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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Council
Subject:	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Fund for economic, social and territorial cohesion, agriculture and rural, fisheries and maritime, prosperity and security for the period 2028-2034 and amending Regulation (EU) 2023/955 and Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 ('NRPP Regulation') - Partial general approach = <i>Statement by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania</i>

Delegations will find attached the statement by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to be included in the minutes of the Council.

STATEMENT BY ESTONIA, LATVIA AND LITHUANIA

on recognising and addressing the challenges faced by the regions bordering Russia and Belarus, in the context of negotiations on the NRPP package and the next Multiannual Financial Framework

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania acknowledge the progress achieved during the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework package. We remain fully committed to supporting the work of the Cypriot and Irish Presidencies to reach an agreement this year.

Nevertheless, important concerns remain regarding the extent to which the proposed framework reflects the challenges faced by the European Union's Eastern border regions, in particular those bordering Russia and Belarus.

On 18 February 2026, the Commission adopted its Communication "Strong Regions for a Safe Europe", recognizing that NUTS2 regions bordering Russia, Belarus and Ukraine face specific security, economic and demographic challenges stemming from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, hybrid threats and the fundamentally changed geopolitical environment and states that "*the regions most affected by the deteriorating security environment and by increased risks of conventional military actions are those on the external border with Russia and Belarus*". Addressing these challenges comes at the expense of long-term investments in competitiveness, innovation, societal well-being and sustainable socio-economic development. Communication rightly underlines that strengthening the resilience and prosperity of these regions is a strategic investment in Europe's security and stability.

While references to the Communication and the challenges faced by Eastern border regions have been introduced into several legislative proposals, the corresponding provisions do not yet sufficiently reflect the scale, persistence and unique nature of these challenges.

The needs and circumstances of the eastern border regions are unique, and the challenges faced by Eastern border regions in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania go beyond what can reasonably be addressed through national budgets alone. These regions are required to absorb growing security, resilience and preparedness costs and impact on the population, while simultaneously safeguarding their economic vitality, social cohesion and long-term development prospects. Without a stronger response, these pressures risk deepening territorial disparities and undermining the attractiveness and competitiveness of regions located on the Union's external border. In this context, there is high importance to mitigate these challenges properly.

Therefore, we maintain our position that regions bordering Russia and Belarus require greater visibility across the future legislative framework, accompanied by additional EU-level support and adequate budgetary backing under the Multiannual Financial Framework. A framework that acknowledges these challenges without providing a commensurate response risks falling short of the Union's strategic objectives.

The Baltic States remain among the Member States receiving the lowest proposed ring-fenced amounts per hectare. **Given the challenges and additional investments needs to strengthen security and resilience of the EU's Eastern border regions, continuing external convergence of direct payments remains important to ensure food security and resilience of our regions.** This issue should be addressed accordingly.

For these reasons, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania consider that further work is required to ensure that the next Multiannual Financial Framework delivers a more balanced and credible response to the realities faced by the regions bordering Russia and Belarus.