## Basic information

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|---|---|
| **2021/2247(INI)**<br>INI - Own-initiative procedure | Procedure completed |
| Report on the 2021 Commission Report on Montenegro<br>**Subject**<br>8.20.01 Candidate countries<br>**Geographical area**<br>Montenegro, from 06/2006 | |

## Key players

**European Parliament**

| Committee responsible | Rapporteur | Appointed |
|---|---|---|
| AFET Foreign Affairs | PICULA Tonino (S&D) | 08/11/2021 |
| | Shadow rapporteur<br>BILČÍK Vladimír (EPP)<br>GROŠELJ Klemen (Renew)<br>WAITZ Thomas (Greens /EFA)<br>KRASNODĘBSKI Zdzisław (ECR)<br>MARIANI Thierry (ID)<br>GEORGIOU Giorgos (The Left) | |

**European Commission**

| Commission DG | Commissioner |
|---|---|
| European External Action Service | BORRELL FONTELLES Josep |

## Key events

| Date | Event | Reference | Summary |
|---|---|---|---|
| 16/12/2021 | Committee referral announced in Parliament | | |
| 12/05/2022 | Vote in committee | | |
| 19/05/2022 | Committee report tabled for plenary | A9-0151/2022 | |
| 22/06/2022 | Debate in Parliament |  | |
| 23/06/2022 | Decision by Parliament | T9-0266/2022 | Summary |

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|---|---|---|---|
| 23/06/2022 | Results of vote in Parliament |  | |

| Technical information | |
|---|---|
| **Procedure reference** | 2021/2247(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/9/07914 |

Documentation gateway

**European Parliament**

| Document type | Committee | Reference | Date | Summary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Committee draft report | | PE703.221 | 25/02/2022 | |
| Amendments tabled in committee | | PE730.023 | 23/03/2022 | |
| Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading | | A9-0151/2022 | 19/05/2022 | |
| Text adopted by Parliament, single reading | | T9-0266/2022 | 23/06/2022 | Summary |

**European Commission**

| Document type | Reference | Date | Summary |
|---|---|---|---|
| Commission response to text adopted in plenary | SP(2022)505 | 20/10/2022 | |

# Report on the 2021 Commission Report on Montenegro

2021/2247(INI) - 23/06/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 506 votes to 50, with 35 abstentions, a resolution on the 2021 Commission Report on Montenegro.

Montenegro is the most advanced of candidate countries in its negotiation process, having opened all 33 screened chapters of the EU acquis and provisionally closed three. Parliament regretted that none have been closed since 2017, slowing down Montenegro's positive track record and status as the most advanced Western Balkans country in its progress towards EU accession.

Moreover, the period after the 2020 elections was marked by deep polarisation between the new ruling majority and the opposition, as well as within the ruling majority. The lack of constructive engagement of all parliamentary actors impeded decision-making in the Parliament. The resumption of inclusive dialogue among all parliamentary parties and relevant stakeholders with a view to building a strong pro-European is needed.

***Democracy and the rule of law***

Concerned by the continuing political tensions between and within the executive and legislative powers, Parliament called on both powers to improve coordination and prioritise legislative initiatives for the implementation of EU reforms. Parliament is also concerned about the overall lack of progress on judicial reform, including on the still pending appointments to key independent institutions and the judiciary, including the appointment of new Constitutional Court judges.

Further efforts are needed to harmonise the electoral legal framework and regulate all key aspects of elections through an inclusive process, well in advance of the next elections.

Members are still worried about the corruption in the country and urged Montenegro to step up the criminal justice response to high-level corruption. However, they did welcome progress in the fight against organised crime and on international police cooperation, in particular in improving access for law enforcement agencies to key databases and Montenegro's constructive cooperation with EU law enforcement agencies.

*Respect of fundamental freedoms and human rights*

Parliament noted the limited progress on freedom of expression and encouraged Montenegro to step up its efforts to fight disinformation, hate speech, online harassment, politically-biased reporting and foreign influence in the Montenegrin media. It expressed concern about the high degree of polarisation in the media landscape, in particular the growing volume of foreign and domestic disinformation campaigns and cyber and hybrid threats, including from Russia and China. In this regard, Members underlined the importance of media freedom and independence, high quality reporting and improving media literacy as key in fighting manipulative disinformation.

Members also strongly condemned verbal and physical attacks against and intimidation of any minorities, including national minorities. Vulnerable groups, including Roma and Egyptians, continue to experience multiple forms of discrimination and difficulties in exercising their rights. Gender-based violence and violence against children continue to be of serious concern, and that this has deteriorated further during the COVID-19 pandemic.

*The economy*

Parliament expressed concern about the persistently high unemployment rate, in particular among women and young people, and urged the authorities to step up efforts to improve their access to the labour market and address the brain drain, the gender gaps in employment and pay, and the availability of affordable childcare. It also expressed concern over Montenegro's sustainable macroeconomic stability and growing vulnerability owing to the increase of its public debt, in particular to China, and the new EUR 750 million loan taken by the government without consulting the Parliament.

Members also welcomed the disbursement of a EUR 60 million from the COVID-19 Macro-Financial Assistance package aimed at mitigating economic impacts of the pandemic and preserving macroeconomic stability, as well as the mobilisation of EUR 14.2 billion from IPA III to support Western Balkans partners in meeting the requirements for European Union membership.