

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SWEDISH PRESIDENCY OF THE EU</b></p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">se2009.eu</p>		<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EUROPEAN COMMISSION</b></p>
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**Sweden and the European Commission are co-hosting a conference on Effective Support for Enlargement in Brussels on 19 October 2009. Opening statements by Swedish State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Mr Frank Belfrage and EC Director General for Enlargement, Mr Michael Leigh.**

The purpose of the conference is to discuss the effectiveness of financial support of the European Union and other donors to the candidate countries and potential candidates for EU membership. The role of the beneficiary countries for a more effective implementation and management of funds will be at the centre of discussion.

How to improve the design and planning of the EU Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), and the coordination with programmes from EU Member States and other donors will also be discussed.

*"The European Commission presented the enlargement package on 14 October. The timing is therefore very appropriate for a discussion connecting all aspects of the enlargement, as well the political process as the financial support provided through IPA", State Secretary Frank Belfrage says.*

*Michael Leigh: "For us, aid efficiency clearly means supporting our partner countries in meeting their commitments under the European and Accession Partnerships and prepare for EU integration".*

There is a large interest in the conference. Over 225 participants are expected, among whom ministers and senior officials from beneficiary countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey, as well donor agencies and international financial institutions.

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The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) was inaugurated in 2007 and has an overall budget of €1.5 billion for the period 2007-2013. Beneficiaries of IPA are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. IPA supports EU reforms in the beneficiary countries and their gradual approximation to the fundamental values of the European Union and the *aquis communautaire*, with a view to prepare for future EU membership.

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<sup>1</sup> under UN Security Council Regulation 1244(1999)