Basic information

2019/2171(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Report on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on Bosnia and Herzegovina **Subject** 8.20.01 Candidate countries **Geographical area** Bosnia and Herzegovina	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs	RANGEL Paulo (EPP)	30/09/2019
	Shadow rapporteur KÖSTER Dietmar (S&D) GROŠELJ Klemen (Renew) STRIK Tineke (Greens/EFA) KANKO Assita (ECR) VILIMSKY Harald (ID) MATIAS Marisa (GUE/NGL)	

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations	VÁRHELYI Olivér

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
19/12/2019	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
27/05/2021	Vote in committee		
02/06/2021	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0185/2021	Summary
23/06/2021	Debate in Parliament		
24/06/2021	Decision by Parliament	T9-0317/2021	Summary

24/06/2021	Results of vote in Parliament		
24/06/2021	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2019/2171(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Annual report
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/9/01987

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE647.075	11/01/2021	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE648.334	15/02/2021	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0185/2021	02/06/2021	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0317/2021	24/06/2021	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2021)581	29/09/2021	

Report on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on Bosnia and Herzegovina

2019/2171(INI) - 02/06/2021 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted an own-initiative report by Paulo RANGEL (S&D, PT) on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Commitment to enlargement

Members stressed their strong support for the European integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina and welcomed Bosnia and Herzegovina's commitment to advancing on its EU path. However, they called for further work on the reconciliation process including the adoption of a law banning the denial of genocide, the Holocaust, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Work on this reconciliation process must focus on the country's youth and start at an early age, embedding reconciliation into the education process. The report stressed the need to urgently put an end to the segregation in education and to remedy unequal access to remote schooling, resulting in many children being deprived of their right to education during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Functioning of democratic institutions

Members urged all BiH authorities, institutions, office holders and political leaders to significantly accelerate work and cooperation in order to fully comply with the 14 key priorities in the Commission's opinion on BiH's EU membership application. They underlined the need to considerably strengthen cooperation and data exchange between state, entity and cantonal jurisdictions across all policy areas.

The report underlined the effective establishment, independent functioning and accountability of democratic institutions are essential feature of a viable democracy and a prerequisite for moving forward with the EU integration process, including obtaining candidate status.

The Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) are urged to step up their facilitation activities in BiH, in order to strengthen political dialogue and reconciliation and to provide a framework for dealing with the legacies from the past and for overcoming the divisions in the society.

Rule of law

Members regretted the lack of progress on judicial reforms and reiterated the urgent need to improve the professionalism and accountability of the judiciary to ensure its independence from undue influence as well as to resolve the mounting backlog of cases pending trial. They stressed that these reforms are essential for the country to obtain candidate status and that they depend solely on the necessary political will.

The report stressed the need to enable a unified interpretation of the law across the country. It urged BiH to establish a legal body ensuring consistent and harmonised interpretation of the law.

Moreover, Members called for immediate steps to tackle widespread corruption and impunity in the public sphere to rebuild citizens' trust in the institutions. They suggested that BiH should adopt a new state-level anticorruption strategy and action plan, and ensure its adequate funding.

Fundamental rights, socio-economic reforms

The report expressed concern over the fundamental rights situation and called for more effective and comprehensive country-wide human rights and anti-discrimination strategies. It also stressed the need to improve measures targeting gender-based and domestic violence, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

BiH is called on to:

- step up socio-economic and active labour market measures, including vocational education and training. The authorities should strengthen measures to guarantee social cohesion, poverty and inequality reduction;

- prioritise measures aimed at boosting economic diversification, digitalisation and tackling the informal economy, while developing effective and transparent mechanisms for energy market, transport infrastructure, sustainable tourism and support for SMEs;

- adopt a country-wide strategy on public finance management and for increased budget transparency in BiH, enabling EU-funded budget support.

Report on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on Bosnia and Herzegovina

2019/2171(INI) - 24/06/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 483 votes to 73, with 133 abstentions, a resolution on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Parliament is a strong supporter of Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BIH) European integration. The EU is BiH's biggest trading partner and by far the most significant provider of financial assistance, which makes a profound difference in the country.

BiH's commitment to enlargement

While welcoming Bosnia and Herzegovina's commitment to advancing on its EU path, Parliament called for further work on the reconciliation process including the adoption of a law banning the denial of genocide, the Holocaust, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Parliament welcomed the efforts by local and international organisations, including the International Commission on Missing Persons, to account for over 30 000 persons who went missing during the 1990s conflicts in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, and more than 8 000 Srebrenica genocide victims. It called for the adoption of a law banning the denial of genocide, the Holocaust, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Work on this reconciliation process must focus on the country's youth and start at an early age, embedding reconciliation into the education process. The resolution stressed the need to urgently put an end to the segregation in education and to remedy unequal access to remote schooling, resulting in many children being deprived of their right to education during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Functioning of democratic institutions

Members urged all BiH authorities, institutions, office holders and political leaders to significantly accelerate work and cooperation in order to fully comply with the 14 key priorities in the Commission's opinion on BiH's EU membership application. They underlined the need to considerably strengthen cooperation and data exchange between state, entity and cantonal jurisdictions across all policy areas.

The resolution underlined the effective establishment, independent functioning and accountability of democratic institutions are essential feature of a viable democracy and a prerequisite for moving forward with the EU integration process, including obtaining candidate status.

Rule of law

Parliament regretted the lack of progress on judicial reforms and reiterated the urgent need to improve the professionalism and accountability of the judiciary to ensure its independence from undue influence as well as to resolve the mounting backlog of cases pending trial. It stressed that these reforms are essential for the country to obtain candidate status and that they depend solely on the necessary political will.

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Moreover, Members called for immediate steps to tackle widespread corruption and impunity in the public sphere to rebuild citizens' trust in the institutions.

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- adopt a country-wide strategy on public finance management and for increased budget transparency in BiH, enabling EU-funded budget support.

Moreover, Parliament urged BiH to step up its efforts against cross-border crime, especially human, firearms and drug trafficking by enhancing strategic cooperation with neighbouring countries and relevant EU agencies (Europol, Eurojust, Frontex).

Foreign policy and security

Parliament called for the strengthening of good neighbourly relations and increased efforts to resolve all outstanding bilateral issues, such as border demarcation with Croatia and Serbia and normalisation of relations with Kosovo. It is strongly urged that BiH align itself with all Council decisions introducing restrictive EU measures.