

Montenegro: 2019 and 2020 country reports

In 2008, Montenegro applied for EU membership, and accession negotiations began in 2012. Montenegro has opened all 33 negotiation chapters, three of which have been provisionally closed. Public opinion surveys show that 75 % of the population support the country's accession to the European Union. A new government led by Zdravko Krivokapić took office in Montenegro on 4 December 2020. During its May 2021 plenary session, the European Parliament is due to debate a resolution on the Commission's latest country reports on Montenegro.

European Commission reports (2019 and 2020)

The European perspective for all Western Balkan countries, including Montenegro, was confirmed at the [Thessaloniki Summit](#) (2003), [Sofia Summit](#) (2018) and at the [Zagreb Summit](#) (2020). Recently, there has been a lot of progress on enlargement policy more broadly. In February 2020, the Commission published a new enlargement methodology in its [communication on Enhancing the accession process – A credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans](#), and it presented an [Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans](#) (October 2020) with a budget of €9 billion. In the past, the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) budget for the six Western Balkan countries amounted to €5.3 billion (IPA I), while the subsequent one (IPA II, 2014-2020) amounted to €6.9 billion.

The Commission's reports on Montenegro in [2019](#) and [2020](#) confirmed progress in accession negotiations, in particular in the field of international police cooperation and the fight against human trafficking. However, according to the reports Montenegro has to accelerate political and economic reforms, particularly on the rule of law, the judiciary, media freedom and the fight against corruption. The Anti-Corruption Agency (2001), operating under newly appointed leadership, has continued to be strengthened through capacity-building activities and technical assistance. However, challenges related to its independence, priority-setting, selective approach and the quality of its decisions remained.

EU support during the coronavirus pandemic

The EU supported Montenegro and other Western Balkan countries during the pandemic under the 'Team Europe' [Coronavirus Global Response package](#), as well as the [EU Vaccines Strategy](#). In addition to the [Western Balkans vaccination programme](#) announced in April 2021 by the European Commission and Austria, under which Montenegro will receive 42 000 BioNTech–Pfizer vaccines, Montenegro [received](#) some 24 000 AstraZeneca vaccines in March 2021, under the global [Covax facility](#), co-financed by the EU and Member States among others. Furthermore, Montenegro can benefit from the [macro-financial assistance](#) to enlargement and neighbourhood partners in the coronavirus crisis, by up to €60 million.

European Parliament position

On 13 April 2021, Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) adopted its [motion for a resolution](#) on the Commission's reports. It welcomes Montenegro's continued engagement in the EU integration process and its overall progress. It stresses that the August 2020 elections were organised in full respect of democratic standards and calls on all political forces in the newly elected Skupština (Parliament) to engage in a constructive, meaningful and inclusive dialogue in Parliament, as this is the key to a successful parliamentary democracy. It deplores the state of freedom of expression and media freedom, an area in which five successive Commission reports have noted 'no progress', and strongly condemns all types of attacks against the media and intimidation of journalists. Finally, it calls for the active engagement and appropriate inclusion of the Western Balkan countries in the Conference on the Future of Europe.

Own-initiative report: [2019/2173\(INI\)](#); Committee responsible: AFET; Rapporteur: Tonino Picula (S&D, Croatia).

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