



Statement of the Advisory Board for East and North Finland to the Government of Finland, the European Parliament and the European Commission on the NRP Regulation

Cohesion policy for balanced growth for all of Finland

The Advisory Board for East and North Finland thanks the Government for its clear position, which recognizes the regional orientation of cohesion policy, the predictability of funding and the importance of special funding for northern sparsely populated areas (NSPA).

We consider it important that Finland defends these principles in the funding negotiations. At the same time, we present the following clarifications and concrete actions to the Government, the EU Parliament and the Commission so that the National and Territorial Partnership Plan strengthens the development of the regions of the entire EU and Finland.

Cohesion policy must be based on multi-level governance and partnership. The Advisory Board for East and North Finland supports the Commission's proposal to the Parliament in November 2025 to supplement the NRP Regulation COM (2025) 565 final/2 by elevating partnership and multi-level governance as horizontal principles alongside the rule of law and the EU Charter of Human Rights.

The regional councils must have a clear responsibility for the planning, decision-making and implementation of the EU 2028–2034 shared management programmes. According to § 17 of the Regional Development Act, the regional councils are responsible for the strategic overall development of the region. The regional councils cannot only be involved in ensuring the acceptability of the National and Regional Partnership Plan. The regional councils must be an equal and influential partner alongside the state actor in the preparation of the national plan and must play a leading role in the regional preparation of the programme.

The partnership plan must contain not only national and sectoral, but also regional chapters. Currently, regional chapters are only an option for the partnership plan. We propose an amendment to Article 21 of the EU Regulation COM (2025) 565 final/2 by deleting the word “where relevant”.

Finland should aim for NSPA funding of EUR 500 million (in current prices) for the entire programming period, comparable to the current level. NSPA support is based on Finland's EU Accession Treaty and Article 174 of the TFEU. The Advisory Council for East and North Finland agrees with the Government's position that special NSPA funding should be secured also in the future. We propose that the Northern Sparsely Populated Areas be included in the EU Regulation COM (2025) 565 final/2 as a basis for allocating funds in order to ensure Finland's greatest possible cohesion contribution and obligations under the Accession Treaty.

Helsinki, 10 December 2025