



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Foreign Affairs

2011/2033(INI)

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DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

for the Committee on Budgetary Control

on budgetary management of European Union pre-accession funds in the areas of judicial systems and the fight against corruption in the candidate and potential candidate countries
(2011/2033(INI))

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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. Reiterates the importance of an independent judiciary and of an efficient fight against corruption in strengthening the rule of law and democracy; welcomes the EU's new negotiating approach, which firmly anchors these core fields at the heart of the accession process and includes an early opening of Chapters 23 and 24; stresses the need for setting transparent and fair benchmarks throughout the process, which translate the criteria into concrete steps towards accession;
2. Considers it an essential enlargement policy and funding concern to improve the independence, accountability, impartiality, professionalism and efficiency of the judiciary; stresses the need for sustainable measures in judicial reform; calls for financial assistance for relevant civil society actors in building long-term capacities;
3. Calls for unbiased and successful prosecutions and court rulings in combating corruption, including in high-profile cases, in order to enhance citizens' trust in the rule of law and public institutions; invites the relevant authorities to improve interinstitutional cooperation, raise public awareness and develop capacities for planning, enforcing and monitoring anti-corruption rules and activities, as well as to cooperate closely with the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) and to engage closely with state independent bodies, such as anti-corruption agencies;
4. Regrets the fact that IPA-I funding levels still appear limited when set against the importance of these areas; considers it essential in the future financing of these areas under IPA-II that progress in meeting specific objectives on an independent and efficient judiciary, the rule of law and combating corruption, including their implementation, should be monitored and assessed on the basis of measurable indicators.