

Follow-up to the European Parliament non-legislative resolution on 2023 and 2024 Commission reports on Serbia

- 1. Rapporteur:** Tonino PICULA (S&D / HR)
- 2. Reference number:** 2025/2022 (INI) / A10-0072/2025 / P10_TA(2025)0093
- 3. Date of adoption of the resolution:** 7 May 2025
- 4. Competent Parliamentary Committee:** Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET)
- 5. Brief analysis/ assessment of the resolution and requests made in it:** The European Parliament's 2025 resolution on Serbia acknowledges the country's continued formal commitment to joining the EU but expresses serious concerns regarding the country's slow progress in meeting essential accession criteria. The resolution states that despite some macroeconomic stability and technical readiness in certain areas, Serbia has made limited or no progress in key areas such as the rule of law, media freedom, judicial reform, public administration reform and alignment with EU foreign policy—especially due to its close ties with Russia and the failure to align with EU sanctions. The Parliament stresses that future accession negotiations should be contingent on Serbia's full alignment with the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and implementation of agreements with Kosovo¹.

The resolution expresses significant alarm over the decline of democratic standards and civil liberties in Serbia. It highlights increasing political interference in the judiciary, widespread corruption, lack of media pluralism, and systemic violations of human rights. A particular concern for the Parliament is the use of spyware and surveillance against civil society and journalists, state-sponsored disinformation, violent suppression of protests, and the marginalisation of minorities. The European Parliament condemns these actions and urges Serbia to implement meaningful reforms and uphold fundamental freedoms and human rights as core conditions of EU membership.

While it welcomes Serbia's engagement in economic reforms and EU-funded initiatives, the Parliament also criticises the lack of transparency and inclusiveness in policymaking. Environmental and energy reforms are noted as insufficient, particularly regarding pollution, energy diversification, and climate commitments. The resolution concludes by urging the EU to condition its financial

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

support on democratic progress and alignment with core EU values.

Response to requests and overview of action taken, or intended to be taken, by the Commission:

On paragraph 5, concerning EU financial assistance to Serbia, the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III) programming is done in line with the IPA III Regulation² and the IPA III Programming Framework, which establish the objectives of the Instrument to support the beneficiaries in adopting and implementing the political, institutional, legal, administrative, social and economic reforms required to comply with Union values and bring the partners closer to the Union rules, standards, policies and practices. EU financial support through IPA III and the Reform and Growth Facility for the Western Balkans³ serves multiple purposes, supporting beneficiaries on their reform path towards EU integration. These funds aim to support essential EU-related reforms, strengthen a partner country's institutions, and improve citizens' lives. The IPA III Regulation provides for a modulation of the scope and intensity of assistance in case of significant regression or persistent lack of progress in the fundamentals. Under the Reform and Growth Facility, financial support will only be disbursed upon the successful implementation of reforms by the beneficiaries and conditional to fulfilment of a set of conditions and pre-conditions, which include the requirement that the beneficiaries continue to uphold and respect democratic mechanisms. The Commission is and will continue to actively engage with Serbia in this context.

On paragraph 8, foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), including disinformation, remain matters of concern to be urgently addressed. The Commission has started to further enhance its engagement with the region, including Serbia, in fields such as addressing hybrid and cyber threats, space and military mobility and will continue to support the Western Balkans in fighting FIMI, including disinformation, as well as other hybrid threats that seek to undermine the region's stability, democratic processes and its EU perspective.

On paragraph 30, concerning the alleged use of spyware, the Commission has raised this issue with Serbian authorities. The Commission expects Serbia to thoroughly examine any allegation of the use of spyware against activists, journalists and members of civil society, and to restore citizens' trust. Any attempts to illegally access data of citizens, including journalists and political opponents, if confirmed, are unacceptable. The Commission will continue to closely monitor developments in the rule of law and fundamental rights area

² OJ L 330, 20.9.2021, p. 1-26.

³ OJ L, 2024/1449, 24.5.2024

in Serbia.

On paragraph 60, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HRVP) Kaja Kallas, as the facilitator of the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue, with the support of the EU Special Representative for the Dialogue (EUSR), Peter Sørensen, is working to achieve a comprehensive, legally binding normalisation agreement between Serbia and Kosovo, addressing all outstanding issues. Such an agreement is essential for both parties to advance on their respective European paths, improve the lives of their citizens and contribute to the security, stability and prosperity of the entire region. HRVP Kallas met with the parties in Serbia and Kosovo as recently as 21-23 May 2025 to drive the process forward. The Commission also remains fully engaged in supporting this process, with all actionable tools at its disposal. The HRVP, with the support of the EUSR, remain committed to regularly informing the European Parliament on progress in the Dialogue.

On paragraph 64, concerning support to reforms in the area of rule of law, the Commission will continue to closely monitor and assess Serbia's progress in complying with the membership criteria, including in the area of rule of law and functioning of the democratic institutions. This assessment will be reflected in the next report on Serbia as part of the 2025 Enlargement Package. Furthermore, the Commission confirms that rule of law related reforms still constitutes a key priority area of support under IPA III and the Reform and Growth Facility. While the EU cannot fully replace US aid, the Commission is assessing how to protect strategic interests, especially in democracy support and media freedom. The EU remains the world's largest donor, and the Commission is strengthening coordination with Member States in this respect. The Commission also continues to encourage Serbia to conclude the working agreement on cooperation with the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO).

On paragraph 65, the Commission continuously ensures effective use and oversight of EU funding programmes in Serbia and other partner countries in line with the applicable legal framework and financial rules.

On paragraph 66, the Commission will continue the implementation of the IPA regional cybersecurity programme through which it provides financial and technical assistance to align legislations and build local capacities and expertise. Cybersecurity will continue to be a priority in the IPA III Regional Programming for the period 2025-27.