

Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) 2007-2013

2004/0222(CNS) - 23/12/2009 - Follow-up document

The Commission presents its 2008 report on the implementation of the Instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA). IPA aims to provide targeted assistance to candidates or potential candidates for membership of the EU. This report deals with the implementation of IPA during 2008, until the cut-off date of 31

December 2008. As implementation of the 2007 and 2008 IPA programmes has only recently begun, the information on monitoring and assessments of results achieved through these programmes are rather limited.

The results achieved in 2008 with respect to the candidate countries and the potential candidates were presented in the November 2008 enlargement package. The enlargement strategy paper outlines the Commission's approach to future enlargement challenges. It is accompanied by progress reports on candidate countries and potential candidates. Most notably, the 2008 strategy paper presented **Croatia** with an indicative and conditional roadmap for reaching the final phase of technical negotiations at the end of 2009. The enlargement package has since been broadly welcomed by the Council and was well received in the enlargement countries.

Turkey's strategic importance to the EU has further increased in key areas such as energy security, conflict prevention and resolution and regional security in the Southern Caucasus and the Middle East. The country's engagement with the EU makes it a stronger force for stability in a region facing many challenges. Accession negotiations with Turkey continued to reflect the pace of reform. In the Commission's 2008 assessment, Turkey qualified for the first time as a functioning market economy in terms of the Copenhagen economic criteria.

As regards the **Cyprus issue**, the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities started full-fledged negotiations on a comprehensive settlement under the auspices of the United Nations. The Commission continued to support their efforts and to stand ready to provide technical advice on issues within EU competence.

All the countries concerned have signed Stabilisation and Association agreements (SAAs). For most of them, the corresponding Interim Agreement has entered into force and the SAA ratification process was underway. The ratification of **Serbia's** SAA and the entry into force of its Interim Agreement is conditional on Serbia's full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). DG Enlargement's activities in the countries of the Western Balkans contributed to further securing stability in the region, including Kosovo, which unilaterally declared its independence on 17th February 2008. **Kosovo** has since adopted a plan for European Integration 2008-10 which aims to facilitate its anchoring in the SAp. Cross-border co-operation in this region continued to develop and all countries concerned have been presented with roadmaps spelling out the conditions for achieving visa-free travel to the EU.

Important efforts have been made to provide support for regional cooperation initiatives in accordance with the Thessaloniki agenda. Several new initiatives to this end were outlined in a Commission Communication on the Western Balkans in March 2008. The newly established Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) became operational in 2008.

Montenegro applied for EU membership in December 2008. The Commission is well prepared for taking up the resulting challenges as soon as the Council mandates the Commission to draw up the related opinion.

The report gives an overview of the programming and implementation of the IPA and sets out the 2008 IPA allocations in million euros by country and by each of the five components, as well as for the regional and multi-country programmes as updated in the 2010-2012 Multi-annual Indicative Financial Framework MIFF (see [COM\(2008\)705](#)). The MIFF is part of the annual enlargement package and it is designed to provide information on the indicative breakdown of the overall IPA envelope proposed by the Commission by country and by component for a three year rolling period. It acts as the link between the political framework within the enlargement package and the budgetary process. Based on the MIFF allocations, and on the priorities identified within the political framework, Multi-annual Indicative Planning documents (MIPD) for each country and for the multibeneficiary programmes are prepared. The MIPD represents the Commission's view of major areas of interventions and main priorities that the beneficiary country is expected to develop in detail in the programming documents.

The report gives details of IPA programmes in 2008 and sets out implementation modalities and structures, noting that for all candidate countries, the medium term objective is fully decentralised management, i.e. with Commission ex post control only. It gives an overview of IPA implemented Programmes.

It discusses the outcome of a Donor Coordination Conference in Brussels in 2008, which highlighted the achievement of cooperation and synergies between donors of the Western Balkans and Turkey on the basis of a reliable overview of donor activities in IPA countries and the need to take on board the experience of the countries which joined the EU in 2004 and 2007.

Lastly, the document sets out details of coordination with the European Investment Bank and International Financial Institutions. Non-repayable grants both from the EU and from other donors including the Member States combined with IFI loans have become a crucial resource for private sector development, investments in energy efficiency, and infrastructure remediation and upgrading without overburdening the Beneficiaries with excessive debts.