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'I' ITEM NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee
Subject:	Draft REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing the Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance (IPA III) (first reading) - Decision to use the written procedure for the adoption of the Council's position at first reading and of the statement of the Council's reasons = Statements

Statement by the European Commission on a geopolitical dialogue with the European Parliament on the the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III)

The European Commission, mindful of the European Parliament's functions of political control laid down in Article 14 of the Treaty on the European Union, commits to conduct a high-level geopolitical dialogue between the two institutions on the implementation of Regulation (EU) XXX/XXX of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III). This dialogue should allow exchanges with the European Parliament, whose positions on the implementation of the IPA III will be fully taken into consideration, in full respect of the Commission's ability to implement the instrument, in line with its institutional responsibilities.

The geopolitical dialogue will discuss general orientations on the implementation of the IPA III, including on programming before the adoption of the IPA III programming framework and programming documents, and concerning specific subjects such as the suspension of assistance to a beneficiary when it persistently fails to observe the principles of democracy, the rule of law, good governance, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The geopolitical dialogue will be structured as follows:

- i) A high-level dialogue between the Commissioner in charge of Neighbourhood and Enlargement, on behalf of the Commission, and the European Parliament.
- ii) A permanent dialogue at senior officials' level with AFET working groups to ensure an adequate preparation and follow-up to the high-level dialogue.

The high-level dialogue will take place at least twice a year. One of the meetings may coincide with the presentation by the Commission of the draft annual budget.

Statement by the European Commission on the modulation/suspension of assistance in Article [7a, paragraph 5] of Regulation No. XXX/2021 of the European Parliament and of the Council of XX/XX 2021 establishing the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III)

The European Commission considers that the provision in Article [7a, paragraph 5] respects the powers of the Commission in the implementation of Union programmes, and the Union budget in general as long as it is without prejudice to the prerogatives and powers entrusted to the Commission by the Treaties and the Financial Regulation to suspend Union assistance provided to third countries.

**Statement of the European Commission on the advisory nature of strategic boards as in
[Article 11] of Regulation No. XXX/2021 of the European Parliament and of the Council of
XX/XX 2021 establishing the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III)**

The European Commission recalls that as laid down in Article [11] of the IPA III Regulation, the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) strategic board is *an advisory body* to the Commission. This is aligned with [Article 33] of the NDICI – Global Europe Regulation, which refers to the WBIF and EFSD+ strategic boards. These strategic boards do not have decision-making powers in the context of the implementation of the EU budget. The Rules of Procedures for the WBIF strategic board will be established on this basis.
