

# 2023 and 2024 Commission reports on Bosnia and Herzegovina

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The European Parliament adopted by 495 votes to 130, with 63 abstentions, a resolution on the 2023 and 2024 Commission reports on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## *Commitment to EU accession*

Parliament **reaffirmed its support for Bosnia and Herzegovina's accession** through a merit-based process based on the Copenhagen criteria, grounded in unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and equality among its citizens. It welcomed the European Council's decision to open accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina in the context of the new geopolitical reality following Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. It welcomed the adoption of several key laws in the run-up to this decision, but regretted that the positive reform momentum had stalled.

Members called on the legitimate political leadership of Bosnia and Herzegovina at all levels to take all relevant steps set out in the Commission's recommendation of 12 October so that the Council can adopt the negotiating framework once these conditions have been met. They reaffirmed that Bosnia and Herzegovina's accession process must be based on functioning democratic institutions, the rule of law, the fight against corruption and organised crime, and respect for the fundamental rights of all citizens and constituent peoples, regardless of their ethnic, religious or other affiliation, without discrimination.

Members called on all political actors to uphold BiH's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity and to refrain from all divisive rhetoric and acts, including secessionist rhetoric and acts, incitement to ethnic, religious and racial intolerance, denial of genocide and other war crimes, and the glorification of war crimes and their perpetrators.

Parliament welcomed BiH's formal full alignment with the EU's common foreign and security policy, including restrictive measures in response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, and urged the effective implementation of these measures. Members strongly supports BiH's sustained aspirations towards Euro-Atlantic integration and NATO membership. On the other hand, they remain concerned by malign foreign interference and disinformation campaigns by foreign actors in BiH, notably **Russia** and **China**. Members also condemned the increase in **Iran's** malign influence in the country and in the Western Balkans.

## *Democracy and the rule of law*

Members regretted that the BiH authorities have not been able to unite society or to create a just and functional system in the country, but rather have largely contributed to deepening divisions. The EU and its Member States are called on to initiate a **transparent and inclusive reform process** that would enable a sustainable transformation of the Dayton Peace Agreement into a constitution, fully in line with European standards and principles, with a view to ensuring a functional, accountable, representative, and popularly legitimate governance system, to overcome ethno-nationalistic divisions and achieve sustainable progress on the path towards the EU.

Parliament noted the limited progress on justice reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly in relation to the independence, professionalism, efficiency and accountability of the judicial system. It called for urgent measures to accelerate reforms in these areas, ensuring full alignment with EU standards and strengthening the capacity of the judiciary to effectively serve justice and uphold the rule of law.

Members called on the relevant authorities to take a more resolute stance in the **fight against corruption**, particularly high-level corruption. They also stressed the need to strengthen the system for managing conflicts of interest of persons holding high-level executive functions and to step up the fight against organised crime.

### ***Fundamental freedoms and human rights***

Parliament strongly condemned all forms of discrimination, violence, and hate speech against any minority. It called on the authorities to improve access to social services, housing, education, and healthcare for all minorities and vulnerable groups. It also called on the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to align their policies, legislation, and practices to **combat sexual and digital violence** against women and girls.

Members stressed the importance of **quality education for all**, including the right to education in the mother tongue, and called on Bosnia and Herzegovina's institutions to adopt legislation ensuring the effective and equal use of its three official languages, Croatian, Bosnian, and Serbian. They urged Bosnia and Herzegovina to guarantee freedoms of assembly, association, and expression, allowing for the participation of civil society in policymaking. They condemned political pressure and SLAPPs against journalists and media workers.

Lastly, Parliament highlighted the importance of **reconciliation** in Bosnia and Herzegovina and urged all authorities to actively promote and ensure access to truth, justice and inclusive reparations, including the adoption of a national law defining minimum rights for war victims across the country.