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WORKING PAPER

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MEETING DOCUMENT

From:	Presidency
To:	Working Party on Enlargement and Countries Negotiating Accession to the EU
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Subject:	Draft IPA III Regulation: – examination of EFSD+ related provisions

Following the previous discussions on Western Balkans-related EFSD+ provisions in the NDICI and in IPA III Regulations, including at the informal videoconference of the Members of COELA on 5 May 2020, and further consultations with relevant stakeholders, delegations are invited to consider the compromise suggestions in annex.

Following the previous discussions on Western Balkans-related EFSD+ provisions in the NDICI and in IPA III Regulations, including at the informal videoconference of the Members of COELA on 5 May 2020, and further consultations with relevant stakeholders, ***delegations are invited to consider the following compromise suggestions:***

- 1) to agree to Article 26ter of the NDICI Regulation relevant to IPA III as set out below:

Article 26 ter

Strategic board of the EFSD+

1. In the management of the EFSD+ the Commission shall be advised by a strategic board, except in the case of the operations covering ~~the EU enlargement~~ ***the Western Balkans*** and financed by [IPA III], which shall have its specific strategic board. ~~ensured under the Western Balkans Investment Framework.~~

- 2) to agree to amending Article 11 of IPA III Regulation, as set out below, clarifying that:
- the governance will be ensured within the WBIF;
 - the current inclusive approach with the participation of the partners, of the financial institutions and bilateral donors is preserved;
 - participation of all MS is ensured.

Article 11

Financial instruments and guarantee for external actions

1. The beneficiaries listed in Annex I shall be eligible to the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+) and to External Action Guarantee as provided for in Chapter IV of Title II of [NDICI Regulation] ***mutatis mutandis***.

With regard to the External Action Guarantee, To this end, IPA III shall contribute to the provisioning ~~related to the guarantee for external actions~~ referred to in Article 26 of [NDICI Regulation] proportionally to the investments carried out to the benefit of the beneficiaries listed in Annex I.

2. In the management of the EFSD+ operations for the Western Balkans, the Commission shall be advised by a specific strategic board.

3. This strategic board shall advise the Commission on the strategic orientation of investments for the Western Balkans, in accordance with the policy framework and objectives defined in this Regulation.

In addition to the current representatives in the Western Balkans Investment Framework, the board shall include representatives of all Member States. Participation in the board may be open to other relevant stakeholders. The strategic board shall be consulted prior to the inclusion of any new member or observer. The strategic board shall be chaired by the Commission and shall, to the extent possible, adopt opinions by consensus. The Commission shall propose the rules of procedure for the strategic board before its first meeting.
