2023 and 2024 Commission reports on Albania

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The European Parliament adopted by 502 votes to 120, with 64 abstentions, a resolution on the 2023 and 2024 Commission reports on Albania.

Parliament welcomed **Albania's unwavering commitment** to EU integration, which is the subject of cross -party consensus and overwhelming public support, and commended its full and consistent alignment with the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and its defence of the rules-based international order. Members welcomed Albania's ambition to **conclude accession negotiations by the end of 2027** and the rapid progress made in recent years.

The pace of progress towards EU accession depends on the candidate country's progress in **aligning itself with the EU acquis** and on its being based on the rule of law, good governance and fundamental rights. Albania is called upon to accelerate reforms aimed at strengthening the rule of law and growing the economy, combating corruption and organised crime, curbing trafficking in human beings, protecting fundamental rights and advancing freedom of expression, freedom of information and media pluralism and independence.

Democratic institutions, media and civil society

Parliament affirmed the shared responsibility of Albanian political forces to strengthen **constructive and inclusive political dialogue** and overcome the marked political polarisation currently characterising the country. It also recognised the growing threat of malign foreign influence and hybrid interference in Albania's democratic institutions. It welcomed Albania's blocking of Russian disinformation domains, but emphasised the need for a coordinated EU-Albania disinformation response mechanism.

Deploring the deterioration in the situation of free media and independent journalists in recent years, Members called on the Albanian authorities to **ensure transparency in media ownership** and to implement a zero-tolerance policy towards the intimidation of journalists. The authorities must adopt a legal framework that effectively protects journalists, human rights defenders, environmental activists, and other stakeholders in the face of the worrying increase in SLAPP lawsuits. Members encouraged the Albanian government to strengthen the role of civil society, particularly women's rights organisations, in the EU accession process.

Fundamental rights

Parliament found that Albania's legal framework for combating gender-based violence is not yet fully compliant with the Istanbul Convention. Violence against women remains a pressing problem, with the number of femicides remaining high. Members called for the strengthening of victim support services, particularly healthcare, funding for shelters, free legal aid, and the reintegration and rehabilitation of victims. Members expressed concern about the persistent gaps regarding persons with **disabilities and gender equality**, such as non-alignment or partial alignment with the EU acquis. They urged public institutions to demonstrate a strong commitment to protecting the rights of LGBTI+ people.

Parliament called on Albania to respect the **autonomy of the Orthodox Autocephalous Church** of Albania and to cease all interference in its affairs. It welcomed the adoption of laws on minority rights, including on the use of minority languages, but insisted on their effective implementation, with adequate resources. The Albanian government is urged to fully respect and protect human rights, including minority rights.

Members called on the Albanian authorities to strengthen institutional mechanisms to prevent discrimination and ensure meaningful political participation for all communities. They called on Albania to provide education to national minorities in their mother tongue, including adequate primary and secondary schooling in Greek in areas inhabited by the Greek national minority. Lastly, they called on Albania to preserve the religious and cultural heritage of the Greek Orthodox minority.

Rule of law

Concerned about the persistence of political interference in the judiciary and the pressure exerted on it, Members called for urgent measures to **ensure the independence of the judiciary** and the integrity of institutions. They highlighted that Albania ranks 80th in Transparency International's 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index, which highlights the need for significant progress in **combating high-level corruption**.

Parliament called on Albania to continue aligning its legal framework, notably its criminal code, with the EU acquis in the fight against organised crime and trafficking in drugs and firearms, as well as in the fight against cybercrime, extremism and terrorist threats. It called on Albania to strengthen the fight against trafficking in human beings and stressed the need to counter the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Members encouraged the European External Action Service and the Commission to continue strengthening Albania's resilience to hybrid threats in the areas of cybersecurity, information manipulation and the protection of critical infrastructure.

Socio-economic reforms

Parliament welcomed Albania's commitment to implementing the EU's growth plan for the Western Balkans, which encompasses EU single market integration, regional economic integration, fundamental reforms, and increased financial support. It welcomed Albania's reform agenda on the business environment, human capital, digitalisation, energy and green transition, fundamental rights, and the rule of law.

Members encouraged the Albanian authorities to **reduce the risk of poverty and social exclusion** by improving access to education and housing, as well as to social and healthcare services. They welcomed Albania's accession to the Single Euro Payments Area in November 2024 and commended the improvement in Albania's fiscal performance.

Lastly, the resolution stressed that Albania needs to redouble its efforts to align with the EU **environmental** acquis.