

MEPs welcome 2016 reform efforts in Montenegro

Montenegro made further progress in its EU accession negotiations last year, topping the list of the most advanced EU accession countries, but corruption and organised crime remain a serious concern, said MEPs on Thursday. MEPs also highlight Russia's attempts to influence developments in Montenegro, as it pursues Euro-Atlantic integration.

“Montenegro, as ever, remains the good news story of the Western Balkans. The country's progress in aligning with the EU acquis continues at a good speed, and we expect to see the country formally join NATO later this year. It is vital that we continue to champion the role that EU membership can bring in holding the Western Balkans together in pursuit of peace and prosperity”, said rapporteur Charles Tannock (ECR, UK).

MEPs welcome the fact that 26 chapters have been opened for negotiations and two closed. They call on the Council “to speed up negotiations” in 2017 and on Montenegro to accelerate the pace of reforms.

However, MEPs are deeply concerned about the polarised domestic climate and the boycott of parliamentary activities by members of opposition, calling on it to end the boycott and join the government.

In addition, corruption, organised crime and efforts to restrict media freedom remain areas of serious concern, says the resolution, which was passed by 471 vote to 98, with 41 abstention.

MEPs also voice concern about alleged attempts by Russia to influence Montenegro and destabilise Western Balkans, as demonstrated by efforts to discredit the October 2016 elections. They call on EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini to follow closely the current investigations into allegations of an attempted coup d'état.

Further information

[Steps of the procedure](#)

[Committee on Foreign Affairs](#)

[EP rapporteur Charles Tannock \(ECR, UK\)](#)

[Adopted text \(2016/2309\) will be available here \(click on 16.03.2017\)](#)

[Video recording of debate \(click on 15.03.2017\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[EP briefing on Montenegro \(March 2017\)](#)

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