Basic information

2019/2170(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Report on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on Albania **Subject** 8.20.01 Candidate countries **Geographical area** Albania	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs	SANTOS Isabel (S&D)	30/09/2019
	Shadow rapporteur LEGA David (EPP) ŠIMEČKA Michal (Renew) ROWETT Catherine (Greens/EFA) FITTO Raffaele (ECR) RIVIÈRE Jérôme (ID) KOULOGLOU Stelios (GUE/NGL)	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
19/12/2019	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
04/03/2021	Vote in committee		
10/03/2021	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0041/2021	Summary
25/03/2021	Decision by Parliament	T9-0112/2021	Summary
25/03/2021	Results of vote in Parliament		
25/03/2021	Debate in Parliament		
25/03/2021	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2019/2170(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Annual report
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/9/01986

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE647.074	26/11/2020	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE648.333	22/12/2020	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0041/2021	10/03/2021	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0112/2021	25/03/2021	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2021)409	01/09/2021	

Report on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on Albania

2019/2170(INI) - 10/03/2021 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted an own-initiative report by Isabel SANTOS (S&D, PT) on the 2019-2020 Commission reports on Albania.

Members welcomed Albania's clear strategic orientation towards EU integration and the European Council declaration of 26 March 2020 on the opening of accession negotiations with Northern Macedonia and Albania. Albania has been a candidate country since 2014 and since 2018 the Commission has recommended the opening of accession negotiations.

The Albanian authorities are invited to intensify their efforts to strengthen political dialogue and the functioning of the country's democratic institutions while improving the conditions for media pluralism and civil society.

Functioning of democratic institutions

Recalling that free and fair elections are fundamental for EU integration, the report stressed that the general elections on 25 April 2021 will be essential for the consolidation and renewal of the country's democratic procedures and structures and for achieving a higher level of political stability.

Members called on Albania's public institutions to act in a transparent manner and to establish good governance practices. Albania should improve co-ordination within government, speed up decentralisation, advance public consultation at local level and push-ahead with public administration reform. The involvement of the Albanian Parliament in the EU integration process should be strengthened with a view to ensuring harmonisation of its legislation with the EU acquis.

Rule of law

Members reiterated the importance of safeguarding the rule of law through a judicial reform and steady and consistent prosecution of high-level corruption. They called for the acceleration of procedures to enable tangible progress towards an accountable, transparent, independent and functional judiciary as a precondition for the first intergovernmental conference.

Highlighting the significant problems of money laundering, particularly in the construction and real estate sectors, the report called for the strengthening of prosecution and final convictions of such cases, as well as measures to reduce the size of the informal economy. Albania is called upon to step up its efforts to dismantle local and international criminal networks and to eliminate drug production and trafficking.

Fundamental rights, civil society and media

Members called for progress towards the adoption of measures that effectively protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of all, with a particular focus on women, children, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and LGBTQI+ people.

The report stressed the need to improve conditions and create an environment for accountability and oversight of public institutions, in particular through cooperation with civil society and journalists by ensuring that they have access to justice and legal certainty.

Concerned about the lack of progress in the area of freedom of expression, Members stressed the need to strengthen self-regulation, ethical standards, independence, impartiality, financial sustainability and news quality of public and private media as well as to improve transparency in media ownership, financing and public advertising.

Socio-economic reforms

The report urged the Albanian government to:

- prioritise measures to mitigate the health and socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic with a particular focus on marginalised and vulnerable groups;

- strengthen social care coverage and improve access to health and social services, especially for vulnerable groups, in order to reduce the risk of poverty and social exclusion;

- take concrete measures to address demographic decline and brain drain, as well as further measures to tackle gender pay gaps and discrimination in the workplace;

- diversify its energy production, ensure economically and environmentally sustainable investments in hydropower generation and increase cost-effective investments in wind and solar energy;

- develop a national energy strategy ensuring full compliance with and implementation of the Paris Agreement and the decarbonisation objectives, in line with the European Green Deal.

Regional cooperation

The report welcomed Albania's continued efforts to foster good neighbourly relations and regional integration. It stressed the importance of adopting new measures to encourage reconciliation with neighbours and regional co-operation, which should be based on respect for the EU's fundamental values.

Members called for the creation of new opportunities for high-level political and policy dialogue with the Western Balkan countries through regular EU-Western Balkans summits and intensified ministerial contacts.

Report on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on Albania

2019/2170(INI) - 25/03/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 581 votes to 61, with 45 abstentions, a resolution on the Commission's 2019-2020 reports on Albania.

Members welcomed Albania's clear strategic orientation towards EU integration and expressed their support for the formal launch of accession negotiations once the conditions set by the European Council are met. Albania has been a candidate country since 2014 and since 2018 the Commission has been recommending the opening of accession negotiations.

Parliament believes that the Conference on the Future of Europe should involve representatives from Albania and the other Western Balkan countries, both at government and civil society level, including young people.

Functioning of democratic institutions

Recalling that free and fair elections are fundamental for EU integration, Parliament stressed that the general elections on 25 April 2021 will be essential for the consolidation and renewal of the country's democratic procedures and structures and for achieving a higher level of political stability.

Members called on Albania's public institutions to act in a transparent manner and to establish good governance practices. Civil society and the media should be informed on a regular basis about measures concerning issues of high public interest, such as the current health emergency.

Albania should improve co-ordination within government, speed up decentralisation, advance public consultation at local level and push-ahead with public administration reform. The involvement of the Albanian Parliament in the EU integration process should be strengthened with a view to ensuring harmonisation of its legislation with the EU acquis.

Rule of law

Members reiterated the importance of safeguarding the rule of law through a judicial reform and steady and consistent prosecution of high-level corruption. They stressed the need for Albania to develop a more strategic approach to justice sector reform to enable a tangible move towards an accountable, transparent, independent and functional justice system as a precondition for the first Intergovernmental Conference.

Parliament called for concrete integrity plans to be swiftly adopted and implemented within all ministries. It called for the strengthening of the prosecution and punishment of money laundering cases and for further measures to reduce the size of the informal economy.

Albania is called upon to intensify its efforts to dismantle local and international criminal networks, eliminate drug production and trafficking, combat trafficking in human beings as well as trafficking in firearms and counterfeit goods, cybercrime and terrorist threats.

Fundamental rights, civil society and media

Members called for progress towards the adoption of measures that effectively protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of all, with a particular focus on women, children, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and LGBTQI+ people.

The resolution stressed the need to improve conditions and create an environment for accountability and oversight of public institutions, in particular through cooperation with civil society and journalists by ensuring that they have access to justice and legal certainty.

Concerned about the lack of progress in the area of freedom of expression, Parliament stressed the need to strengthen self-regulation, ethical standards, independence, impartiality, financial sustainability and news quality of public and private media as well as to improve transparency in media ownership, financing and public advertising.

Further progress should be made to reduce irregular migration and the number of unfounded asylum applications by Albanian nationals in EU Member States, including arrivals of unaccompanied minors.

Socio-economic reforms

Parliament urged the Albanian government to:

- prioritise measures to mitigate the health and socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic with a particular focus on marginalised and vulnerable groups;

- strengthen social care coverage and improve access to health and social services, especially for vulnerable groups, in order to reduce the risk of poverty and social exclusion;

- take concrete measures to address demographic decline and brain drain, as well as further measures to tackle gender pay gaps and discrimination in the workplace;

- tackle gender pay gaps and discrimination in the workplace and to step up its efforts to eliminate child labour throughout the informal economy;

- diversify its energy production, ensure economically and environmentally sustainable investments in hydropower generation and increase cost-effective investments in wind and solar energy;

- develop a national energy strategy ensuring full compliance with and implementation of the Paris Agreement and the decarbonisation objectives, in line with the European Green Deal.

Regional cooperation

The resolution welcomed Albania's continued efforts to foster good neighbourly relations and regional integration. It stressed the importance of adopting new measures to encourage reconciliation with neighbours and regional co-operation, which should be based on respect for the EU's fundamental values.

Members called for the creation of new opportunities for high-level political and policy dialogue with the Western Balkan countries through regular EU-Western Balkans summits and intensified ministerial contacts.