

Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) 2014-2020

2011/0404(COD) - 11/12/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 616 votes to 50, with 12 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II).

Parliament adopted its position at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure. The amendments adopted in plenary are the result of a compromise negotiated between the European Parliament and the Council.

General objective: the objective of the IPA II should be to support the beneficiaries listed in Annex I of the future Regulation in adopting and implementing the political, institutional, legal, administrative, social and economic reforms required by the beneficiaries listed in Annex I to comply with Union values and to progressively align to Union rules, standards, policies and practices with a view to Union membership. Through such support, IPA II should contribute to stability, security and prosperity in the beneficiary countries.

Specific objectives: a new series of specific objectives have been added:

- strengthening of democracy and institutions, including an independent and efficient judiciary;
- promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, enhanced respect for the rights of persons belonging to minorities, including LGBT, non-discrimination and respect for cultural diversity;
- regional co-operation and good neighbourly relations;
- promotion of reconciliation, peace building, and confidence building measures;
- border management and implementation of migration policy, including the management of migration flows;
- improvement of social dialogue and strengthening of the capacities of social partners;
- strengthening of education and research;
- preservation and restoration of cultural heritage.

Where appropriate, particular attention should be paid to good governance, the rule of law and the fight against corruption and organised crime in each of the planned actions.

Incentive measures and performance indicators: progress in these areas should be assessed through performance indicators defined in the draft Regulation. It is also specified that assistance should be managed with a strong focus on results and with incentives for those who demonstrate their commitment to reform through efficient implementation of pre-accession assistance and progress towards meeting the membership criteria. A part of the financial allocation should be earmarked for beneficiary countries demonstrating particular progress.

General framework of assistance: assistance under this Regulation should be provided in accordance with the enlargement policy framework, as well as with the relevant resolutions of the European Parliament. Assistance should be targeted and adjusted to the specific situation of the beneficiaries, taking into account further efforts needed to meet the membership criteria as well as the capacities of those beneficiaries. Assistance should be differentiated in scope and intensity according to the needs of each beneficiary. To this effect, the thematic priorities for providing assistance according to the needs and capacities of the beneficiaries are set out in Annex II and III of the future Regulation. Assistance should in particular support cross-border cooperation between the beneficiaries with a view to promoting good neighbourly relations.

Civil society: the role of civil society should be enhanced both in programmes implemented through government bodies and as a direct beneficiary of Union assistance.

Implementation: provisions have been included to clarify the technical implementation of the IPA II in terms of its strategic planning and programming.

It should be noted that when establishing the uniform conditions for implementing this Regulation, the lessons learnt from the management and implementation of past pre-accession assistance should be taken into account.

Financial envelope: in accordance with the agreement on the Financial Framework, the financial envelope for the implementation of this Regulation for the period from 2014 to 2020 is set at EUR 11 698 668 000. Up to 4% of this amount would be allocated to cross-border cooperation programmes. Part of the allocation would also be devoted to cross-border mobility.

Optimisation of resources: the Union should seek the most efficient use of available resources in order to optimise the impact of its external action. This should be achieved through coherence and complementarity between Instruments for external action.

Delegated acts: in order to take account of changes in the enlargement policy framework or of significant developments in the beneficiary countries, the power to adopt acts in accordance with Article 290 on the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union should be delegated to the Commission in respect of adapting and updating the thematic priorities for assistance listed in Annex II of the future Regulation. Following the publication of the Mid-term report and based upon the recommendations contained in the mid-term review report, the Commission shall adopt a delegated act amending Annex II to this Regulation by 31 March 2018.

Annexes: strengthening the rule of law, including the fight against corruption and organised crime, and good governance, including public administration reform, remain key challenges in most of the beneficiaries listed in Annex I and are essential for these to come closer to the Union and later to fully assume the obligations of Union membership.

The future Regulation should comprise 3 annexes:

- Annex I lists the beneficiary countries of the IPA II: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;
- Annex II defines the thematic priorities of assistance;

- Annex III concerns the priorities of assistance as regards territorial cooperation.

It should be noted that the amended draft Regulation is accompanied by a series of joint, bilateral or unilateral statements from the EU institutions including:

- a statement on the funding of horizontal programmes for minorities;
- a Commission declaration on the use implementing acts for the setting of the specific provisions for the implementation of certain rules in the [European Neighbourhood Instrument](#) and the IPA II;
- a European Parliament statement on the suspension of assistance granted under the financial instruments for foreign policy, particularly in cases where a beneficiary country fails to observe the basic principles enunciated in the respective instrument and notably the principles of democracy. (It is stated that Parliament considers that any suspension of assistance under these instruments would modify the overall financial scheme agreed under the ordinary legislative procedure. As co-legislator, Parliament is therefore entitled to fully exercise its prerogatives in that regard, if such a decision is to be taken).