reducing them further would not modernise the EU budget; it would only weaken it and risk undermining public support for the

European project. Moreover, the new MFF already entails a fundamental transformation of its structure, programming and approach to spending.

Europe's new priorities require adequate additional resources, while the funding for Agriculture and Cohesion must be preserved. In this regard, we stand ready to work constructively on the revenue side, including on proposals for–new own resources that would ease direct pressure on national budgets. Such resources should be genuine, fair, simple and non-regressive, in line with our May Declaration. We will carefully consider the adjustments to the proposals that the Commission has committed to present.

We should also consider, as options, a more gradual repayment of NextGenerationEU, which could create additional fiscal space in the next MFF, subject to an assessment of its impact on the overall cost of repayment, as well as limited and targeted European debt instruments, for clearly identified strategic priorities, in line with May Declaration. Finally, the current system of rebates should have no place in the next MFF. Rebates were intended to address an excessive burden on the contributions of certain Member States. The circumstances that originally justified such corrections have fundamentally changed. In assessing national contributions, account should be taken not only of their absolute level, but also of Member States' different levels of prosperity and the relative effort required from each of them.

We count on the Irish Presidency to duly take these considerations into account in preparing the forthcoming Negotiating Box and stand ready to work with the Presidency and all Member States towards an ambitious, balanced and adequately financed MFF.

Yours sincerely,

Giorgia Meloni
President of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Republic

Nicușor Dan
President of Romania

Rumen Radev
Prime Minister of Bulgaria

Nikos Christodoulides
President of Cyprus

Andrej Plenković
Prime Minister of Croatia

Andrej Babiš
Prime Minister of the Czech Republic

Kristen Michal
Prime Minister of Estonia

Kyriakos Mitsotakis
Prime Minister of Greece

Péter Magyar
Prime Minister of Hungary

Andris Kulbergs
Prime Minister of Latvia

Gitanas Nausėda
President of the Republic of Lithuania

Robert Abela
Prime Minister of Malta

Donald Tusk
Prime Minister of Poland

Luís Montenegro
Prime Minister of Portugal

Janez Janša
Prime Minister of Slovenia

Robert Fico
Prime Minister of Slovakia

Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón
President of the Government of Spain