

COPENHAGEN, BERLIN, THE HAGUE, VIENNA, HELSINKI, STOCKHOLM,

28 September 2026

Micheál Martin, T.D.
Taoiseach

Dear Taoiseach, dear Micheál,

Thank you for your personal commitment during your Council Presidency in the complex negotiations on the next Multiannual Financial Framework. The MFF will determine how Europe allocates its common resources well into the next decade. Europe's next long-term budget is about much more than money. It is about political priorities and about whether we can achieve the goal we have jointly set ourselves: a strong and sovereign Europe in an uncertain world.

To achieve this, the MFF must be fundamentally reformed. We must make choices.

Together, we reached an important milestone this summer with the agreement on the Partial General Agreements for the three major future spending programmes.

We are now entering the decisive phase of the negotiations, in which we must determine the overall size of the MFF and decide which areas should be prioritised for funding. The funding should be focussed on common investment in security and defence, competitiveness, innovation and the fight against irregular migration.

In this context, we would like to reiterate that the MFF negotiations are characterised by a fundamental asymmetry: our six countries alone finance almost 40% of all

Member States' contributions. While net contributors as a whole are in the minority they shoulder around three quarters of the total financing burden.

Almost every EU member state is making painful efforts to consolidate its public finances. There will be no European sovereignty without sound public finances. We are not calling for cuts compared to the existing MFF. The MFF will grow compared to the current MFF. Any such increase during a period of domestic fiscal consolidation is already a significant commitment. It shows how seriously we take the need for a stronger Europe. But we also need to be realistic. The European Commission has proposed a nominal increase of around 60%. That is simply not realistic. Not economically. Not politically. And certainly not at a time when public finances in several member states are a cause for serious concern. An increase in staffing levels in the EU institutions at a time when we are reducing staff in our own administrations is also out of step with the times.

The EU budget is ultimately paid for by European citizens. That remains true whatever financing mechanism or own resources we invent. Common borrowing cannot be the answer either. So, there is no avoiding the difficult question of the overall volume.

The Commission's proposal will need to be reduced by several hundred billion euros. All headings will have to contribute to these savings.

In this context, the proposal to be put forward by the Irish Presidency carries particular responsibility. If the Irish negotiating box is to serve as the basis for further discussions, it must set out an overall volume that can realistically be financed by those who carry the main financial burden. This issue cannot be postponed.

Best regards,

Mette Frederiksen
Prime Minister of Denmark

Friedrich Merz
Federal Chancellor of Germany

Rob Jetten
Prime Minister of the Netherlands

Christian Stocker
Federal Chancellor of Austria

Petteri Orpo
Prime Minister of Finland

Ulf Kristersson
Prime Minister of Sweden

Cc:

His Excellency António Costa
President of the European Council