

POSITION OF THE ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF METROPOLITAN AREAS AND AGGLOMERATIONS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC (MOA) ON THE EU BUDGET 2028-2034

EUROPE NEEDS A COMPETITIVE BUDGET WITH A STRONG TERRITORIAL DIMENSION

MOA supports a more flexible and performance-oriented European budget that **reflects territorial cohesion and the priorities of metropolitan areas and agglomerations**.

MOA are among the **main drivers of European competitiveness, innovation and transformation**. They concentrate businesses, universities, research capacities, a skilled workforce, as well as strategic transport, energy and digital infrastructure. At the same time, **they face a high concentration of challenges** in the areas of housing, mobility, energy transformation, public services, the environment and social cohesion. All implemented projects have a broader impact on residents.

MOA in the Czech Republic **concentrate approximately 60% of the population and 70% of GDP**. With the Czech Republic's GDP at around CZK 8.3 trillion in 2025, they represent an economic base of approximately CZK 6 trillion.

The future Multiannual Financial Framework must therefore connect **European competitiveness with territorial cohesion**. MOA should be not only final beneficiaries of national programmes, but also **strategic partners in the planning, decision-making and implementation of European investments**.

WHAT WE DEMAND

1. A guaranteed territorial dimension in the National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPPs)

MOA must be involved from the outset in **the preparation, negotiation, implementation and revisions of the future NRPPs**, and the European Commission should assess the quality of partnership when approving NRPPs.

Simplification of the national planning architecture **must not mean centralisation or narrowing it down** to a few national priorities.

MOA supports a **mandatory territorial or urban chapter** of the NRPPs with a clearly defined and **predictable financial allocation**, prepared and implemented with the active involvement of territorial partners.

2. A stable and predictable allocation for sustainable urban development

The future framework should guarantee **at least 15% for sustainable urban development**.

Strategic metropolitan investments require several years of technical, property-law, financial and permitting preparation of projects. A predictable allocation makes it possible to build a pipeline of well-prepared projects and coordinate related investments among cities, municipalities, sectors and funds.

3. Strengthening ITI and integrated place-based investments

Integrated Territorial Investments have created, over two programming periods, a functioning framework for cooperation between Czech core cities and their wider functional areas. The **integrated approach increases the benefit** compared with isolated projects by approximately 20-25%, and by up to 40% when focused on competitiveness. Investments in integrated MOA projects will therefore be inseparably reflected in the growth of the entire Czech Republic.

The future MFF should **make use of and further develop this capacity of MOA and the ITI instruments** to contribute to economic growth, rather than replace it.

We demand in particular:

- strengthening of the ITI instrument;
- stronger decision-making powers for the holders of integrated strategies;
- greater concentration of funds through integrated strategies instead of fragmented individual calls;
- ensuring technical support;
- focusing integrated instruments on competitiveness, innovation, resilience and cross-border cooperation.

4. Assess quality and impact, not only speed or the degree of innovativeness

The performance model **must respect the reality of complex and long-term investments**; it must not be based on quick, unsystematic and low-quality solutions. Quality and adequate time bring real impact.

Cities must **not bear the financial consequences of failure to meet national reforms** that they cannot influence. Implementation deadlines must remain realistic and territorial allocations stable throughout the entire programming period.

Project assessment should be based primarily on their **necessity, quality, readiness, cost-effectiveness, scalability and measurable impact**.

European funding should support high-quality, rational and proven projects capable of delivering high economic, environmental or social benefits; therefore, we **reject the N+10 months rule**, which in the case of complex investments creates pressure for speed instead of quality. We demand that at least **the N+3 rule be maintained**.

MOA demands direct access for metropolitan areas and their umbrella organisations to technical assistance so that they can pursue European priorities in the territory directly and over the long term.

5. Metropolitan areas must be part of the European Competitiveness Fund

MOA are a natural environment for testing, demonstrating, deploying and subsequently scaling up new technologies and solutions.

Cities and municipalities **must therefore be explicitly eligible actors under the future European Competitiveness Fund** and must have the possibility to access support both directly and through national instruments.

At the same time, competitiveness policy must not lead to the concentration of investments only in a few of Europe's already strongest innovation ecosystems.

The future ECF should include **mechanisms supporting a balanced geographical distribution of investments**, support for first-time applicants, tailor-made technical assistance, the diffusion of innovation between regions and the preservation of the convergence benefits of cohesion policy.