

Recommendations from public debate: IPA 2 (2014 - 2020) Perspectives and Opportunities for Usage November 17-18th 2014, Skopje Republic of Macedonia

1. The Committee on European Affairs is expecting from the Government of the Republic of Macedonia to undertake in due time all measures that are necessary for the successful implementation of the Indicative Strategic Document for the Republic of Macedonia (2014-2020), which has been approved in July 2014, between the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and the European Union, as a strategic document that reaffirms the European Union's resolve to continue the enlargement process and further the Partnership with our country.
2. The Committee expresses its gratitude to the European Union that the funds allocated under IPA 2 are greater than those for IPA 1, despite the fact that the Union is still in a post-crisis period. Furthermore, the Committee notes the need to utilize these funds, in the amount of EUR 664.2, in the best possible way for the realization of the country's strategic goals, so as to make possible the implementation of the necessary reforms preparing the country for the fulfilment of its ultimate goal – membership of the Republic of Macedonia in the European family.
3. The Committee welcomes the five strategic goals that are stated in the four-year programme of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia (2014-2018), which coincide with the main objectives of IPA, in particular: to increase economic growth and employment, to integrate the country in EU and NATO, to fight corruption and crime and implement the laws efficiently, to maintain good inter-ethnic relations based on the principles of mutual tolerance and respect and compliance with and implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, and to invest in education, science and information technology.
4. The Committee points out that the Government should, as soon as possible, make the necessary adjustments and use the new approach to the utilization of IPA 2 – per sectors, rather than per components, as a process that is aiming at a closer alignment of the national strategies with those of the EU, which raises the level of ownership of the beneficiary country and increases the coherence of the sectorial policies, the governmental expenditures and the improved performance. In order to increase the effectiveness of IPA 2, in accordance with the new sectorial approach, the Government should promptly lay down a national sectorial policy and strategy for sectorial budgets, designate a ministry that would be responsible for the relevant sector/subsector, establish a functional sectorial coordination framework and undertake steps for its development.
5. The Committee recommends the use of midterm economic programming and midterm fiscal planning, and, in that context, a review of the implications of national co-financing of projects supported by EU.



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- 6.** The Committee emphasizes the need for greater incentives, i.e. subsidies from the State, the State Budget and the local budgets, for some of the beneficiaries of projects that require co-financing by all partners involved in the relevant project. It recommends the establishment of a national fund for co-financing civil society organizations within the framework of IPA.
- 7.** The Committee notes the importance of providing the greatest possible transparency concerning the opportunity to obtain funds under IPA 2, as well as concerning the benefits of the IPA assistance for the country and its general guidelines, so as to raise the public awareness about the use and the benefit of such assistance.
- 8.** The Committee encourages the Government of the Republic of Macedonia to implement the General Communication Strategy on IPA, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia in July 2013, in order to ensure transparency and accountability in the process of informing the citizens about the success in the utilization of these funds. The Committee also welcomes the working visits of high government officials to the institutions –beneficiaries of IPA funds and implementers of NPAA, including the civil society organizations and associations, in view of their immediate involvement and information on all aspects related to the use of IPA 2.
- 9.** The Committee emphasizes the importance of strengthening the administrative capacities of the IPA structures in the institutions, by virtue of new employments and professional trainings specialized in the utilization of the European funds. The institutional capacity is essential for the realization of IPA 2, i.e. the specific activities in the four priority areas: democracy, rule of law and human rights; socio-economic development; education and human resources development; and agriculture and rural development.
- 10.** The Committee, in the spirit of developing the good neighbourly relations policy and regional cooperation, recognizes the commitment of Republic of Macedonia to continue providing a constructive and positive contribution to the regional initiatives with the Western Balkans countries, under the principle of inclusiveness.
- 11.** The Committee notes the need for the Government to intensify its endeavours in view of the implementation of the regional projects within the frames of IPA 2, thus enhancing the cross-border cooperation and the relations among the countries in the region. Furthermore, the Committee calls for our greater involvement in the development of a modern and eco-efficient railway system that will connect Southeast Europe with the remainder of the continent, as well as for further progress and harmonization of the transport policy with the EU acquis, in accordance with item 62 of the European Parliament’s Resolution on the progress achieved by the Republic of Macedonia in 2013.



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12. The Committee welcomes the support of EU in the fields of economy and competitiveness, via IPA 2, which shall contribute to an improved business climate and support for small and medium enterprises, which, in turn, shall reduce the differences among the regions and link the research and development institutions in the business sector with the employment sector.

13. The Committee, having regard to the beneficiaries, in accordance with Regulation no. 231/2014 (paragraph 6 of the Preamble) establishing IPA 2, proposes , in addition to the regular meetings at the Conferences of the Committees on European Affairs/Integrations of the parliaments of the countries within the scope of the Stabilization and Association Process in Southeast Europe – COSAP, more intensive joint regional meetings of the European Affairs/Integrations Committees, which shall discuss the potential for strengthening the parliamentary scrutiny over the efficiency in the utilization of the EU funds.

14. The Committee notes the need for the Secretariat for European Affairs at the Government of the Republic of Macedonia to submit to the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, at least once per year, information on the utilization of IPA 2.

15. The recommendations from the public hearing of the Committee on European Affairs should be forwarded to the Speaker of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, the Members of Parliament, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, the Secretariat for European Affairs within the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and to the Delegation of EU to the Republic of Macedonia.

16. The recommendations from the public hearing should be published at the web page of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia so as to be made available to the general public.