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

2018/0247(COD) - 11/03/2019 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the report by Knut FLECKENSTEIN (S&D, DE) and José Ignacio SALAFRANCA SÁNCHEZ-NEYRA (EPP, ES) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III).

The committee recommended that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the Commission's proposal as follows:

Objectives

IPA III shall assist beneficiary countries in adopting and implementing the political, institutional, legal, legal, administrative, social and economic reforms required to ensure that they comply with the values of the Union and gradually align with the Union's rules, standards, policies and practices for accession.

Members set out the specific objectives of the instrument, namely:

- to strengthen the rule of law, democracy, the respect of human rights, including those of minorities and children, gender equality, fundamental rights and international law, civil society, academic freedom, peace and security, the respect for cultural diversity, non-discrimination and tolerance;

- to address forced displacement and irregular migration, ensuring that migration takes place in a safe, orderly and regular manner, and safeguarding access to international protection;

- to reinforce the effectiveness of public administration and support transparency, structural reforms, judicial independence fight against corruption and good governance at all levels;

- to strengthen the rules-based multilateral international order as well as well as peace-building and conflict prevention, including through confidence-building and mediation, inclusive and integrated education people to people contacts, freedom of the media and communication;

- to strengthen economic, social and territorial development and cohesion;

to reinforce environmental protection, increase resilience to climate change, accelerate the shift towards a low-carbon economy and develop the digital economy and society, thereby creating job opportunities, in particular for the youth;

- to support territorial and cross border cooperation including across maritime borders, and enhance trade and economic relations by fully implementing existing agreements with the Union, reducing regional imbalances.

Budget

Members proposed that the financial envelope for the implementation of IPA III for the period 2021-2027 shall be set at **EUR 13 009 976 000 at 2018 prices** (EUR 14 663 401 000 in current prices). The European Parliament and the Council shall authorise the annual appropriations within the limit of the multiannual financial framework for the period 2021 to 2027.

Programmes and actions shall aim to contribute to at least 16% of the overall financial envelope being devoted to climate-related objectives.

Increased involvement of civil society

The Commission shall act in partnership with the beneficiaries. The partnership shall involve, as appropriate, relevant national and local authorities, as well as civil society organisations, allowing them to play a meaningful role in the design, implementation and monitoring phases.

IPA programming framework

The IPA programming framework shall be established by the Commission by means of delegated acts. The programming framework shall expire on 30 June 2025 at the latest. The Commission shall adopt a new IPA programming framework by 30 June 2025 based on the mid-term evaluation, ensuring consistency with other external financing instruments and taking due account of relevant European Parliament resolutions.

The IPA programming framework shall be based on clear and verifiable performance indicators set out in Annex IV to the Regulation to assess progress towards the objectives set out therein.

Suspension of Union assistance

Members proposed to strengthen the conditionality of IPA aid by considering the possibility of suspending assistance in the event of violations of the principles of democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms or commitments made under agreements concluded with the Union.

Budget support shall be reduced or suspended in the event of systemic irregularities in management and control systems or unsatisfactory progress towards the objectives agreed with the beneficiary.

Governance

A horizontal steering group composed of all relevant Commission and EEAS services and chaired by the VP/HR or a representative of that office shall be responsible for the steering, coordination and management of this instrument throughout the management cycle.

The European Parliament shall be fully involved in the design, programming, monitoring and evaluation phases of the external financing instruments in order to guarantee political control and democratic scrutiny and accountability of Union funding in the field of external action.