Strong support for Bosnia and Herzegovina’s integration into the European Union

• Functioning democratic institutions a condition to becoming a candidate for accession
• MEPs condemn steps aiming to undermine the country’s statehood
• Call for coordinated response to migratory pressure

In a report adopted on Thursday, Parliament welcomes Bosnia and Herzegovina’s commitment to advancing on its EU path, but demands further substantial reforms.

Reacting to the 2019-2020 Commission reports on Bosnia and Herzegovina, MEPs call on the European Council to continue backing Bosnia and Herzegovina’s European perspective, “including sending a positive political message on the granting of candidate status”.

They recognise the steps taken by Bosnia and Herzegovina to address key aspects of the Commission’s Opinion on the country’s EU membership application, but recall that the effective functioning of independent and accountable democratic institutions is a prerequisite for advancing in the EU integration process, including obtaining candidate status. Reforms in the areas of democratic functionality, rule of law, fundamental rights and public administration are crucial, they add.

In view of attempts to undermine the country's statehood and constitutional values, Parliament expresses its strong support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina recalling that the path towards EU membership depends on sustainable peace, stability and meaningful reconciliation that underpins the democratic and multicultural character of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Constitutional and electoral reforms

MEPs stress that Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to address shortcomings in its constitutional framework and to move forward with reforms to transform the country into a fully functional and inclusive state.
The report also calls on the authorities to resume inclusive negotiations on electoral reform, eliminating all forms of inequality and discrimination in the electoral process. It emphasises that the agreement reached regarding elections in Mostar enabled the city’s citizens to vote in the 2020 local elections for the first time since 2008.

**Migratory pressure**

Concerned by the increased migratory pressure that has led to a grave humanitarian situation, MEPs call for a coordinated, strategic, countrywide response, in order to improve border management and to build appropriate reception capacity across the country. To fight cross-border crime more effectively, closer cooperation with neighbouring countries and relevant EU agencies is essential, MEPs stress.

**Quote**

Rapporteur Paulo Rangel, (EPP, Portugal) said: “Bosnia and Herzegovina is at the heart of Europe and its diversity is at the core of European DNA. Further reforms are needed, building upon modest progress to date. We support an inclusive dialogue involving reforms that will allow BiH to advance on its European path and to obtain candidate status. This is only possible by affirming Bosnia and Herzegovina's pluralistic nature while ensuring a functional democracy where all peoples and citizens are equal!”

The report was adopted by 483 votes in favour, 73 against and 133 abstentions.