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

2018/0247(COD) - 09/09/2021 - Council position

The Council adopted its position at first reading with a view to the adoption of a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA III) for the period covered by the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027.

The aim of the instrument is to **prepare the beneficiaries** - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Kosovo, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey - for future membership to the EU and to support their accession process, in complementarity with other instruments, in particular the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI).

Objectives

IPA III has the following specific objectives:

- strengthen the rule of law, democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular through the promotion of an independent judiciary, the fight against corruption and organised crime, respect for international law, freedom of the media and the rights of persons belonging to minorities, the promotion of gender equality and the improvement of migration management;

- reinforce the effectiveness of public administration and supporting transparency, structural reforms and good governance at all levels;

- shape the rules, standards, policies and practices of the beneficiaries with those of the Union and to reinforce regional cooperation, reconciliation and good neighbourly relations;

- strengthen economic and social development and cohesion, with particular attention to youth, through supporting investment and private sector development, with a focus on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as on agriculture and rural development;

- reinforce environmental protection, to increase resilience to climate change;

- support territorial cohesion and cross-border cooperation across land and maritime borders, including transnational and interregional cooperation.

Performance-based approach and fair share principle

Assistance will be differentiated in scope and intensity according to performance of the beneficiaries. It will be targeted and adjusted to their specific situations and will take into account the needs and capacities of the beneficiaries.

Assistance may be modulated in the event of significant regression or persistent lack of progress by a beneficiary in the core areas (rule of law and fundamental rights, functioning of democratic institutions and public administration reform, and economic development and competitiveness), including by reducing funds proportionally and redirecting them in a way that avoids compromising support for improving

fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law, including support to civil society and, where appropriate, cooperation with local authorities. Where progress has resumed, the assistance should also be modulated to further support those efforts.

Strategy Board for the Western Balkans

The Commission will be advised by a specific Strategy Board in the management of EFSD+ operations for the Western Balkans. It will set the main investment goals for the Western Balkans in terms of the use of the external action guarantee in support of EFSD+ operations. The European Parliament will have observer status.

The Commission will report annually to the Strategy Board on progress in the implementation of operations covering the Western Balkans.

Evaluation, monitoring, visibility

The results of the EU's action will be monitored and evaluated on the basis of pre-defined, transparent, country-specific and measurable indicators. The recipients of EU funding will have to ensure visibility, in particular when it comes to promoting the actions and their results.

The Commission may adopt delegated acts to supplement this Regulation in order to set out specific targets and thematic priorities for assistance.

Budget

The financial envelope for the implementation of IPA III for the period 2021-2027 is set at **EUR 14 162 000 000** in current prices.