

## Prime Minister: The proposal to reduce support for Latvia within the framework of Cohesion Policy is inadmissible

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On Monday 4 June, Prime Minister Māris Kučinskis met with Corina Crețu, European Commissioner for Regional Policy in Tallinn.

During the meeting, the officials discussed the issue concerning the multiannual budget of the European Union (EU) for the next programming period.

M. Kučinskis pointed out that the Cohesion Policy is an important instrument for Latvia that has allowed for a substantial increase in the level of prosperity. The Cohesion Policy and EU funds are the most visible and most appreciated EU instrument in Latvia, which improves the quality of life and, in our opinion, is one of the most important EU values. He expressed confusion as to the EC proposal and its impact on the support available to Latvia - a country which is still around 65% of the EU's average level, within the framework of the Cohesion Policy. The support of the Cohesion Policy for Latvia is shrinking by 13%.

"The proposal to reduce cohesion funding, while increasing the national co-financing rates and increasing the national contributions to the EU budget, is unacceptable," said M. Kučinskis.

During the conversation with C. Crețu, a very disappointing attitude was expressed regarding the criteria proposed by the EC because the issue of depopulation - the movement of economically active people to other EU member states - is also not being addressed.

"Depopulation not only lowers the availability of the cohesion funds for us because of declining population but also significantly reduces our future growth potential," stressed M. Kučinskis.

The Prime Minister also expressed great confusion about the proposals of the Regulations, which set even more stringent restrictions on the minimum investments in certain funds and areas as in the current programming period.

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