



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on Foreign Affairs

2012/2015(DEC)

7.5.2012

DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

for the Committee on Budgetary Control

on Special Report No 14/2011 (Discharge 2011) - Has EU assistance improved Croatia's capacity to manage post-accession funding?
(N7-0039/2012 – C7-0029/2012 – 2012/2015(DEC))

Rapporteur: Libor Rouček

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Foreign Affairs calls on the Committee on Budgetary Control, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the significant and positive role of pre-accession assistance in preparing Croatian authorities for the management of cohesion and rural policies in the post-accession period; commends the progress made by Croatia in reinforcing its institutional and administrative capacity and consolidating the management of pre-accession assistance; stresses, however, that further sustained action is needed, given that, in most areas, the Commission has not yet authorised Croatia to implement pre-accession assistance without *ex ante* checks;
2. Urges the Commission and the Croatian authorities to prioritise the build-up of robust public procurement capacities; emphasises, in this context, that the fight against corruption plays a central role in the entire accession process, and failure to implement preventive anti-corruption measures will impede the future absorption of EU assistance;
3. Stresses that capacity-building in the framework of pre-accession assistance should target central institutions as well as regional and local structures; is concerned that, in the case of Croatia, insufficient attention to the latter may result in them lacking adequate administrative capacity and experience to implement EU assistance;
4. Reiterates that the purpose of pre-accession assistance is, inter alia, to bolster the candidate states' capacity to absorb future EU funding in an efficient and transparent manner; welcomes, therefore, the new approaches used by the Commission in planning pre-accession assistance to Croatia, such as linking specific capacity-building projects to accession negotiations, allowing for multiannual operational programmes;
5. Calls on the Commission to maximise the potential for institutional learning and capacity-building in candidate and potential candidate states, notably by further aligning the procedures of pre-accession assistance with those used under the Structural Fund, the European Social Fund, and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development;