Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) 2014-2020

2011/0404(COD) - 11/03/2014 - Final act

PURPOSE : to establish an instrument for pre-accession aid (IPA II) for the period 2014-2020 following on from the instrument for pre-accession aid for the period 2007=2013.

LEGISLATIVE ACT : Regulation (EU) N° 231/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II).

BACKGROUND : this Regulation forms part of the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014-2020 in the field of the Union's external relations and cooperation with third countries. The relevant instruments are as follows:

- Financing instrument for development cooperation
- Partnership instrument for cooperation with third countries
- this Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II)
- European Neighbourhood Instrument
- Instrument for nuclear safety cooperation
- Instrument for Stability
- Financing instrument for the promotion of democracy and human rights worldwide

All the procedures applicable to the implementation of these financial instruments will be governed by a single Regulation, adopted at the same time.

CONTENT : the objective of this Regulation is to establish the Instrument for Pre–accession Assistance for the period from 2014 to 2020 ('IPA II') to support partner countries in adopting and implementing the political, institutional, legal, administrative, social and economic reforms required by these beneficiaries in order to comply with the Union's values and to progressively align to the Union's rules, standards, policies and practices, **with a view to Union membership.**

Specific objectives: assistance under the Regulation will pursue the achievement of the following specific objectives according to the needs of each of the beneficiaries, as well as their individual enlargement agenda:

- support for political reforms, including strengthening democracy and rules on governance as well as the promotion of good neighbourly relations ;
- support for economic, social and territorial development, with a view to sustainable growth;
- strengthening of the ability of beneficiary countries to fulfil the obligations stemming from membership by supporting progressive alignment with Union policies;

- regional integration and territorial cooperation.

Policy areas: assistance will mainly address the following policy areas:

- reforms in preparation for Union membership and related institution- and capacity-building;
- socio-economic and regional development;
- employment, social policies, education, promotion of gender equality, and human resources development;
- agriculture and rural development;
- regional and territorial cooperation.

Progress in these areas will be assessed on the basis of **performance indicators** specified in the Regulation.

Partner countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iceland, Kosovo (UN definition), Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Framework for assistance – differentiation: assistance should be targeted and adjusted to the specific situation of the beneficiaries, taking into account further efforts needed to meet the membership criteria as well as the capacities of those beneficiaries. Assistance should be differentiated in scope and intensity according to the needs of each beneficiary, as well as their commitment to reform and **progress in implementing reforms.**

Thematic priorities for providing assistance according to the needs and capacities of the beneficiaries are set out in Annex II of the Regulation. There are also provisions on supporting cross-border cooperation between the beneficiaries and between beneficiaries and Member States or countries under the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) with a view to promoting good neighbourly relations.

The thematic priorities for assistance for territorial cooperation are set out in Annex III.

Implementation: measures will be implementation in accordance with the provisions of the horizontal Regulation on common rules and procedures for Instruments for financing external action. There are also provisions ensuring coherence with assistance granted under other European funds, such as the ERDF.

Financial envelope: in accordance with the MFF, the financial envelope for the implementation of the Regulation for the period from 2014 to 2020 is e set at **EUR 11 698 668 000** at current prices. Up to 4 % of the financial envelope is allocated to cross-border cooperation programmes between the beneficiaries and the Member States.

In addition, the promotion of the international dimension of higher education will receive an amount of **EUR 1.68 billion** from these financial instruments:

- the Development Cooperation Instrument
- the European Neighbourhood Instrument

- the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance

- the Partnership Instrument.

This amount shall be allocated to actions in respect of learning mobility to or from partner countries **within the ERASMUS + programme** and to cooperation and policy dialogue with authorities, institutions and organisations from those countries.

Monitoring progress and performance reward: an appropriate amount of assistance will remain available to reward an individual beneficiary for:

- particular progress made towards meeting the membership criteria; and/or

- efficient implementation of pre-accession assistance whereby particularly good results are achieved with respect to the specific targets set in the relevant strategy paper.

In such cases, the Commission shall adjust the allocations proportionately. An appropriate amount shall be set aside for the rewards and will be allocated on the basis of an assessment of performance and progress over a period of several years

Coherence and coordination: compliance, coherence, and complementarity of assistance should be ensured with other external policy areas and other Union policies including through regular consultations, with other donors.

The role of civil society should be enhanced both in programmes implemented through government bodies and as a direct beneficiary of Union assistance.

Strategy papers: the Regulation sets out the programming framework. Assistance shall be provided on the basis of country or multi-country indicative strategy papers established for the period from 2014 to 2020. The strategy papers shall define the priorities for action towards meeting the objectives in the relevant policy areas.

Annexes: the Regulation contains Annexes containing details of **thematic priorities** for assistance and **thematic priorities for assistance for territorial cooperation.**

Strategic dialogue with the European Parliament: the Commission makes a declaration in which it undertakes to inform the European Parliament of relevant actions in the framework of a strategic dialogue.

Suspension of assistance: in a unilateral declaration, Parliament notes that the instruments applicable in the field of the EU's external relations do not contain any explicit reference to the possibility of suspending assistance in cases where a beneficiary country fails to observe the basic principles on democracy, rule of law and the respect for human rights. Any suspension of assistance under these instruments must take place under the ordinary legislative procedure.

ENTRY INTO FORCE : 16.03.2014. The Regulation is applicable from 01.01.2014 to 31.12.2020.

DELEGATED ACTS : the Commission may adopt delegated acts in respect of adapting and updating the thematic priorities for assistance listed in Annex II following the mid-term review report presented by 31 March 2018. The power to adopt delegated acts is conferred on the Commission **for the duration of the programme**. The European Parliament or Council may raise objections to a delegated act within two months from the date of notification (which may be extended by two months). If Parliament or Council raise objections, the delegated act will not enter into force.