COMMUNICATION ON EU'S EASTERN REGIONS BORDERING RUSSIA, BELARUS AND UKRAINE

Strong regions for a safe Europe

February 2026

With this Communication, the European Commission sets out a plan to make Europe's regions bordering Russia, Belarus and Ukraine more secure, resilient and attractive places to live and work. This concerns 9 Member States: Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has severely affected people and communities

Security threats are rising:
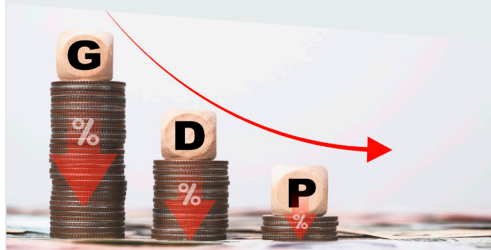Hybrid attacks, disinformation, weaponised migration, sabotage from Russia and Belarus

Economic disruption:
Collapse of cross-border trade, reduced investment, stagnating housing markets, pressure on SMEs and supply chains

Strain on local services:
Limited financial capacity of municipalities, underfunded services, and increased pressure from displaced persons

Demographic decline:
Emigration, ageing populations and shortages of workers in key sectors such as healthcare and education

5 priority areas for support

Security and Resilience

Growth and Regional Prosperity

Building on Local Strengths

Connectivity

Supporting People

EastInvest Facility: Unlocking investment for these regions

→ Easier **access to financing** for businesses and local authorities

→ **Loans** by participating institutions (international financing institutions and national promotional banks)

→ A total of €28 billion in **lending support** for the concerned Member States by the end of 2027

→ **Advisory support** to projects' promoters

Other areas of concrete support

→ Increased EU funding for **defence, border management and internal security** in next EU budget

→ Upgrading of **transport networks and dual-use** road, rail and port **infrastructure** for security and growth across eastern frontier communities

→ Continued support for priority **cross-border infrastructure** projects in the regions

→ Support for the creation of a regional **community of practitioners** to exchange best practices and preparedness solutions