

**Question for written answer E-000664/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Removal of Albania and Turkey from list of Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III) beneficiary countries for democratic backsliding

On 17 January 2022, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan travelled to Albania as part of a new effort to strengthen bilateral ties between the two countries.

Through its free trade agreements and busy roster of diplomatic, cultural and religious activities, such as the construction of new mosques – including the Namazgah Mosque in Tirana, which is set to become the largest in the Balkans – Turkey currently plays an important role in the Balkan peninsula.

Ankara and Tirana also both recognise the independence of Kosovo, an entity which five EU countries do not recognise as a sovereign state.

Even though that support for Kosovan independence runs counter to EU interests, the EU is actually the region's biggest financial backer: it has granted it EUR 14 162 billion for the period 2021-2027 under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III).

Given that this instrument is supposed to be an effective means to uphold the rule of law and fundamental rights and consolidate democratic institutions and that Albania and Turkey were singled out for corruption and democratic backsliding by the Commission in a report it published in 2021, does the Commission intend to remove those countries from the list of IPA III beneficiary countries?