Resolution on the 2012 progress report on Bosnia and Herzegovina

2012/2865(RSP) - 23/05/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution tabled by the Committee on Foreign Affairs on the 2012 progress report on Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).

General considerations: whilst strongly reiterating its support for the European integration of BiH, Parliament is concerned at the **continued lack of a shared vision for the overall direction of the country on the part of the political elites,** which is putting BiH at risk of **continuing to fall further behind the other countries of the region**. Members underline the importance for BiH of speaking with one voice in the EU integration process, and they urge political leaders to work together and focus on the implementation of the Roadmap as part of the High Level Dialogue with the Commission, thus making it possible to meet the requirements enabling the Stabilisation and Association Agreement to come into force at last and permitting the submission of a credible membership application. At the same time, Parliament encourages innovative ways of fostering a **climate of reconciliation** in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the region.

Political conditions: Members state that tangible progress is needed in key areas of state-building, including in governance, the judiciary and the implementation of the rule of law, as well as in the fight against corruption and in approximation to EU standards. Parliament urges the authorities to **execute the Sejdi-Finci judgment**, as a first step in the comprehensive constitutional reform that is needed in order to move towards a modern and functional democracy. Parliament also urges the following:

- substantial **constitutional reforms**, at both state and entity levels, in order to make the institutional structures at all levels more efficient, functional and transparent;
- the establishment of an independent, impartial and effective **judicial system** supported by an impartial and independent police service, and implementation of the Justice Sector Reform Strategy and the National War Crimes Strategy;
- reforming **public administration** and strengthening administrative capacities at all levels of government dealing with EU matters;
- the development of **independent and diverse media** that are free of political interference, ethnic fragmentation and polarisation;
- implementation of **anti-discrimination laws** and policies and addressing the shortcomings existing in law and practice;
- the sustainable **return of refugees and internally displaced persons** by ensuring their access to housing, education, social protection and employment, noting that at the end of 2011 there were still approximately 113 000 internally displaced persons in BiH.

Lastly, Members express their concern over the **high level of corruption**, its link to political parties and the presence of corruption in all layers of public life. They invite the responsible authorities to **show political will in tackling the** issue and to provide means for the Anti-Corruption Agency to become fully operational.

Socio-economic issues: Parliament notes that a **lack of job prospects**, in particular for young people, continues to seriously plague the socio-economic and political development of the country. It is also concerned about the **size of the informal economy** and expresses concern over the impact that **political instability and the weak rule of law** have on growth and investment, as well as on the business environment as a whole. Members call on the government to create a **single economic space** within the country, and stress the need to **improve the overall quality of education** in order to meet the needs of the internal and foreign labour market, and also urge all competent authorities to end the ethnic segregation of children.

Regional cooperation and bilateral issues: Members commend BiH for its constructive role in regional cooperation, and invite the country to work on the delimitation of borders in cooperation with all its neighbours. They urge the authorities in BiH **to step up their preparations for Croatia's accession to the EU** by aligning the relevant BiH food safety legislation with the EU acquis. Parliament is concerned that the lack of action by the BiH authorities may lead to losses on the BiH export markets. Lastly, it reiterates its call to permit the **entry of Kosovo citizens**, since BiH is still the only country of the region not admitting them.