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SVILANOVIC: COUNTRIES OF THE REGION COULD WITHDRAW MORE FUNDS FROM IPA 2

SARAJEVO, 13 March (FENA) – European Commission, acceding countries and other partners, including the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) are working on finalizing the new Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance (IPA 2). This instrument will be applied from 2014. Now is the time for the region, i.e. beneficiaries of the EU funds, to actively participate to have their interests represented as much as possible, since all changes are possible only until the end of the year, FENA was told by the RCC Secretary General Goran Svilanovic.

Svilanovic said that even now some trends will definitely have positive impact on the nature of the pre-accession assistance, especially in regional dimension, the so called “multi-beneficiary IPA 2”.

“Regional development strategy SEE 2020, which the RCC is developing with countries of the region and other partners, has prominent role in the process of shaping IPA 2 and we already have support from the European Commission for implementation of this strategy in the upcoming period. We expect SEE 2020 strategy to become an integral part of programming of IPA 2 instrument and to give advantage to the activities which the RCC, along with countries of the region, recognizes as a regional priority in the implementation of SEE 2020 strategy. Thereby, we now have adjustment of interests and needs of the region on the one hand, and the European Commission on the other”, said Svilanovic.

Asked by FENA about the expected financial support, Svilanovic said that IPA 2 will undergo certain changes in its total amount compared to the previous period.

“Overall EU budget is lower, and therefore the funds for the region as well. However, 50% out of the total amount of the last mechanism, IPA 1, was used. That is why the countries from the region, which are ready to ‘withdraw’ funds from EU, can count on higher amount, if they continue being efficient in proposing concrete projects in accordance with demands of the new financial instrument”, explained Svilanovic.

He also emphasized that there will be no different treatment depending on countries’ status in the accession process, therefore they will all have equal access to all components of IPA 2 funds.

“IPA 2 will also have focused, sector approach, where most of the pre-accession assistance would be directed to the priority sectors determined by the countries. That is why the RCC and each individual country need to use the opportunity now and clearly present their priorities to the Commission in the next few months, to indicate which sectors are of the

greatest importance for economic growth in each country so the countries would be ready to continue the accession process”, said Svilanovic.

The new instrument of financial and development support in the pre-accession period is designed with full participation of the beneficiaries.

“Unlike the previous period where each of the countries was allocated a predetermined amount of assistance, we can expect different approach in the coming period. Namely, the amount of the financial assistance will be proportional to the success of a country in use of funds, so the countries will be motivated to develop their capacities, achieve absorbing power and show that they fully respect the reform obligations they assumed”, RCC Secretary General Goran Svilanovic told FENA.

The RCC, in collaboration with the European Commission, has an important role in preparing reports, assessing progress of each individual country in the accession process. Furthermore, the RCC will be consulted while making decisions on use of these funds at the regional level.

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