

Basic information	
2022/2202(INI)	Procedure completed
INI - Own-initiative procedure	
2022 Commission Report on Montenegro	
Subject	
8.20.01 Candidate countries	
Geographical area	
Montenegro, from 06/2006	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	AFET Foreign Affairs	PICULA Tonino (S&D)	08/11/2022
		Shadow rapporteur BILČÍK Vladimír (EPP) GROŠELJ Klemen (Renew) WAITZ Thomas (Greens /EFA) KRASNODEĘBSKI Zdzisław (ECR) MARIANI Thierry (ID) GEORGIOU Giorgos (The Left)	

Key events			
Date	Event	Reference	Summary
19/01/2023	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
20/09/2023	Vote in committee		
26/09/2023	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0277/2023	Summary
17/10/2023	Debate in Parliament		
18/10/2023	Decision by Parliament	T9-0369/2023	Summary
18/10/2023	Results of vote in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2022/2202(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/9/10923

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE749.915	12/06/2023	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE751.625	06/07/2023	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0277/2023	26/09/2023	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0369/2023	18/10/2023	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2024)45	04/04/2024	

Meetings with interest representatives published in line with the Rules of Procedure

Rapporteurs, Shadow Rapporteurs and Committee Chairs

Transparency				
Name	Role	Committee	Date	Interest representatives
PICULA Tonino	Rapporteur	AFET	04/07/2023	Mr. Ranko Krivokapic, former Foreign Minister and honorary President of the Social Democratic Party of Montenegro SDP, Mr. Ivan Vukovic, Vice President of the Democratic Party of Socialists DPS and former Mayor of the City of Podgorica, and Ms. Daliborka Uljarevic, Executive Director of the Center for Civic Education in Podgorica

2022 Commission Report on Montenegro

2022/2202(INI) - 26/09/2023 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by Tonino PICULA (S&D, HR) on the 2022 Commission Report on Montenegro.

Commitment to EU accession

The report commended Montenegro's long-standing commitment to EU integration and reiterated its support for Montenegro in this regard. Members stressed that progress and the overall pace in negotiations depends on meeting interim rule of law benchmarks. Moreover, although all 33 screened chapters have been opened, Members regretted that no chapter has been closed in the past six years, slowing down Montenegro's progress and negatively affecting its positive record and status as the most advanced Western Balkan country on its path towards EU accession.

Members also regretted the fact that high political tensions and polarisation, the failure to build consensus on matters of national interest and a lack of cross-party dialogue have delayed progress on EU-related reforms and plunged Montenegro into a deep political and institutional crisis.

Following recent elections in the country, the report stressed that Montenegro needs a stable pro-European government capable and willing to continue on the EU accession path as soon as possible.

Democracy and the rule of law

Members regretted the adoption of the controversial Law on amendments to the Law on the President by the Parliament of Montenegro in December 2022, which directly challenged respect for constitutionality and the rule of law, despite the urgent opinion of the Venice Commission and the EU's calls against its adoption. They also regretted the deep polarisation, lack of dialogue, mistrust and political boycotts in the Montenegrin Parliament that have seriously hampered the legislative process. Both the legislative and executive branches are urged to strengthen loyal cooperation, including on the accession process.

The report regretted the lack of progress made on the reform of the electoral, legal and institutional framework.

Montenegro is urged to put in place a credible and effective criminal justice response to corruption. The report welcomed Montenegro's ongoing cooperation with EU agencies such as Europol and Eurojust and noted the importance of this cooperation in assisting Montenegro with tackling cross-border crime, including the trafficking of weapons, drugs and human beings, and with combating terrorism and extremism.

Fundamental freedoms and human rights

Montenegro is called on to step up its efforts to combat hate speech, online harassment, which disproportionately affects human rights defenders and women, and politically biased reporting and foreign influence in the Montenegrin media. The report expressed concern about the deep political polarisation in the media landscape, the lack of independence of the public broadcaster (Radio and Television of Montenegro – RTCG) and, in particular, the growing volume of foreign and domestic disinformation campaigns that negatively impact democratic processes. Further measures are needed against hate speech, social exclusion and discrimination and to improve vulnerable groups' access to justice, employment, housing and healthcare.

Socio-economic reforms

Members positively noted the reported budget surplus for the first quarter of 2023 and the projected economic growth in 2024. They encouraged Montenegro to adjust its economic growth strategy to boost productivity and human capital. Increased public investment is needed in the education system for sustainable social and economic development. The country is called on to enhance its fiscal economic policies in order to align its public debt levels with the target set by the EU's Stability and Growth Pact, ensuring they do not exceed 60 % of GDP.

Noting China's increased interest in investing in the Western Balkans and transportation infrastructure projects in Montenegro as part of its Belt and Road Initiative, the report called on the authorities to reduce economic dependence on China.

Montenegro is encouraged to make the best use of the EU funds available under the IPA III and the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans, including the Western Balkans Investment Framework, the Youth Guarantee in the Western Balkans and the Erasmus+ programme.

2022 Commission Report on Montenegro

2022/2202(INI) - 18/10/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 529 votes to 51, with 53 abstentions, a resolution on the 2022 Commission Report on Montenegro.

Commitment to EU accession

While commanding Montenegro's long-standing commitment to EU integration, Members regretted that, out of the 33 open chapters, no chapter has been closed in the past six years, slowing down Montenegro's progress and negatively affecting its positive record and status as the most advanced Western Balkan country on its path towards EU accession.

Members stressed the urgent need for political stability, commitment and credible engagement in consensus-building to move the stagnant EU reform process forward, in particular as regards the urgent rule of law reforms.

Parliament remained seriously concerned by malign foreign interference, destabilisation efforts, hybrid threats and disinformation campaigns by foreign actors in Montenegro that present the EU as an unreliable and uninvolved partner and undermine Montenegro's progress on its European path, in particular those originating from Russia, China and Serbia.

Following recent elections in the country, the resolution stressed that Montenegro needs a stable pro-European government capable and willing to continue on the EU accession path as soon as possible.

Democracy and the rule of law

Members regretted the deep polarisation, lack of dialogue, mistrust and political boycotts in the Montenegrin Parliament that have seriously hampered the legislative process. Both the legislative and executive branches are urged to strengthen loyal cooperation, including on the accession process.

The resolution regretted the lack of progress made on the reform of the electoral, legal and institutional framework.

Montenegro is urged to put in place a credible and effective criminal justice response to **corruption**. The resolution welcomed Montenegro's ongoing cooperation with EU agencies such as Europol and Eurojust and noted the importance of this cooperation in assisting Montenegro with tackling cross-border crime, including the trafficking of weapons, drugs and human beings, and with combating terrorism and extremism.

Fundamental freedoms and human rights

Montenegro is called on to step up its efforts to combat hate speech, online harassment, which disproportionately affects human rights defenders and women, and politically biased reporting and foreign influence in the Montenegrin media. Parliament expressed concern about the deep political polarisation in the media landscape, the lack of independence of the public broadcaster (Radio and Television of Montenegro – RTCG) and, in particular, the growing volume of foreign and domestic disinformation campaigns that negatively impact democratic processes.

Further measures are needed against hate speech, social exclusion and discrimination and to improve vulnerable groups' access to justice, employment, housing and healthcare.

Socio-economic reforms

Parliament noted that Montenegro's inflation rate remains one of the highest in Europe. It encouraged Montenegro to adjust its economic growth strategy in order to boost productivity and human capital and to accelerate its convergence with the EU. Increased public investment is needed in the education system for sustainable social and economic development. The country is called on to enhance its fiscal economic policies in order to align its public debt levels with the target set by the EU's Stability and Growth Pact, ensuring they do not exceed 60 % of GDP.

Moreover, it emphasised the importance of improving the sustainability of its exports by reducing overreliance on extractive industries, such as **copper ore and raw aluminium extraction**.

The resolution welcomed Montenegro's decision to terminate its citizenship by investment programme on 31 December 2022. It noted that between 2019 and 2022 more than 70 % of these passports issued were granted to citizens of the Russian Federation.

Montenegro is encouraged to make the best use of the EU funds available under the IPA III and the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans, including the Western Balkans Investment Framework, the Youth Guarantee in the Western Balkans and the Erasmus+ programme.

Energy, the environment and biodiversity

Montenegro is called on to better integrate with EU Member States' energy markets and to boost the implementation of energy efficiency measures in conjunction with facilitating the deployment of renewable energy with a view to transitioning away from fossil fuels.

Lastly, Parliament called on Montenegro to step up the development and adoption of a coherent and credible national energy and climate plan as well as improvements to waste management practices water quality protection.