2022 Commission Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina

2022/2200(INI) - 12/07/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 530 votes to 68, with 33 abstentions, a resolution on the 2022 Commission Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).

Commitment to EU accession

Parliament underscored that BiH's path towards EU accession needs to be anchored in functioning democratic institutions, the rule of law, good governance, the fight against corruption and organised crime, respect for fundamental rights and equality and non-discrimination for all citizens. It also welcomed the European Council's decision to grant candidate status to BiH in the context of a changed geopolitical reality, on the understanding that a number of steps are taken to strengthen the country's readiness for accession negotiations.

The resolution encouraged all political authorities to seize the momentum to meaningfully advance on implementing the 14 key priorities in line with the aspirations of all citizens, respecting the accountability of institutions and the quality and transparency of the process. Moreover, Parliament strongly supports BiH's sustained aspirations towards Euro-Atlantic integration and NATO membership. It also reiterated its call for targeted sanctions against destabilising political actors in BiH.

Parliament denounced in the strongest terms the recurring inflammatory rhetoric and secessionist laws and policies by the leadership of the Republika Srpska (RS) entity, including the celebration of the unconstitutional so-called 'RS Day' and other events that cause tensions. It also condemned all malign foreign interference, disinformation campaigns and destabilisation efforts by international and regional actors in BiH, notably Russia's continuing destabilisation of the Western Balkans.

The EU is called on to increase cooperation with Western Balkan partners to strengthen democratic resilience and counter hybrid threats, including on cybersecurity, protecting critical infrastructure and food and energy security.

Democracy and the rule of law

The resolution called on BiH political actors to support and establish a functioning coordination structure to steer public administration reform. It also called on BiH to harmonise party registration rules and to ensure the transparency of political party financing in line with international standards and the recommendations of relevant international bodies.

Members expressed deep concern about the lack of progress on preventing widespread corruption and the increasing signs of state capture, political interference and obstruction¸ pressure and intimidation and called for the transparent use of EU financial assistance.

Fundamental rights and socio-economic reforms

Members strongly condemned attacks and threats, smear campaigns, insults, intimidation and strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPP) against journalists and media workers, including by politicians and public figures including the recent attacks on journalists Aleksandar Trifunovi and Nikola Moraa, and by private companies.

Parliament condemned all forms of discrimination, segregation, violence and hate speech against women, minorities, including ethnic minorities, LGBTIQ+ persons, people with disabilities, refugees, displaced persons and people on the move, and called on BiH to ensure their protection and fundamental freedoms. BiH is called on to ensure gender equality in all aspects of public and private life and to take practical steps to promote the inclusion of and prevent violence against the LGBTIQ+ community, including by adding sexual orientation and gender identity to hate crime provisions in criminal codes.

Furthermore, BiH is called on to:

- prioritise measures aimed at addressing poverty, inequality and social protection, improving competitiveness and the business environment, as well as economic and social cohesion, boosting economic diversification and bringing legislation in the area of VAT and excise duties in line with that of the EU;

- promote the digital and green transitions, address the informal economy and tackle unemployment and poverty, particularly among young people, women and people in vulnerable situations, such as inhabitants of rural areas, Roma people, children and elderly people;

- adopt an ambitious, credible and cohesive energy and climate plan for 2021-2030.