Justice Programme 2014-2020

2011/0369(COD) - 19/11/2013 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Legal Affairs, jointly with the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, adopted the report by Luigi BERLINGUER (S&D, IT) and Philip CLAEYS (NI, BE) on the proposed Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the "Justice" Programme 2014-2020.

The parliamentary committee recommended that the position of the European Parliament adopted at first reading, following the ordinary legislative procedure, amend the Commission proposal.

The key amendments aim to:

General objective: the general objective of the Programme shall be to contribute to the further development of a **European area of justice based on mutual recognition and mutual trust**, in particular by promoting judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters.

Specific objectives: the specific objectives of "Justice" would also aim to:

- facilitate and support judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters;
- **support and promote judicial training**, including language training on legal terminology, with a view to fostering a common legal and judicial culture;
- facilitate effective access to justice for all, including to promote and support the rights of victims of crime, while respecting the rights of the defence;
- **support initiatives in the field of drugs policy** as regards judicial cooperation and crime prevention aspects closely linked to the Health for Growth Programme.

These objectives shall be pursued through:

- enhancing public awareness and knowledge of Union law and policies;
- improving knowledge of Union law, including substantive and procedural law;
- supporting the effective, comprehensive and consistent implementation and application of Union instruments and policies in the Member States and the monitoring and evaluation thereof;
- promoting cross-border cooperation, improving mutual knowledge and understanding of the civil and criminal law and the legal and judicial systems of the Member States and enhancing mutual trust;
- improving the efficiency of judicial systems and their cooperation by means of information and communication technology.

The type of actions to be funded have been revised to meet these specific objectives. In general, actions covered by the future Programme should contribute to developing mutual trust between the Member States, increasing cross-border cooperation and networking and achieving the correct, coherent and consistent application of Union law. Union intervention in this context can bring **additional value** compared to the action of Member States alone.

The Programme objectives also include an operating grant to the **European Judicial Training Network**.

Mainstreaming: in the implementation of all of its actions, the Programme shall seek to promote equality between women and men and to promote the rights of the child, inter alia by means of **child-friendly justice**. It shall also comply with the prohibition of discrimination based on any of the grounds defined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

Access to the Programme: it is specified that bodies and entities which are profit-oriented shall have access to the Programme **only in conjunction with non-profit or public organisations**. In addition to the

entities covered by the Programme, access shall also be open to international organisations active in the areas covered by the Programme

National, regional and local authorities should also be included among the bodies and entities having access to the Programme.

Financial envelope: in accordance with the overall agreement on the financial framework, the financial envelope for the implementation of the Programme for the period 2014 to 2020 is set at **EUR 377,604 million**.

This shall be divided in line with the Annex of the future Regulation:

- to facilitate and support judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters 30% of budget;
- to support and promote judicial training, including language training on legal terminology 35%;
- to facilitate effective access to justice for all 30%;
- to support initiatives in the field of drugs policy 5%.

The Commission shall not depart from the allocated percentages by more than five percentage points for each group of specific objectives. Should it prove necessary to exceed that limit, the Commission shall be empowered to adopt **delegated acts** to modify each of the figures.

Work programme: the annual work programme shall determine:

- the actions to be undertaken, including the indicative allocation of financial resources;
- the essential eligibility, selection and award criteria to be used to select the proposals which are to receive financial contributions;
- the minimum percentage of annual expenditure to be allocated to grants.

Appropriate and fair distribution of financial support between different areas covered by the programme shall be ensured.

Monitoring and evaluation of the Programme: the Commission shall monitor the Programme annually. It shall also provide:

- an interim evaluation report by 30 June 2018;

- an ex-post evaluation report by 31 December 2021.

The evaluations shall also assess the way in which gender equality and non-discrimination issues have been addressed across the Programme's actions.

Performance indicators were also added to better evaluate the effectiveness of the Programme. These last include the number and percentage of persons in a target group reached by the awareness-raising activities; the number of stakeholders participating in training activities; the number of cases, activities and outputs of cross-border cooperation; the geographical coverage of the activities, etc.

In addition to the indicators, the evaluation reports shall assess the **perceived impact** of the Programme on access to justice**,** as well as **the European added value of the actions** and the level of finance involved in relation to results achieved (in terms of effectiveness).