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Europaforum Northern Sweden's declaration on expectations for the EU's cohesion policy post 2027

Europaforum Northern Sweden (EFNS) is a network for politicians at the local and regional levels from Norrbotten, Västerbotten, Jämtland Härjedalen and Västernorrland. EFNS is a meeting place and a knowledge arena for discussion and analysis of the impacts of EU policy on northern Sweden. EFNS monitors European issues to influence EU legislation, the EU's strategies and action programmes and the EU's budget. The objective of EFNS is to safeguard the interests of northern Sweden both in the European arena and in relation to the national level in matters with a clear European perspective.

- **EFNS WANTS TO SEE A COHESION POLICY FOR ALL REGIONS**

We want to see a cohesion policy, post 2027, which highlights development potential throughout the regions of the union and the political will to unleash its potential.

The Northern Sparsely Populated Areas (NSPA) have unique characteristics without equivalents in Europe and are more similar to Canadian and Australian rural regions. In northern Sweden, our communities are structured in ecosystems with a different logic than that which applies to urban environments. For us, cohesion policy is crucial to; release the development capacity required to manage our economic, social and territorial conditions, and to build innovation capacity to maximise growth potential and strengthen competitiveness.

- **EFNS WANTS TO SEE THE CONTINUATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PLACE-BASED POLICIES**

We think that cohesion policy is a method to make policies tailored and place-based, a method that can add value to more EU policy areas.

Cohesion policy takes into account local and regional conditions and insights of citizens, public and private sector, civil society and academia. This means that interventions are tailored to local conditions and needs in a way that gives everyone the opportunity to contribute to a competitive EU.

We think that the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of cohesion policy would increase with further territorial adaptation.

The foundation of the policy must continue to be that all regions are unique, with different economic, social and territorial conditions. Our regions are good examples of this, the NSPA are characterised by spatially large administrative units. Although the Swedish programs are regional, the regions are larger than several European countries combined. Further territorial adaptation would give us the possibility to work with the extensive intra-



regional variations in terms of conditions and needs.

- **EFNS WANTS TO SEE A LONG-TERM POLICY AND A COMMON VISION**

We want to see a stable and regionally anchored cohesion policy that is more long-term than a budget cycle and that does not fall victim to short-term crisis management.

The structural funds are the most important investment tool for regional growth and employment in northern Sweden. We need a cohesion policy that allows for the long-term work required to unleash development capacity and build innovation capability. Because of this we want to see a long-term strategy, like Europe 2020, leading the way to a cohesive, digital and green Europe.

- **EFNS WANTS TO SEE A STRONGER MULTI-LEVEL COOPERATION**

We think the EU's partnership principle should be the starting point when shaping policies and funds.

Cohesion policy, post 2027, must be permeated by strengthened multi-level cooperation and by the partnership principle. The relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and the European added value of policies are maximised when co-designed by organisations from different political levels and across sectors. The stakeholders need to continuously build knowledge together and have dialogue regarding; analysis, planning, program development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and learning. In this way, local, regional, national and European endeavours are mobilised and coordinated.

Adopted by Europaforum Northern Sweden on November 9th 2023

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