



Parlamentul României Senat

Bucharest, 6 November 2025

Courtesy translation

OPINION of the SENATE of ROMANIA

on the 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

COM(2025) 565 final

The Romanian Senate examined the 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 - COM(2025) 565 final – according to the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon Protocol (no. 2).

Taking into account the report of the Committee for European Affairs, **the Plenary of the Senate**, during its session of November 3, 2025

- (1) Notes that the 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 - COM(2025) 565 final - complies with the principle of subsidiarity but does not comply with the principle of proportionality.
- (2) Formulates observations and proposals, in accordance with the opinions of parliamentary committees and the views of ministries, respectively:
 - a) maintaining consistent allocations for the two policies essential for achieving convergence, cohesion and the CAP, for a simplified and efficient single Fund, but not to the detriment of convergence and the development of disadvantaged regions;
 - b) allocation criteria based on GDP/capita, unemployment, poor infrastructure and demographic developments and we call for a transition period and compensatory corrections for states with persistent gaps;
 - c) regarding co-financing rates, we propose greater flexibility regarding the possibility for the European Union to cover a higher share for strategic infrastructure and green/digital transition projects in less developed regions;

- d) financing the CAP through a distinct and sufficient budget, which continues to operate on the basis of the two pillars. It is necessary to outline a fair allocation formula that recognizes the rural specificities and the structural challenges of the country. Agriculture and rural areas must remain a priority, with an emphasis on small and medium-sized farms in order to maintain convergence.

In this regard:

- i. It is appropriate to create a separate chapter for agriculture in national and regional plans, including specific objectives, result indicators and clearly defined financial resources, in order to prevent agricultural priorities from being diluted in favour of other cohesion policies. Without a clear demarcation of funds for agriculture, there is a risk that resources will be redistributed to other national policies, to the detriment of farmers;
- ii. the Commission's proposal to reduce the share of the CAP in the European Union budget, from 38% in the current financial framework to 14.7% for the period 2028–2034, raises serious concerns about the capacity of Romanian farmers to continue the process of modernization and adaptation to new economic and climate challenges.

Such a reduction seriously affects the investment capacity of farmers, especially in countries with a predominantly medium and small agricultural structure. The elimination of measures dedicated to rural development by merging Pillar II into the single fund will lead to reduced investments in agricultural infrastructure, processing, digitalization and services for the rural environment.

This will accentuate the gaps between European regions and limit young people's access to employment and training opportunities in agriculture;

- iii. we propose that support for farmers, including direct payments and rural development measures, should continue to be fully financed from the European Union budget. This approach ensures fair treatment, stability and predictability for all European farmers, regardless of the budgetary capacity of each Member State, and contributes to maintaining the unitary character of the Common Agricultural Policy;
- iv. continuing the process of external convergence of direct payments, so that Romanian farmers benefit from fair support, close to the European average. Also, the agricultural area used to calculate allocations must be updated according to real data, to reflect the increase in eligible area in recent years. Failure to update these values would lead to significant losses for Romanian farmers and would perpetuate historical inequities between Member States;
- v. also expresses reservations regarding the introduction of a mandatory cap on direct payments, which would penalise high-performing farms and limit their capacity to invest in technology and efficiency. Instead, it is proposed to increase the level of the degressive payment to at least 15%, in order to ensure a fair distribution of support without affecting the production structure and competitiveness of commercial farms;
- vi. proposes the creation of a permanent European reserve for managing agricultural crisis situations, which could be activated rapidly in the event of market disruptions, extreme weather events or other unforeseen situations, based on objective indicators (production losses, extreme price fluctuations, natural disasters);

- vii. proposes the creation of a line dedicated to the digitalisation of agriculture, to finance investments in smart equipment, data analysis platforms, traceability solutions and resource efficiency. These investments should be supported by European financial instruments with public guarantees and low interest rates;
 - viii. proposes the introduction of a mechanism to protect beneficiaries in the event of suspension of payments at programme level. Compliance measures must protect final beneficiaries and avoid penalising farmers for administrative errors or systemic delays;
 - ix. proposes the inclusion of a dedicated agricultural performance mechanism, based on relevant result indicators for productivity, fair incomes and farm sustainability. Performance assessment must focus on the economic and social impact of interventions on farmers and rural communities, not just the degree of absorption of funds;
 - x. proposes the widespread use of simplified forms of support (lump sums, standard unit costs, payments based on results), the complete digitalization of the application submission and verification processes and the implementation of a uniform payment mechanism on time, so that beneficiaries benefit from predictability and clear processing times;
 - xi. proposes prioritizing investments in water and soil infrastructure through investment measures aimed at water retention, rehabilitation of irrigation systems, digitalization of networks and promotion of regenerative practices.
- e) In the context of increasing climate needs, stock recovery and modernisation and diversification of objectives, we consider that the funds proposed for the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) are insufficient, so that fisheries risk not having priority in national reform plans in relation to larger sectors, and crisis response mechanisms remain limited.

In this regard:

- i. proposes ensuring separately dedicated resources for fisheries/aquaculture, guaranteeing fair and easy access for small-scale fishermen and small operators, as well as regulating effective measures in situations of crisis and temporary cessation of activity.

An adequate and fair allocation of funding is needed. The proposed amount of EUR 2 billion set aside for the implementation of the CFP is welcome but insufficient, given the scale of climate change adaptation, stock recovery, fleet modernisation and aquaculture development needs. We believe that a larger financial package should be provided and the allocation between Member States should reflect dependence on fishing, length of coastline, prevalence of small-scale fishing and aquaculture potential;

- ii. regarding small-scale/artisanal/traditional fisheries, it is necessary to simplify administrative procedures and reduce reporting obligations to ensure accessibility for small operators. In this regard, in addition, specific sub-measures or priority access for small-scale fishermen should be established, with co-financing rates of up to 100% where private contribution is not feasible.

Securing livelihoods is important, environmental and climate conditionalities must be progressive, realistic and accompanied by technical and financial support. Investments should give greater weight to selective innovation in fishing gear, low-

impact practices and ecosystem restoration projects with the active involvement of fishermen;

- f) As regards to aquaculture, stronger support for sustainable aquaculture is needed, such as establishing a specific support component, in particular for organic and low-carbon systems, in addition to facilitating access for SMEs and family farms, with specific aid for innovation, feed alternatives and offshore aquaculture, where possible.

Integrated community development of coastal areas should ensure that national and regional plans explicitly address fisheries and aquaculture in coastal development strategies in a coordinated manner. Allowing funding for infrastructure investments (ports, landing sites, refrigerators chains, processing) should not be omitted, as should economic diversification in coastal areas (e.g. ecotourism).

In this regard:

- i. the establishment of a rapid response mechanism within the fund to address situations such as stock declines, disease outbreaks, market fluctuations or geopolitical disruptions is desirable, to ensure that measures to temporarily cease or limit catches are fairly compensated to protect livelihoods;
- ii. it is appropriate to create specific measures to support young fishermen and entrepreneurs in the aquaculture sector, including start-up aid, modernization of vessels/their replacement due to age and to meet environmental requirements, as well as training opportunities, promotion of continuous training programs, initial training and cross-border exchanges to ensure knowledge transfer and renewal of the sector.

- g) from the Interreg perspective, as part of the legislative package:

- i. expresses concern, however, about the drastic compression of the decommitment period and the increase in national co-financing for Interreg programmes at external borders involving third countries, which would negatively affect the strategic nature of Interreg and its effects in boosting the integration of communities and increasing the effectiveness of cohesion policy, at cross-border, transnational or interregional level;
- ii. expresses reservations regarding the proposed implementation model, in close correlation with the responsibility and administrative burden still associated with the aspects included in the proposed format of the management declarations, especially taking into account the fact that, in the case of Interreg, the funds are used in several partner countries;

In this context, the members of the European Affairs Committee point out that, although the proposed regulation proposes performance-based payments in the relationship between the Commission and the Member States and specifies that the managing and audit authorities should not verify the costs related to operations, in practice the Member States will have to establish a parallel system for verifying operations in order to provide assurance and audit that the funds have been managed in accordance with all applicable rules, with the principle of sound financial management and in accordance with applicable legislation.

For an unequivocal implementation of this proposed regulation in the context of Interreg, it is necessary to carefully review all provisions, both to clearly delimit the articles that are not applicable to Interreg, and to ensure the use of clear and uninterpretable terms, covering also the multi-national situation specific to Interreg.