

THE PRE-ACCESSION PROGRAMMES

Marina Kesner-Škreb
Institute of Public Finance, Zagreb

Glossary*
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The European Union launched its pre-accession programmes as assistance for the preparation of candidate countries to meet the membership criteria (the Copenhagen criteria as they are known). Candidate countries need to make considerable investments in order for their institutions to prepare for application of the *acquis* and to be able to meet the conditions for membership. For the 2000-2006 period, three of these pre-accession programmes were launched: Phare, ISPA and SAPARD. The Phare programme is concentrated on institution-building, investment in infrastructure and economic and social cohesion. The SAPARD programme is involved in the modernisation of agriculture and rural development, while ISPA supports infrastructure projects in the area of transport and environmental protection. For the 2007-2013 period, a programme called Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance – IPA – will be the only manner of financing candidate countries and will replace all the other pre-accession programmes. It will also replace the CARDS programme, intended for the countries of the Western Balkans.

Phare is an assistance programme set up in 1989 after the fall of communism in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, its aim being the reconstruction of these countries. At first it covered only Poland and Hungary and was called *Pologne-Hongrie: assistance à la restructuration économique*, hence the current acronym. In time it was expanded to the other countries of CEE and as well as providing assistance for the reconstruction of the economies of these countries, Phare was the main financial instrument in the pre-accession strategy of countries that had applied to be members of the EU. The objectives of Phare are to prepare candidate states for membership in the Union, that is, making them capable of full acceptance of the *acquis* of the EU and of employing the structural funds and the Cohesion Fund after joining. It mainly addresses, then, the development of institutions necessary for the process of convergence on economic integration and for the funding of investment programmes in the candidate countries.

At least 30% of funds from Phare are meant for the strengthening of institutions

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charged with harmonising national legislation with the *acquis* and with its implementation, mainly via twinning projects in the public administration, that is, linking and project-cooperation between similar bodies in the candidate country and in one or more EU member countries. The projects cover assistance in harmonising and implementing laws via direct expert assistance, training activities and the preparation of a development strategy for a given sector. The bulk of the resources, 70% of them, are meant for investment in the regulatory infrastructure that is necessary for implementation of the *acquis* (for example, the purchase of specialised laboratory equipment for food quality control, equipping national border veterinary control points and the modernisation of border crossings) as well as investment in economic and social cohesion (for example, for encouraging the development of small and medium-sized undertakings and investment in local infrastructure). The user state is bound to co-finance all investment in equipment and infrastructure projects in the amount of 25% of the value of the investment.

ISPA (Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession) was officially launched on April 1 2000, the aim being to provide assistance to candidate countries in their preparations for membership in the area of transport and environmental protection. During the period of 2000 to 2006 the programme will provide access to 1.04 billion euros (in 1999 prices), and in the European Commission it is the General Directorate for Regional Policy that is charged with its administration. The main priorities of the programme are preparation of candidate states concerning the policies and procedures of the EU in the area of training about policies and procedures in the EU,

assistance in meeting EU standards in environmental protection, and expansion of transport networks and linkups with trans-European networks.

In the transportation sector the programme funds projects that expand the trans-European transport network linking the EU and the candidate states, the national networks with each other, and the national networks with the trans-European. The projects are targeted to the development of road, rail and sea routes, ports and airport infrastructure. The environmental protection sector of the programme funds projects aimed at harmonisation with EU regulations and involving heavy investment, such as management of solid and hazardous waste, water supply and drainage and air quality improvement.

SAPARD (Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development) is a special EU pre-accession programme for agriculture and rural development, and is designed as assistance to the countries of CEE in preparations for taking part in the single market and the common agricultural policy. The objective of the programme is to help candidate states in solving problems of structural adjustments in their farm sectors and in rural areas and to provide assistance in implementation of the *acquis* in the area of the CAP and of the whole of the relevant legislation. The programme was started in June 1999, and candidate countries have the right to use it until they join the EU.

Financial assistance from the SAPARD programme is provided for interventions in line with the measures determined by national plans for rural development, for example, for investment in farms, processing and marketing of farm and fishery prod-

ucts, diversification of rural economic activities, the development and strengthening of rural infrastructure, forestation, assistance to producer associations, investment in quality control systems and so on. This programme is meant above all for private undertakings in the area of farm and food products, and for the institutions in charge of the development of the local infrastructure through which progress is made in rural areas and rural development.

LITERATURE

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