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## **FITTO FIGHTS VON DER LEYEN PLAN TO BYPASS REGIONS IN NEW EU BUDGET**

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Gregorio Sorgi

Italian Commissioner Raffaele Fitto is leading a rearguard fight inside the EU executive to secure a powerful role for Europe's regions in the bloc's new multi-year budget.

Fitto, who is currently in charge of €300 billion in regional funding, is at odds with his boss, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, over a plan to dramatically increase the power of national governments in managing the cash pot to the detriment of local bodies.

That would be a major setback for the regions, and for Fitto, who have handled the so-called cohesion policy ever since it was introduced in the 1970s to narrow the gap between poorer and richer areas in Europe.

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