Resolution on the 2014 progress report on Bosnia and Herzegovina

2014/2952(RSP) - 30/04/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the 2014 Progress Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Members recalled that the EU has repeatedly stated its unequivocal commitment to BiH's European perspective and to its territorial integrity, sovereignty and unity. It urged the new BiH leaders to commit fully to carrying out the necessary institutional, economic and social reforms in order to improve the lives of BiH citizens and enable progress on the path to EU membership.

Reforms: Members strongly supported the European integration of BiH and believed that the EU's reinforced engagement should focus, inter alia, on socio-economic issues, the business environment, the institutional framework, the rule of law and governance, law enforcement policy, an independent judiciary, the fight against corruption, public administration reform, civil society and youth. They invited the new leaders of BiH to agree with the EU on a **concrete roadmap** for a broad and inclusive reform agenda to advance the country on its path towards the EU.

Enhanced democracy: Parliament considered it crucial to continue, in parallel, with political reforms and democratisation of the political system. It underlined the fact that economic prosperity is only possible if it is based on a democratic and inclusive society and state. According to the Parliament, BiH will not be a successful candidate for EU membership until appropriate institutional conditions have been established.

Members are seriously concerned that the **public administration**, which is supposed to help BiH advance towards EU membership and improve living conditions for its citizens, continues to be **fragmented, politicised and dysfunctional**.

Fight against corruption: Parliament urged the authorities to make the fight against corruption an absolute priority, given that it has not yet resulted in satisfactory improvements and that corruption affects all sectors, including health and education, and in particular the judicial system.

War crimes: Parliament called for steps to be taken to strengthen the protection of victims and improve the work of the BiH Prosecutor's Office by reviewing the processing of Category II war crimes cases. It noted with concern that there are still 84 500 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 6 853 refugees in BiH. It is concerned at the violation of the rights of returnees in the Republic of Serbia.

Fight against terrorism: Parliament urged the authorities to amend the Criminal Code in order to strengthen the criminalisation of the financing of terrorism. It welcomed the amendment to the Criminal Code seeking to ban and punish membership of foreign paramilitary groups, in order to prevent religious radicalisation.

It noted that BiH remains a country of origin, transit and destination for the trafficking of human beings. It recommended that the authorities take effective measures, including legislative measures, to **combat trafficking in drugs and human beings** and provide protection for the victims of human trafficking.

LGBTI people and Roms: Parliament considered it essential to foster an inclusive and tolerant society in BiH, protecting and promoting minorities and vulnerable groups. It encouraged the authorities to implement awareness-raising actions on the rights of LGBTI people among the judiciary, law enforcement agencies and the general public. It commended the progress made with regard to the housing needs of

Roma and called for further steps to be taken to improve their living conditions by improving access to employment, health and education.

Economic development: Parliament considered that BiH has made little progress towards becoming a functioning market economy. It is concerned that considerable weaknesses in the business environment continue to negatively affect private-sector development and foreign direct investment. It highlighted the fact that economic prosperity and job prospects, especially for young people, are essential to the development of the country. It called on the governments to implement labour market reforms in order to **tackle the very high unemployment rate**.

Regional cooperation: lastly, Parliament welcomed BiH's constructive and proactive stance in promoting regional cooperation. It stresses the crucial importance of good neighbourly relations and invited the new leaders to continue and enhance efforts to resolve outstanding border and property issues with neighbouring countries.