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DRAFT REPORT

on the 2025 Commission report on Albania
(2025/2250(INI))

Committee on Foreign Affairs

Rapporteur: Andreas Schieder

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

**on the 2025 Commission report on Albania
(2025/2250(INI))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Albania, of the other part¹,
- having regard to Albania's application for EU membership, submitted on 24 April 2009,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/1529 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 September 2021 establishing the Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance (IPA III)²,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2024/1449 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on establishing the Reform and Growth Facility for the Western Balkans³,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 5 February 2020 entitled 'Enhancing the accession process – A credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans' (COM(2020)0057),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 8 November 2023 entitled 'New growth plan for the Western Balkans' (COM(2023)0691),
- having regard to the Reform Agenda of Albania submitted under the EU's Reform and Growth Facility, as approved by the Commission on 23 October 2024,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 8 July 2025 entitled '2025 Rule of Law Report' (COM(2025)0900), accompanied by the Commission staff working document entitled '2025 Rule of Law Report – Country Chapter on the rule of law situation in Albania' (SWD(2025)0928),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 4 November 2025 entitled '2025 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy' (COM(2025)0690), accompanied by the Commission staff working document entitled 'Albania 2025 Report' (SWD(2025)0750),
- having regard to the final report of 23 October 2025 by the Election Observation Mission of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) on Albania's

¹ OJ L 107, 28.4.2009, p. 166, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_international/2009/332/oj.

² OJ L 330, 20.9.2021, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1529/oj>.

³ OJ L, 2024/1449, 24.5.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1449/oj>.

parliamentary elections of 11 May 2025,

- having regard to the declaration of the EU-Western Balkans summit held in Brussels on 17 December 2025,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Albania,
 - having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A10-0000/2026),
- A. whereas EU enlargement remains a strategic investment in peace, security, stability and democratic and socio-economic development across the European continent;
- B. whereas Albania has maintained a clear strategic orientation towards EU membership and has demonstrated full alignment with the EU's common foreign and security policy (CFSP);
- C. whereas Albania has been an EU candidate country since 2014, began accession negotiations in July 2022, successfully completed the screening process in November 2023 and opened all negotiation clusters between 15 October 2024 and 17 November 2025;
- D. whereas the 2025 Commission Report on Albania confirms that the country continues to make progress in most accession-related areas, while underlining the need for deeper, more consistent and irreversible reforms;
- E. whereas the credibility of the enlargement process depends on strict conditionality, merit-based progress and the effective implementation of reforms, rather than formal adoption of legislation alone;
- F. whereas strengthening democratic institutions, judicial independence, anti-corruption efforts, media freedom and fundamental rights remains essential for Albania's accession trajectory;
- G. whereas the OSCE/ODIHR recommendations to further improve the conduct of elections in Albania have not yet been fully addressed;
1. Welcomes Albania's outstanding commitment to EU integration, based on consensus among all political parties and overwhelming support among citizens, and commends the fact that Albania opened all clusters of accession negotiations within just 13 months;
 2. Welcomes Albania's ambition of closing accession negotiations by the end of 2027 and the swift progress made in recent years; highlights the need to ensure thorough implementation of legislation;
 3. Notes that the Commission assesses Albania's electoral framework as broadly adequate to conduct competitive elections, while reiterating concerns related to the uneven playing field, misuse of administrative resources, vote-buying allegations and pressure on voters; calls therefore on the majority and the opposition, to pursue constructively and inclusively a comprehensive electoral reform, in close cooperation with civil

society, and to fully implement outstanding OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations well ahead of future electoral cycles;

4. Expresses concern about continued political polarisation and confrontational political discourse, which undermine parliamentary oversight, public trust and the effective functioning of democratic institutions;
5. Encourages stronger parliamentary scrutiny of the executive, enhanced transparency in legislative procedures and more meaningful consultation with civil society organisations, social partners and independent institutions;

Rule of law, judiciary and anti-corruption

6. Welcomes the continued implementation of the justice reform process, including the vetting of judges and prosecutors, which has contributed to increased accountability and integrity within the judiciary; notes, however, persistent challenges related to judicial efficiency, case backlogs, consistency of jurisprudence and attempts to exert undue influence;
7. Calls for further strengthening of judicial governance bodies, ensuring their independence, transparency and professional capacity, and for sustained investment in court infrastructure and digitalisation;
8. Stresses that corruption remains a serious concern and that, despite progress in the legal and institutional framework, Albania must further consolidate its track record of investigations, prosecutions and final convictions, particularly in high-level corruption cases;
9. Insists that corruption needs to be addressed at all levels to strengthen citizens' trust in state institutions and allow for a predictable business environment;
10. Highlights the importance of effectively combating organised crime, including money laundering and drug trafficking networks, and calls for intensified cooperation with EU agencies such as Europol and Eurojust;

Fundamental rights and media freedom

11. Calls for further efforts to protect freedom of expression and media pluralism, including greater transparency of possible conflicts of interest of media owners, safeguards against political and economic pressure on journalists and effective investigation of threats and attacks against media professionals;
12. Encourages Albania to strengthen the institutional framework for the protection of minorities and vulnerable groups, including Roma and Egyptians, persons with disabilities, migrant workers and LGBTIQ+ persons, and to ensure effective implementation of anti-discrimination legislation; is concerned by anti-gender rhetoric present in the political discourse;
13. Underlines the need to improve access to justice, particularly for vulnerable and marginalised groups;

Public administration reform and governance

14. Acknowledges progress in public administration reform, including strategic planning and coordination; stresses, however, that further efforts are required to ensure merit-based recruitment and depoliticisation of the civil service;
15. Calls for improved policy planning, evidence-based decision-making and transparent budgetary processes, including strengthened parliamentary oversight of public finances;

Socio-economic reforms and environment

16. Welcomes Albania's engagement in implementing the EU's Growth Plan for the Western Balkans; notes, however, that structural weaknesses persist, including informality, limited productivity growth and a challenging business environment; reiterates the importance of improving the transport infrastructure between the Western Balkan countries and developing connections with EU Member States;
17. Highlights the importance of investing in education, skills development and innovation to support sustainable growth and social cohesion;
18. Underlines the key importance of genuine social dialogue for delivering benefits of enlargement to different segments of the population; regrets the low frequency of National Labour Council meetings; calls for strengthening of the tripartite consultation process, including adequate trade union representation; stresses the need to further support capacity building of social partners;
19. Notes with concern the Commission's assessment that there had been no progress on environment and climate change over the past year;

Foreign policy and regional cooperation

20. Commends Albania's continued full alignment with the EU's common foreign and security policy, including restrictive measures, Albania's continued engagement in CSDP missions and operations, and its constructive role in promoting regional stability;
21. Underlines the importance of good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation as essential components of the enlargement process and welcomes Albania's active participation in regional initiatives;

EU support

22. Welcomes EU financial and technical assistance to Albania under IPA III and the Reform and Growth Facility, and stresses that such support must remain firmly linked to concrete reform implementation and measurable results;

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23. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the President of the European Council, to the Council, to the Commission, to the Vice-President of the

Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, to the governments and parliaments of the Member States, and to the President, Government and Parliament of the Republic of Albania.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

This report evaluates the state of play and latest developments regarding Albania's progress in joining the EU. It encompasses Parliament's response to the Commission's enlargement report of 2025.

Albania has been an EU candidate country since 2014, began accession negotiations in July 2022, successfully completed the screening process in November 2023 and opened all negotiation clusters between 15 October 2024 and 17 November 2025 in a record time of just over a year.

In this and the next year, Albania will need to maintain the momentum to deliver on its goal of being ready for EU accession by the end of 2027. This would allow the Member States to proceed with the ratification of the accession treaty for Albania to enter the EU by the end of the decade. In this next phase, effective implementation of adopted reforms on the ground will be essential.

This report assesses Albania's progress regarding its democratic institutions, media freedom, involvement of civil society, fundamental rights, rule of law, socio-economic reforms, environment, regional cooperation and foreign policy.

Despite the progress achieved, Albania still faces several challenges such as overcoming internal political polarisation and improving political culture, strengthening the rule of law and consolidating anti-corruption reforms.

This year's report places particular focus on socio-economic reforms and highlights the key importance of genuine social dialogue for delivering benefits of enlargement to all segments of the population.

ANNEX: DECLARATION OF INPUT

Pursuant to Article 8 of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure, the rapporteur declares that he included in his report input on matters pertaining to the subject of the file that he received, in the preparation of the draft report, from the following interest representatives falling within the scope of the Interinstitutional Agreement on a mandatory transparency register¹, or from the following representatives of public authorities of third countries, including their diplomatic missions and embassies:

1. Interest representatives falling within the scope of the Interinstitutional Agreement on a mandatory transparency register
2. Representatives of public authorities of third countries, including their diplomatic missions and embassies
Government of Republic of Albania
Members of Parliament of the Republic of Albania

The list above is drawn up under the exclusive responsibility of the rapporteur.

Where natural persons are identified in the list by their name, by their function or by both, the rapporteur declares that he has submitted to the natural persons concerned the European Parliament's Data Protection Notice No 484 (<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/data-protect/index.do>), which sets out the conditions applicable to the processing of their personal data and the rights linked to that processing.

¹ Interinstitutional Agreement of 20 May 2021 between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on a mandatory transparency register (OJ L 207, 11.6.2021, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_interinstit/2021/611/oj).