Internal Security Fund: instrument for financial support for police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management 2014-2020

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In accordance with Regulation (EU) No 514/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council, the Commission presents the results of the interim evaluation of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the Internal Security Fund.

The report covers:

- Regulation (EU) No 514/2014 (horizontal provisions) as well as:

- this Specific Regulation No 513/2014 establishing as part of the Internal Security Fund the instrument for police cooperation, preventing and combating crime and crisis management **(ISF-P);**
- the Specific Regulation (EU) No 515/2014 establishing as part of the Internal Security Fund the instrument for external borders and visa (ISF-BV); and
- the Specific Regulation (EU) No 516/2014 establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).

The evaluation covers the period between 1 January 2014 and 30 June 2017 and reports on all national programmes, Union actions and emergency assistance financed under the funds.

This summary concerns **Internal Security Fund-Police (ISF-P).**

ISF-P aims to ensure a high level of security in the EU through supporting the fight against crime and managing risks and crises effectively. The Fund has two specific objectives: (i) crime prevention and (ii) managing risks and crises.

Budget: the total resources for the ISF-P's implementation over the period 2014-2020 were **initially estimated at EUR 1 004 million**, but were **increased** through a top-up of EUR 70 million to support Member States in implementing the Passenger Name Record Directive and another top-up of EUR 22 million for developing information exchange. Under shared management, Member States have allocated 73 % (EUR 549 million) to the crime prevention objective and 22 % (EUR 169 million) to the objective of managing crises and risk while the remaining 5 % (EUR 36 million) is for technical assistance. A total amount of EUR 122.5 million was allocated for Union actions and EUR 6.5 million for emergency assistance in the annual work programmes 2014-2016.

Relevance: the fund's original rationale and objectives are still relevant in the aftermath of the migratory and security crisis. The **flexibility** offered by the Fund, consisting of transfers of funding between different objectives, helped to address the changing needs. However Member States would appreciate even more flexibility from the number of national objectives being reduced.

Effectiveness: the Fund has been mainly effective and has contributed to **improving security in the EU,** with cooperation through the exchange of information on cross-border crime, the establishment of transnational networks and projects, and the participation of Member States in joint investigation teams. In terms of results, actions taken disrupted organised crime through: (i) seizures of cash (over EUR 1.6 billion); (ii) the taking down of websites; (iii) arrests; (iv) seizures of stolen goods (over EUR 90 million in value); and (v) seizures of drugs such as heroin and cocaine (over 4 million).

Although the number of ISF-P funded projects at national and EU level is relatively low, evidence suggests that the Fund has contributed to **boosting Member States' capabilities** to develop comprehensive threat and risk assessments. Several Union-level actions have been funded in the area of early warning and cooperation on crisis prevention: e.g. the ATLAS network, which aims to strengthen the preparedness of special intervention units.

The report notes that in spite of the funding available under ISF-P, **limited progress** has been achieved by the Member States in terms of (i) strengthening capability to protect critical infrastructure, (ii) the protection of victims, (iii) developing training schemes and exchange programmes; (iv) cooperation with third countries and international organisations.

Coherence: the fund's coherence and complementarity with other EU financing instruments were ensured during the design, programming and implementation stages. However, there appears to be some **room for improvement** in relation to EU agencies and to internal coherence as there is little awareness among beneficiaries about the actions and projects carried out within the ISF framework

EU added value: the report states that the fund has ensured EU added value in terms of improving cross-border cooperation, the exchange of knowledge and best practices, trust among Member States' law enforcement authorities and the application of key EU policies. It has also

- enabled high-volume investments, especially in IT systems, training and specialised equipment;
- enabled the broadening of the types of knowledge exchange and law enforcement training;
- contributed to the harmonisation of EU level research on crime prevention, as well as enabled increased investments and focused on long-term measures

The report notes that by establishing the **shared management mode** in ISF-P (initially 60 % of the total programme and over 70 % after the top-ups), ISF-P had a better geographical reach across all Member States than its predecessor ISEC programme and CIPS programme, though Union actions are still characterised with the same geographical imbalance that existed in the previous funds.

The report goes on to make a number of **general remarks about all three funds**. Overall and in the limits of available data, the evaluation indicated that the results of the funds were achieved at **reasonable costs** in terms of both human and financial resources. With regard to ISF, the report notes that the scope of ISF might need to be **adapted further** in the future to cater for the new policy initiatives to strengthen operational cooperation and exchange of information.