

# Protection of the financial interests of the European Union: Hercule III programme (2014-2020)

2011/0454(COD) - 11/10/2019 - Follow-up document

The Commission staff working document provides an annual overview with information on the results of the Hercule III Programme in 2018.

As a reminder, the budget for the implementation of the Programme amounted to EUR 15.35 million in commitment appropriations and EUR 13.2 million in payment appropriations.

The overview states that the Hercule III programme continues to be an important and effective tool in the protection of the financial interests of the Union. The results of the annual overview demonstrate that the actions undertaken with support from the programme contributed to the prevention and fight against fraud, corruption and other illegal activities affecting the financial interests of the Union.

The relevance of the Programme's aims and objectives is supported by the findings of the mid-term evaluation carried out in 2017. The evaluation demonstrated that the Programme, in its current form and stage of implementation, has largely fulfilled its mission. The Programme has been efficiently implemented while effectively addressing the Member States' needs.

The introduction of the electronic submission and processing of grant applications is an important development which has considerably shortened the time for notifying applicants about the outcome of the evaluation procedure. As its full implementation continues, this electronic system is expected to further reduce the administrative burden for applicants, grant beneficiaries and the Commission.

## *Way forward*

The Hercule III programme will come to an end on 31 December 2020. Acknowledging its contribution, the Commission adopted on 30 May 2018 a [proposal](#) for a new EU Anti-Fraud Programme under the financial framework 2021-2027. The proposal combines two types of spending activities:

- (1) a classic spending programme following up on the Hercule III programme;
- (2) the financing of two operational activities which are tasked to the Commission by secondary legislation (the Anti-Fraud Information System (AFIS) which supports, essentially, operational activities in the area of mutual administrative assistance between Member States' customs authorities, and the Irregularity Management System (IMS), an IT established for the reporting by Member States of fraudulent and non-fraudulent irregularities to the EU budget in shared management and pre-accession funds).

This combination will permit the creation of synergies and allow for flexibility between the three components of the new programme as well as with other relevant programmes.