


**Role of Civil Society in Programming EU Financial Assistance for Kosovo: Emphasis  
on Country Strategy Paper (CSP) within IPAII 2014 - 2020**



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**Commentary III**

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### I. Introduction

Technical and financial assistance to the EU enlargement countries, including Kosovo, is currently provided through the **Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) 2007 - 2013**<sup>1</sup>. This instrument will expire at the end of 2013. With a view to future accessions, the EU will continue to offer candidate countries and potential candidates' technical and financial assistance to assist their transition reforms and develop sustainably. As a result the European Commission is in the process to propose a regulation, for the approval from the Council and the Parliament, for the second phase of **Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance for years 2014 – 2020**.

In its Communication of June 2011 '*A Budget for Europe 2014 - 2020*' the European Commission proposed to allocate an amount of **EUR 14 billion** to the new Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance for the period of 7 years.<sup>2</sup>

The **new pre-accession instrument - IPA II**, will continue to focus on delivering on the Enlargement Policy, which is one of the core priorities of EU External Action, thus helping to promote stability, security and prosperity in Europe. To that end, the new instrument will continue to pursue the general policy objective of supporting Kosovo in its preparations for EU membership and the progressive alignment of its institutions and economy with the standards and policies of the European Union, according to its specific needs and adapted to its accession process. In doing so, the coherence between the financial assistance and the overall progress made in the implementation of the pre-accession strategy is envisaged to be strengthened.<sup>3</sup>

The objectives of the assistance will be defined in indicative **Country Strategy Papers (CSP)** established by the Commission for the duration of 7 years in partnership with the beneficiary country i.e. Kosovo, based on its specific needs and enlargement agenda. The strategy paper identifies the policy areas for assistance and lays down the indicative allocations of funds per policy area, broken down per year. Sufficient flexibility will be allowed to build in to cater for emerging needs and to give incentives to improve performance.<sup>4</sup> The strategy paper should ensure coherence and consistency with the efforts of beneficiary countries as reflected in their national budgets and should take into account the support provided by other donors. In order to take into account internal and external developments, the **multiannual indicative strategy paper** should be revised as appropriate.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Council Regulation 1085/2006 of 17 July 2006

<sup>2</sup> For more visit [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/budget/bu0001\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/budget/bu0001_en.htm)

<sup>3</sup> Strategy Paper for Kosovo (draft version September 2013) 2014 – 2020

<sup>4</sup> Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II). Brussels 7.12.2011

<sup>5</sup> Structure of the Country Strategy Papers under IPA II

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The draft **Country Strategy Paper for Kosovo** is prepared by the European Commission with involvement of the Kosovo institutions through the Ministry of European Integration. In addition, the Strategy has been consulted and written inputs were asked from civil society organizations. The strategy covers years 2014 – 2020 and a midterm review is envisaged in 2017. The strategy identifies main sectors of **IPA assistance** whereby for each sector **specific objectives** to be reached by 2020, **proposed activities** and **indicators** to measure the progress are specified. Preliminary selection of sectors for IPA II in Kosovo include: Rule of Law & Justice and Home Affairs, Agriculture and food safety, Energy, Socio-Economic development and institution building.<sup>6</sup> **IPA II budget** for Kosovo is estimated at €70 million per year i.e. about €500 million for the 7-year period. Currently, this strategy is on internal consultation process among EU member states and it is expected to be adopted by EC in 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2014.

Future pre-accession assistance in Kosovo needs to be even more strategic, efficient and better targeted than it has been the case so far, aiming for more sustainable results reflecting the ownership, partnership and local incentives and priorities. A positive sign is that IPA II will operate more flexibly and leverage more funds from other donors or the private sector by using innovative financing instruments, while pursuing simplification and reduction of the administrative burden linked to managing the financial assistance.

Therefore, the involvement of civil society in the design of EU financial assistance for Kosovo is of high importance. First, the civil society organizations are well placed to objectively prioritize the technical and financial assistance, and secondly they are familiar with the local needs and can associate projects with direct beneficiaries i.e. target groups. Furthermore civil society is able to identify local capacities and incentives for sustainable partnerships. Hence, their early involvement and contribution in programming and design of EU assistance is crucial.

The SAP dialogue sectorial and plenary meetings with civil society provide a good structure to give input for programming of financial assistance. However, based on the nature of the financial programming documents,<sup>7</sup> which involve highly technical and complex matters, the key to successful contribution is being focused within a sector, taking proactive stance and sending written contributions. Hence, KCSF would like to share its opinion and comments towards the process of designing EU financial assistance for Kosovo. These remarks were also sent as a written contribution from KCSF for **Country Strategy Paper for Kosovo 2014 – 2020**.

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<sup>6</sup> Strategy Paper for Kosovo (draft version September 2013) 2014 – 2020

<sup>7</sup> These involve Country Strategy Papers, Yearly IPA programming, project fiches, TORs

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### II. KCSF remarks to Country Strategy Paper (CSP) IPA II for Kosovo 2014 – 2020

#### General remarks:

- We welcome the good intention of EC for a **more inclusive way** of developing the IPA 2014 - 2020 support as compared to the IPA 2007 - 2013 cycle;
- We welcome the novelties introduced by IPA II on supporting implementation of the necessary reforms but also social and economic development through five (5) thematic policy areas in particular that IPA assistance will be used to contribute to the implementation of beneficiaries (i.e. Kosovo's) **national reform policies**.
- We welcome the change in EC financial assistance approach and introduction of **performance element** which we hope will improve the absorption and quality of projects in line with governments increased attention to efficiency.
- Up to date, KCSF has actively participated in the process of **programming and implementation** of annual IPA programs within previous cycle. We will appreciate the possibility to get engaged into structured consultations when further yearly and midterm plans are developed.

Concretely, KCSF called upon EC's attention to:

- The CSP and the entire IPA II support need to be fully **coherent with national reform policies and existing or upcoming strategies**. A close look shall be taken to outdated strategies mentioned in the CSP and instead have in mind revised or upcoming strategies. On these lines, we call that the CSP and financial support is closely linked with **National Strategy for European Integration 2014 – 2020**.
- The financial support needs to be conditioned to **indicators of achievement** and closely monitored/linked to EC Progress Report yearly assessments. **SMART indicators** (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) shall be developed for planned type of actions in order to allow yearly and in particular midterm evaluation of the assistance and if need be re-design the support.
- Under current draft of CSP (June, 2013), Kosovo will benefit only from three (3) **policy areas and sectors of assistance for 2014-2020**, for 1) Transition process and institution building (TAIB), 2) Regional Development (RD), 3) Agriculture and rural development. Kosovo should be allowed to benefit also from two remaining IPA II policy areas such as 4) Employment, social policies and human resources development and 5) Regional and territorial cooperation in order to prepare itself for accession process, build capacities, diversify funding and

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complement support. On this note, what will be the destiny of Cross Border Cooperation projects?

- A **clear division of funding (%)** shall be allocated as per policy areas and sectors supported in order to allow proper planning and linkage to national reforms in particular MTEF and yearly budgetary planning in Kosovo.
- While support should be provided to CSOs through CSF within IPA II, space needs to be left horizontally at CSP for CSOs inclusion. An approach can be taken to include CSOs into programming, implementation and more inclusive process during implementation of thematic areas where expertise and interest exists such as rule of law, anti-corruption, home affairs, human rights, protection of minorities, economic and social development, energy, agriculture etc.
- In parallel to benefiting from EU support, civil society role under the CSP should also be that of **monitoring** the EU support and its efficiency.
- A **positive changes** in the support of civil society development in Enlargement countries under the IPA CSF 2007-2013, in particular more flexible programming, availability of longer-term programmatic support, more flexible approach and reaching the grass-root organizations through re-granting should continue within IPA II 2014 – 2020 and build on lessons learned from previous cycle;

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### **III. Final remarks**

With the purpose to encourage Kosovar NGOs to send written inputs for the programming of EU assistance, KCSF prepared this commentary sharing its general remarks and specific comments on CSP for Kosovo 2014 - 2020. At this stage of the programming, when CSP is being finalised, these comments can be used as a learning exercise from civil society partners. By making it public and available to other NGOs, KCSF's written input aims to be used as a tool to promote and advocate for CSOs written contributions as soon as next stages of EU financial assistance programming take place.

This commentary and the written contribution to the EC are an outcome of KCSF's experience in management and implementation of EU funds, various internal datasets, CfP analysis, meetings with local partners and stakeholders, observations and presentations at various conferences, knowledge accumulated through project beneficiaries and grantees and well established regional and European networks.

The written input submitted by KCSF is among the only written contributions of Kosovar NGOs into the programming of next phase of EU financial assistance. KCSF aims to use this model to encourage civil society organizations for contribution and participation in programming of EU financial assistance.

The next challenge is to be pro-active and contribute into prioritization and bringing relevant projects within annual IPA programming cycle. Once sector based project fiches start to be developed, a specific role of Kosovar NGOs lies within design of appropriate objectives, results, and impact and project beneficiaries. Through this process civil society organizations can play a vital role in making financial assistance available to Kosovo relevant, effective, useful and serving local needs and priorities.