Technical Support Instrument

2020/0103(COD) - 02/10/2020 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs adopted the report by Othmar KARAS (EPP, AT), Drago PÎSLARU (Renew, RO) and Alexandra GEESE (Greens/EFA, DE) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a technical support instrument.

The proposed Regulation aims to establish a ‘technical support instrument’ for the period 2021-2027 to support Member States' efforts to implement the reforms necessary for recovery, resilience and economic and social convergence.

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

Technical support

Members clarified the definition of ‘technical support’ to mean measures that help Member States, including their national authorities, to carry out and implement institutional, administrative, structural and growth-sustaining, sustainable, socially-inclusive, fair and resilience-enhancing reforms, and investments that strengthen the economic, social and territorial cohesion and social dialogue, including those in the context of the Union recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

General objectives

The technical support instrument shall promote the EU's green and digital transformation and encourage investments that support an economic, social, gender-equal, sustainable and equitable recovery from the COVID-19 outbreak order to:

- increase competitiveness, and effectively address the country-specific recommendations adopted in the context of the European semester;

- achieve resilience and upward economic and social convergence;

- reduce poverty and inequality;

- increase competitiveness and respond effectively to the country-specific recommendations adopted during the European semester;

- support Member States' efforts to strengthen their institutional and administrative capacity and their judicial framework to implement Union law, including at regional and local level;

- implement the strategic objectives in accordance with the commitments made by the Union and the Member States under the Paris Agreement, in particular the Union's climate and energy objectives for 2030, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and the European Pillar of Social Rights.

In order to achieve these general objectives, the instrument shall assist national authorities in improving their capacity to design, develop and implement reforms and investments, such as the preparation, implementation, revision and improvement of national recovery and resilience plans.

Scope of action

This shall cover, inter alia, reforms and investments in the following areas:

- modern and efficient administrative structures and information management systems for public financial and asset management, the budget process, including gender budgeting;

- digitisation of public administration;

- capacity building of competition and anti-trust authorities;

- business environment, in particular for independent small and medium-sized enterprises;

- vocational education and training, youth policies, participation of under-represented groups in the labour market, housing, civil protection, asylum, migration and integration and border policies;

- more equitable access to health care;

- access to finance and lending to the real economy, in particular for SMEs and the self-employed.

Budget

Members proposed that the overall financial envelope for the implementation of the instrument for the period 2021-2027 shall be EUR 1 450 000 000 in current prices. For the period 2021-2024, the financial envelope shall be EUR 1 000 000 000 and for the period 2025-2027, EUR 450 000 000 in current prices.

In addition to this budget, Member States may, at their request, transfer additional resources to the budget of the instrument. The additional resources shall be used to finance actions eligible for technical support and shall be used exclusively for the benefit of the Member State concerned.

Rule of law

The Commission shall implement the instrument in accordance with the Financial Regulation, including full compliance with the rules for the protection of the Union's budget in the case of generalised deficiencies as regards the rule of law in the Member States in accordance with Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council [Rule of Law Mechanism in the MFF].

Dialogue between the institutions

In order to enhance the dialogue between the Union institutions, in particular the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, and to ensure greater transparency and accountability, the competent committee of the European Parliament may invite representatives of the Council and of the Commission to discuss the implementation of the instrument.

Transparency

Beneficiaries shall ensure, for the benefit of the general public, maximum transparency concerning the actions and financial flows under this instrument. Such transparency may only be limited by legal acts related to commercial confidentiality, applicable data protection rules or undergoing administrative or criminal investigations by the Union bodies. All public procurements shall be published on the EU Open Data Portal.