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

2018/0247(COD) - 15/09/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution **approving** the Council 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 Preaccession Assistance (IPA III).

The proposed regulation establishes the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III) for the period covered by the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027.

IPA III ensures continuity with IPA II (which covers the period 2014-2020) and complementarity with other instruments, in particular the Neighbourhood, Development Cooperation and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe and EU policies (e.g. on climate change).

Objective

The overall objective of the IPA III is to assist the beneficiaries - **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Kosovo, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey** - in adopting and implementing the political, institutional, legal, administrative, social and economic reforms required for these beneficiaries to become fully operational, social and economic reforms required for these beneficiaries to conform to the values of the Union and gradually align themselves with the EU's rules, standards, policies and practices with a view to their future accession to the Union, thereby contributing to the stability, security, peace and prosperity of each of the parties.

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.

Thematic approach

Actions under IPA III should be financed through a thematic approach, in order to maximise the impact of EU assistance, while ensuring coherence, synergies and complementarities with other areas of EU external action, and with other relevant EU policies and programmes.

Assistance under the Regulation should focus on enabling the beneficiaries to strengthen their democratic institutions and the rule of law, to undertake judicial and public administration reform, to respect fundamental rights, including those of persons belonging to minorities, and to promote gender equality, tolerance, social inclusion and non-discrimination, including with regard to persons in vulnerable situations, children or persons with disabilities.

It should also support the development of a social market economy in line with the key principles and rights set out in the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Results-based approach and fair share principle

Assistance should be targeted and tailored to their specific situations and the needs and capacities of the beneficiaries will be taken into account in order to avoid an unreasonably low level of assistance compared to other beneficiaries.

The scope and intensity of assistance may be **modulated in the event of significant backsliding 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** proportionately and redirecting them in a way that should avoid undermining support for the improvement of fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law, including support to civil society and, where appropriate, cooperation with local authorities.

If progress is resumed, assistance should also be modulated accordingly, in order to sustain the effort.

In a statement annexed to the legislative resolution, the European Parliament considers that any suspension of assistance under the instrument would modify the overall financial scheme as approved under the ordinary legislative procedure. As co-legislator and co-branch of the budgetary authority, Parliament would be entitled to exercise its full prerogatives in this respect, if such a decision were to be taken.

Monitoring and visibility

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

Parliament called on the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to set up a strategic coordination structure composed of all relevant Commission and EEAS services to ensure coherence, synergy, transparency and accountability, in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2021/947 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe.

For its part, the Commission commits to a high-level geopolitical dialogue between the two institutions on the implementation of the instrument. This dialogue should allow for exchanges with the European Parliament, whose views on the implementation of IPA III will be fully taken into account.

The European Commission also recalled that the Western Balkans Investment Framework Strategy Board is an advisory body to the Commission.