

19 February 2026

**His Excellency**

**Piotr Serafin**

**European Commissioner for Budget, Anti-Fraud and Public Administration**

Cc: Marilena Raouna  
Thérèse Blanchet

Dear Commissioner Serafin,

On 16 July 2025, the Commission presented its proposal for an ambitious next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for the period 2028–2034, including a fundamental redesign of the EU budget to make it more streamlined, flexible and impactful. We share the Commission’s ambition of a modernised European Budget for a strong European Union.

Such ambition must also be reflected internally. If the Union is to credibly reform how it engages with citizens, regions, businesses and global partners, it must apply the same level of scrutiny and reform to its own administration.

National public administrations face comparable structural challenges, brought about by demographic change, budgetary restraints and swift digital transformation. The pressure on national governments to increase the efficiency of public expenditure is increasing. At the same time, digitalisation and artificial intelligence offer plenty of opportunities to speed up and streamline our administrative processes. The Member States, often at the request of the Commission, have responded with difficult reforms of their public spending as well as administrative reforms to increase efficiency, reduce staffing levels and generate savings – while maintaining to strive for excellent public services which deliver for our citizens and businesses.

Against this backdrop, we see the ongoing large-scale review of the Commission’s organisation and operations, together with an external benchmarking exercise against other organisations and national administrations, as a critical opportunity to deliver concrete reforms and measurable savings. In our experience such cost cutting exercises are only successful if specific cost saving targets are determined at the beginning of the process. We would therefore encourage the Commission to do the same.

On the basis of this work, we expect the Commission to present ambitious, quantified proposals as a direct input for the ongoing negotiations on the next MFF, including on an EU

administrative system that reflects the challenges of our times – both in terms of scope and quantity. In this context, the proposed increase of 2,500 posts as well as the overall significant increase of heading 4 (administration) runs counter to the stated objectives of efficiency, restraint and reform, and risks undermining the credibility of the broader MFF proposal. Furthermore, operational means should not be used to finance administrative expenditure. Hence, all administrative expenditure should be included under heading 4.

We urge the Commission to significantly raise its level of ambition in this exercise. The 2028-2034 heading 4 has to effectively reflect the impact of the simplification effort underlying the MFF proposal, and rely on a reinforced governance and overview both for expenditures and staff allocations.

We stand ready to support and constructively accompany a reform agenda that delivers tangible efficiency gains and aligns the Commission's administrative evolution with the realities faced across Europe and the ambition of a modern budget.

Sincerely,

Claudia Bauer  
*Federal Minister for Europe,  
Integration and Family  
of Austria*

Alexander Pröll  
*State Secretary in the Federal Chancellery  
of Austria*

Milena Hrdinková  
*Sherpa and Chief Diplomatic Adviser for the  
EU to the Prime Minister of the Czech  
Republic*

Gunther Krichbaum  
*Minister of State for Europe  
of Germany*

Nicolai Wammen  
*Minister for Finance  
of Denmark*

Margus Tsahkna  
*Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia*

Joakim Strand  
*Minister for European Affairs and  
Ownership Steering of Finland*

Baiba Braže  
*Minister for Foreign Affairs  
of Latvia*

David van Weel  
*Minister of Foreign Affairs  
of the Kingdom of the Netherlands*

Jessica Rosencrantz  
*Minister for EU Affairs  
of Sweden*