

## **Council gives final go-ahead to seven-year funding for accession countries**

Member states today gave the final green light to almost 14.2 billion euro of pre-accession financial assistance for the period 2021–2027 in favour of the Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia, the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Turkey.

This support will help beneficiaries carry out reforms with a view to future Union membership. The beneficiaries will be supported in conducting the necessary political, institutional, legal, administrative, social and economic reforms in order to comply with Union values and to progressively align themselves with Union rules, standards, policies and practices.

### **A performance-based approach and a fair-share principle**

Assistance under IPA III will be based both on a performance-based approach and the fair share principle. This means that assistance will be differentiated in scope and intensity according to performance of the beneficiaries. Particular attention will be paid to efforts made in the fundamental reform areas (the rule of law and fundamental rights, democratic institutions and public administration reform, as well as economic development and competitiveness). At the same time, a fair share principle will be applied to ensure that the scope and intensity of the funding takes into account not only the performance of the beneficiaries but also their needs and capacities in order to avoid a disproportionately low level of assistance when compared with others and to ensure progress by all beneficiaries.

### **Conditionality**

It is also foreseen that the scope and intensity of the assistance can be modulated in case of significant regression or persistent lack of progress by a beneficiary in the fundamental reform areas. In such cases funds could be reduced proportionally and redirected without compromising support for improving fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law, including support to civil society.

### **Thematic priorities**

The Union assistance, starting retroactively from 1 January 2021, will be divided according to thematic priorities rather than into country envelopes.

### **Background**

In June 2018, the Commission presented its proposal for a regulation establishing the instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA III). The Council adopted its position in March 2019 and the Presidency of the EU Council and the Parliament reached a political agreement on 2 June 2021.

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

### **Next steps**

After today's formal support from the Council, the Plenary of the European Parliament will also have to complete its confirmation process. The adoption of the regulation is expected in September.

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