Instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA III) 2021–2027

2018/0247(COD) - 14/06/2018 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to establish the instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA III) for the period 2021-2027.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II) expires on 31 December 2020. In order to safeguard the effectiveness of the Union's external actions, the Commission proposes to maintain a framework for the planning and delivering external assistance under the next multiannual financial framework for the period 2021-2027.

The Commission considers it essential to maintain a **dedicated instrument in support of enlargement policy**, while ensuring its complementarity with the general objectives of the Union's external action and in particular those of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI).

The enlargement process is based on well-established criteria ("the Copenhagen criteria") and fair and rigorous conditionality. The objective of the proposed instrument is to **provide increased assistance to candidate and potential candidate** countries to pursue the necessary far-reaching reforms.

In November 2015, the European Commission set out a medium-term strategy for the Union's enlargement policy, which remains valid today. The current enlargement agenda covers the partners of the Western Balkans and Turkey. On 17 April 2018, the European Commission recommended to the Council the opening of accession negotiations with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania in light of the progress achieved. This would maintain and deepen the current reform momentum.

The Commission reaffirmed the firm, merit-based prospect of Union membership for the Western Balkans . It is also keen to continue the dialogue with Turkey on a number of key areas of common interest such as economic and trade relations, energy, transport, migration and asylum, foreign policy, security and the fight against terrorism.

CONTENT: the proposal for a Regulation - presented for a Union of 27 Member States - seeks to establish the **instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA III) programme** for the period 2021-2027.

IPA III shall support the beneficiary countries in adopting and implementing the **political, institutional, legal, administrative, social and economic reforms** required by those beneficiaries to comply with Union values and to progressively align to Union rules, standards, policies and practices with a view to Union membership.

IPA III shall be clearly positioned in the context of the **new Western Balkans strategy**, and reflect the developments in the relations with Turkey.

As regards **political priorities**, IPA III shall focus on the main priorities set out in the enlargement policy and relevant strategy papers, namely: the rule of law, fundamental rights and governance, socio-economic

development, EU policies and acquis, and people-to-people contacts, as well as reconciliation, good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation.

In addition to these priorities already included in IPA II, other key issues such as migration, security, environmental protection and climate change are more visibly addressed in the proposal.

Programming framework: this shifts the focus from partner allocations to performance in achieving the objectives. Assistance will continue to be targeted and adjusted to the specific situation of the beneficiaries. However, access to funds should, in addition to a principle of **'fair share'**, be based on criteria such as **project/programme maturity**, expected impact and progress on the rule of law, fundamental rights and governance.

Proposed budget: the European Commission has proposed an amount of **EUR 14.5 billion** (in current prices) for the new instrument for pre-accession assistance for the period 2021-2027.