Resolution on the 2014 progress report on Montenegro

2014/2947(RSP) - 11/03/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the 2014 Progress Report on Montenegro, prepared by its Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Parliament recalled that **Montenegro is currently the only country in the region opening and provisionally closing negotiating chapters with the EU**.

Reforms: Parliament reiterated that rule-of-law-related reforms constitute the core of the European integration process and are an essential condition for progress in overall accession talks.

Concerned that the deeply polarised domestic climate has resulted in the main opposition party boycotting certain parliamentary sessions, Parliament urged all political forces, in government and opposition alike, to focus on the country's EU accession process and to engage in sustainable dialogue and constructive cooperation.

Members welcomed the reforms carried out in the area of **public administration**. However, they called for progress in enhancing the transparency, efficiency and accountability of central and local government administration. They welcomed the **new judicial reform strategy** for 2014-2018 and noted that the progress registered in the judicial reform area facilitated the opening of four additional chapters in the Intergovernmental Conference of December 2014. In this regard, they underlined the urgent need to improve the selection criteria for appointments and promotions of judges.

Corruption: Parliament is concerned that, despite the substantial financial resources channelled from international donors to the authorities, only limited progress has been made in combating corruption. It urged the authorities to enhance the capacity of prosecutors, judges, the police and other law enforcement agencies, and to **develop a solid track record of investigations, prosecutions and convictions at all levels**.

Fight against Islamic terrorism: Parliament welcomed the new criminal law which criminalises 'foreign fighters', including jihadists and called on the competent authorities to effectively implement relevant legal provisions in order to prevent and monitor any potential threat to the security of Montenegrin citizens.

Antidiscrimination: Parliament invited the authorities to address the remaining shortcomings concerning **racial discrimination** and the provisions on sanctions. It welcomed the efforts of the competent authorities to protect LGBTI, disabled persons and women's rights.

Parliament strongly encouraged the Montenegrin authorities to further protect the multinational identity of the Boka Kotorska region and enhance its cultural and economic cooperation with neighbouring EU Member States.

Regional policy and bilateral relations: Parliament welcomed the government on being the only EU candidate in the Western Balkans, together with Albania, to fully align with the EU's positions and decisions on the situation in Ukraine. It encouraged Montenegro to address the outstanding bilateral issues

with its neighbours as early as possible in the accession process, and the need to swiftly settle the still pending border demarcation and succession issues with Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo.