2023 and 2024 Commission reports on Serbia

2025/2022(INI) - 07/05/2025 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 419 votes to 113, with 88 abstentions, a resolution on the 2023 and 2024 Commission reports on Serbia.

Commitment to EU accession

Parliament noted Serbia's stated commitment to making EU membership its strategic objective and its ambition to fully align with the EU acquis by the end of 2026. It called on Serbia to **swiftly and decisively implement key reforms** to ensure that this highly ambitious commitment is seen as realistic. Serbia must demonstrate seriously and categorically that it is strategically oriented towards the EU.

Members reaffirmed **the strategic importance** of the Western Balkans in the current geopolitical context and for the security and stability of the European Union as a whole. They condemned Serbia's attempts to establish a sphere of influence that undermines the sovereignty of neighbouring countries.

While noting Serbia's good level of preparation in terms of macroeconomic stability and budgetary discipline, Parliament noted with concern that, in general, **progress** in meeting the EU membership benchmarks across all negotiating chapters **has been limited** or non-existent, with gaps in particular in critical areas such as the rule of law, media freedom, public administration reform and alignment with EU policies, in particular EU foreign policy.

Due to Serbia's close relations with Russia, Serbia remains a notable exception in the Western Balkans when it comes to alignment with the CFSP. Serbia is urged to reverse this trend and take positive steps towards full alignment. In this context, Members regretted the continued decline in public support for EU membership in Serbia and the growing support for Vladimir Putin's regime, the result of long-standing anti-European and pro-Russian rhetoric from government-controlled media and some state officials.

Democracy and the rule of law

Parliament noted difficulties in ensuring **the independence of the judiciary**, particularly due to the lack of safeguards to prevent political interference in judicial appointments. Progress in the **fight against corruption** has been limited, despite the adoption of a new anti-corruption strategy for the period 2024-2028, and after several years, results have not yet been achieved in cases in which there is significant public interest. The level of corruption in Serbia is a significant obstacle to its accession to the European Union.

Members welcomed the more pluralistic composition of the new parliament, but noted the frequent early elections, constant campaigning, long delays in forming governments, and the disruption of the national parliament's work. They are also concerned about the growing role of **foreign information manipulation and interference**, foreign cyber operations, and interference in democratic election processes in Serbia. The paramount importance of ensuring the independence of key institutions is emphasised.

Human rights

Parliament expressed its deep concern about the systemic problems highlighted by the **student protests** and various other demonstrations in Serbia. It deplored (i) the continued violence against students, (ii) the misuse of personal data from public registers for the purpose of reprisals against peaceful protesters, (iii) the increasing political and financial pressure on primary and secondary school teachers, (iv) the large-

scale illegal surveillance practices using spyware against activists, journalists and members of civil society, (v) the political pressure on universities and other research institutions, (vi) the deterioration of media freedom in Serbia, and (vii) the increasing difficulties faced by civil society organisations.

Members called on Serbia to **combat disinformation**, including manipulative anti-European narratives, and, in particular, to end its own public disinformation campaigns. They called on the Serbian authorities to combat hybrid threats and to fully align themselves with the Council's decision to suspend the broadcasting activities of Sputnik and RT.

Parliament noted the adoption of the National Equality Strategy and the Strategy for the Prevention and Protection against Discrimination and called for their full implementation and further alignment with European standards. The Serbian authorities must adopt concrete measures to uphold and strengthen respect for children's rights. The need for a strong commitment to protecting the rights of national minorities is also underlined.

Reconciliation and good neighbourly relations

Parliament stressed that Serbia must develop good neighbourly relations, implement bilateral agreements, and resolve outstanding bilateral issues with its neighbours. It called for historical reconciliation and the elimination of past discrimination and prejudice and urged Serbia to intensify its reconciliation efforts and seek solutions to past disputes, including those related to missing persons, which number 1782 in Croatia, 7608 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and 1595 in Kosovo.

Members reiterated the importance of constructive engagement by the authorities of both Serbia and Kosovo in order to reach a comprehensive and legally binding normalisation agreement, based on mutual recognition, in accordance with international law.

Lastly, Serbia is invited to redouble its efforts to transpose the relevant acquis in the field of environment and climate and to ensure the proper application of environmental protection standards.