

2025 Commission report on North Macedonia

2025/2254(INI) - 17/06/2026 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 411 votes to 120, with 120 abstentions, a resolution on the 2025 Commission report on North Macedonia.

Parliament reaffirmed its **full support** for North Macedonia's commitment to EU membership, based on **clear and measurable progress and strict but fair conditionality**. It welcomed the country's commitment to European integration and encouraged continued efforts to advance EU-aligned reforms. However, it reiterated that progress in the accession negotiations still depends on **persistent and in-depth reforms** in fundamental areas and remains strictly merit-based.

Regretting the lack of progress since their last report, Members pointed out that the reform process requires renewed political commitment and clear actions, including necessary constitutional amendments, constructive cooperation between parties, and effective parliamentary oversight. They clarified that the country will be assessed solely on the basis of the reforms implemented.

Parliament reiterated the call, made by the European Council in its conclusions on North Macedonia 2024, to **accelerate the completion of constitutional reforms**.

Recalling that decisions regarding the opening and closing of accession negotiations must be taken unanimously, Members once again call for strengthening the EU's capacity to act, for example through the use of qualified majority voting during the intermediate stages of the enlargement process.

Functioning of democratic institutions

Even though North Macedonia's democratic institutions are functioning satisfactorily, Members nevertheless urged all political parties represented in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia **to move beyond virulent election rhetoric and work together**, transcending political divides, to reach an agreement on necessary reforms. Parliamentary oversight of the executive branch should be further strengthened through more effective checks and balances, including increased participation from opposition parties and civil society actors.

While acknowledging that moderate progress has been made in public administration reform and digital transformation, Members urged **greater depoliticisation** of public administration and the full implementation of merit-based recruitment and selection procedures for senior management.

Media and civil society

North Macedonia offers adequate legal guarantees for **freedom of expression**, but further improvements are needed to create an environment truly conducive to media freedom and independence. The effective implementation of legal provisions protecting journalists remains challenging, particularly in cases of online harassment and gender-based violence against women journalists. Furthermore, the lack of specific anti-SLAPP legislation (strategic lawsuits against public participation) is a cause for concern.

The resolution underlined the urgent need for genuine **media reform** and the adoption of effective measures against concentration, including full transparency in media ownership and the allocation of public funds for state advertising, as well as compliance with competition rules, state aid rules and intellectual property rights.

The EU and its Member States are urged to take further efforts to help North Macedonia **combat malicious foreign interference** on its territory. This also includes improving media literacy, encouraging fact-checking, combating hate speech, and strengthening resilience against hybrid threats that challenge democratic values and the country's pursuit of EU membership.

Fundamental rights, rule of law

Parliament noted that the general legal framework for fundamental rights is largely in line with European standards. However, it called on the Government of North Macedonia to strengthen its implementation in practice, in particular by improving the institutional framework for **gender equality** and by ensuring effective protection mechanisms against gender-based and domestic violence, access to healthcare services, and the allocation of sufficient resources to victim support services.

Members called for continued efforts to improve the situation of non-majority communities, to include all ethnic communities in the constitution, to combat the persistent socio-economic exclusion of Roma, to complete the legal and institutional framework relating to the rights of persons with disabilities and to improve the legal protection of the rights of LGBTIQ+ people.

Parliament expressed its concern that the judicial system, the independence of the courts and the public prosecutor's office, and efforts to strengthen the rule of law and anti-corruption frameworks have not progressed sufficiently. It stressed the importance of preserving the integrity and **independence of the judiciary** and called on the Government of North Macedonia to improve the implementation of its national strategy for **preventing corruption and conflicts of interest**, to adopt a new criminal code in line with the *acquis* of the European Union, and to intensify its efforts to combat money laundering.

Economic reforms

Parliament supports continued efforts to modernise the economy, address skills mismatches, strengthen the digital economy, and improve the business environment. It called for:

- strengthening oversight and ensuring the effective participation of civil society organisations, professional associations, and social partners at all stages of the Western Balkans Reform and Growth Facility,
- the preservation of the independence and legitimate role of representative trade unions,
- the continued implementation of labour market activation strategies for young people, the long-term unemployed, low-skilled workers and disadvantaged groups, such as women, people with disabilities, Roma and Egyptians from the Balkans;
- strengthening youth policy.