

# EU reaches provisional agreement on pre-accession financial assistance

The Council presidency has reached an agreement with the European Parliament on a regulation establishing the instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA III) for the period 2021–2027, beneficiaries of which are, among others, the Western Balkans and Turkey. Over the seven-year period the Union will provide financial assistance amounting to more than EUR 14 billion (in current prices). This political agreement still needs the approval of the Council.



Pre-accession assistance supports the beneficiaries in adopting and implementing key political, institutional, social and economic reforms to comply with EU values and to progressively align to the EU's rules, standards and policies.

*Ana Paula Zacarias, Portuguese Secretary of State for European Affairs*

## **Next steps**

The Portuguese Presidency has negotiated this political agreement with the European Parliament on behalf of the Council. Now the member states will have to confirm their support by qualified majority.

## **Background**

In June 2018, the Commission presented its proposal for a regulation establishing the instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA III). The Commission proposed that Union assistance would be divided according to thematic priorities and be allocated based on the actual performance of beneficiaries on the basis of an annual assessment.

The Council adopted its position in March 2019 and has been negotiating with the European Parliament for over a year.

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## Press release following President

## Michel's discussions with President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Acting Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia



In today's phone call with President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and meeting with Acting PM Pashinyan of Armenia, President Michel of the European Council stressed the importance for the EU of stability and prosperity of the South Caucasus and of deepening relations with the two partner countries.

He recalled that the full implementation of the 9 November 2020 ceasefire declaration by Azerbaijan and Armenia is essential for regional security and stability. The EU is ready to provide expertise on border delimitation and demarcation and to support confidence building.

The European Union also encourages both parties to cooperate, as matter of urgency, on the return of detainees and full transparency with regard to mine fields, and other important humanitarian issues. The EU is providing almost 20 million EUR in humanitarian assistance and will continue to be engaged.

Addressing these immediate challenges is, however, only a first step towards a sustainable peaceful settlement. The PEC called on both sides to engage in renewed negotiations in a constructive spirit.

The European Union has a profound interest in the security, stability and prosperity of the South Caucasus region as an integral part of the EU's Eastern Partnership.

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## EU Court of Justice: appointment of three judges of the Court of Justice and a judge of the General Court



The representatives of the governments of the member states today appointed three judges of the Court of Justice and a judge of the General Court.

### **Court of Justice**

- Mr Siniša Rodin (Croatia) has been reappointed as a judge of the Court of Justice
- Mr François Biltgen (Luxembourg) has been reappointed as a judge of the

Court of Justice

- Mr Zoltán Csehi (Hungary) has been appointed to the post of judge of the Court of Justice

The appointments are part of the partial renewal of the composition of the Court of Justice, since the terms of office of 14 judges and 6 advocates general will expire on 6 October 2021.

## General Court

- Ms Maja Brkan (Slovenia) has been appointed to the post of judge of the General Court

The appointment is for a term of office ending on 31 August 2025.

This appointment is part of the partial renewal of the composition of General Court, since the terms of office of 23 judges expired on 31 August 2019.

## Background

The Court of Justice of the European Union consists of two courts: the Court of Justice and the General Court.

The judges and advocates-general are appointed by common accord of the governments of the member states after consultation of a panel responsible for giving an opinion on prospective candidates' suitability to perform the duties concerned.

They are chosen from among individuals whose independence is beyond doubt.

For appointment to the Court of Justice, candidates must possess the qualifications required for appointment, in their respective countries, to the highest judicial offices, or be jurisconsults of recognised competence. For appointment to the General Court, they must possess the ability required for appointment to high judicial office.

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## [Media advisory – Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council \(Transport\), 3 June 2021](#)



### Indicative programme

## Thursday 3 June 2021

Place:

ECCL, Luxembourg

Chair:

**Pedro Nuno Santos**, Portuguese Minister for Infrastructure and Housing

*All times are approximate and subject to change*

from 08.45

Arrivals ([live streaming](#))

**10.00**

**Beginning of the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Transport)**

Adoption of the agenda

10.10 Single European Sky 2+ ([public session](#))

11.40 Any other business

- COVID-19 and air connectivity
- Forced landing of a civilian aircraft

12.00 Hired vehicles ([public session](#))

12.10 Recognition of 3rd country certificates ([public session](#))

12.20 Council conclusions on rail

12.40 Any other business

- Progress report on IRP
- Electronic freight information exchange

13.00 Approval of non-legislative A items

14.45 Council Conclusions on sustainable and smart mobility

15.05 Sustainable and smart mobility strategy – the way forward ([public session](#))

16.35 Any other business

- Eurovignette ([public session](#))
- Transition to zero-emission light-duty vehicles
- Update on the ePLF project
- C-ITS Roadshow event in Brno
- Container loss by ships

Work programme of the incoming Presidency

**At the end of the meeting (+/- 17.35) press conference in [live streaming](#)**

## Arrangements for the press conferences

Please note that there will be no physical press conference. EU accredited journalists will be able to ask questions remotely using [this link](#).

Journalists who already registered for the previous meetings of Transport and Telecommunications Council do not need to do it again.

**Deadline for registration: Thursday, 3 June 2021, 16.35**

Further instructions will be sent to all registered participants approximately half an hour after the deadline.

[Videos and photos from the event](#)

[Visit the meeting page](#)

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## Public country-by-country reporting by big multinationals: EU co-legislators reach political agreement

Representatives of the Portuguese presidency of the Council today reached a provisional political agreement with the European Parliament's negotiating team on the proposed directive on the disclosure of income tax information by certain undertakings and branches, commonly referred to as the public country-by-country reporting (CBCR) directive.



Corporate tax avoidance and aggressive tax-planning by big multinational companies are believed to deprive EU countries of more than 50 billion euros of revenue per year. Such practices are facilitated by the absence of any obligation for big multinational companies to report on where they make their profits and where they pay their tax in the EU on a country-by-country basis. At a time when our citizens are struggling to overcome the effects of the pandemic crisis, it is more crucial than ever to require meaningful financial transparency regarding such practices. It is our duty to ensure that all economic actors contribute their fair share to the economic recovery.

*Pedro Siza Vieira, Portuguese Minister of State for the Economy and Digital Transition*

The agreed text requires multinational enterprises or standalone undertakings with a total consolidated revenue of more than €750 million in each of the last two consecutive financial years, whether headquartered in the EU or outside, to disclose publicly income tax information in each member state, as well as in each third country listed in Annex I of the Council conclusions on the EU list of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes or listed for two consecutive years in Annex II of these Council conclusions. Such reporting shall take place by means of a common EU template and in machine readable electronic formats.

In order to avoid disproportionate administrative burden on the companies involved and to limit the disclosed information to what is absolutely necessary to enable effective public scrutiny, the directive provides for a complete and final list of information to be disclosed.

The reporting will take place within 12 months from the date of the balance sheet of the financial year in question. The directive sets out the conditions under which a company may obtain the deferral of the disclosure of certain elements for a maximum of five years.

It also stipulates who bears the actual responsibility for ensuring compliance with the reporting obligation.

Member states will have eighteen months to transpose the directive into national law. Four years after the date of its transposition, the Commission shall report on the application of the directive.

## **Next steps**

The provisionally agreed text will now be submitted to the relevant bodies of the Council and of the European Parliament for political endorsement. If such endorsement takes place, the Council will adopt its position at first reading on the basis of the agreed text (subject to standard legal-linguistic scrutiny). The European Parliament should then approve that Council's position and the directive will be deemed to have been adopted.