



TEXTS ADOPTED

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2025 Commission report on Montenegro

European Parliament resolution of 17 June 2026 on the 2025 Commission report on Montenegro (2025/2253(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 Montenegro, of the other part¹, which entered into force on 1 May 2010,
- having regard to Montenegro's application for membership of the European Union of 15 December 2008,
- having regard to the Commission opinion of 9 November 2010 on Montenegro's application for membership of the European Union (COM(2010)0670), the European Council's decision of 17 December 2010 to grant Montenegro candidate status and the European Council's decision of 29 June 2012 to open EU accession negotiations with Montenegro,
- 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 Presidency conclusions of the Thessaloniki European Council meeting of 19 and 20 June 2003,

¹ OJ L 108, 29.4.2010, p. 3, ELI:
http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/2010/224/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>.

- having regard to the declarations of the EU-Western Balkan summits held in Sofia (Bulgaria), Zagreb (Croatia) and Brdo pri Kranju (Slovenia) in 2018, 2020 and 2021, respectively,
- having regard to the Western Balkans Leaders' meeting of 1 July 2025 in Skopje, North Macedonia, on the Growth Plan for the Western Balkans,
- having regard to the declaration of the EU-Western Balkans Summit of 17 December 2025,
- having regard to the Presidency conclusions on enlargement of 16 December 2025,
- having regard to the Berlin Process, launched on 28 August 2014,
- having regard to the Chair's conclusions of the 2025 Summit on the Berlin Process, held on 22 October 2025,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 6 October 2020 entitled 'An Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans' (COM(2020)0641),
- 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 Commission communication of 20 March 2024 on pre-enlargement reforms and policy reviews (COM(2024)0146),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 8 July 2025 entitled '2025 Rule of Law Report – The rule of law situation in the European Union' (COM(2025)0900), and to the accompanying Commission staff working document entitled '2025 Rule of Law Report – Country Chapter on the rule of law situation in Montenegro' (SWD(2025)0929),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 4 November 2025 entitled '2025 Communication on EU enlargement policy' (COM(2025)0690), and to the accompanying Commission staff working document entitled 'Montenegro 2025 Report' (SWD(2025)0754),
- having regard to the Commission's overview and country assessment of 2 June 2025 of the economic reform programme of Montenegro, and to the joint conclusions of the Economic and Financial Dialogue with Regional Partners of 13 May 2025,
- having regard to the outcomes of the Accession Conferences with Montenegro of 22 June 2021, 13 December 2021, 29 January 2024,

26 June 2024, 16 December 2024, 27 June 2025, 16 December 2025, 26 January 2026 and 17 March 2026,

- having regard to outcome of the 11th EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Council on 14 July 2022,
 - having regard to the EU list of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes,
 - having regard to the declaration and recommendations adopted at the 23rd and 24th meetings of the EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee, held on 2 and 3 April 2025 and on 18 and 19 September 2025 respectively,
 - having regard to Montenegro's accession to NATO on 5 June 2017,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Montenegro,
 - having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A10-0143/2026),
- A. whereas enlargement is a key EU foreign policy tool and a strategic investment in peace, security and prosperity on the European continent, particularly in the context of the evolving geopolitical landscape and the security challenges in Europe;
- B. whereas each candidate country is judged on its own merits in fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria, with strict yet fair conditionality and measurable results, particularly in the areas of the rule of law and alignment with the EU's values and common foreign and security policy;
- C. whereas Montenegro applied for EU membership in 2008; whereas it was granted candidate country status in 2010; whereas negotiations began in 2012; whereas the Government of Montenegro has declared its ambition to become the 28th EU Member State by 2028;
- D. whereas Montenegro is the candidate country that has made the most progress towards EU accession; whereas Montenegro has opened all 33 negotiating chapters, some of which have already been closed; whereas further progress is contingent on lasting results in implementing reforms, particularly in Chapters 23 and 24;
- E. whereas the EU is Montenegro's most trusted partner and is trusted by 69 % of the country's citizens, which is among the highest levels of trust towards the EU in the region; whereas this increases the obligation on political actors to bring about responsible, consistent and effective reform;

- F. whereas sustained political commitment from both the candidate countries and the EU is vital for maintaining the consistency, credibility, transparency and overall effectiveness of the enlargement process; whereas bilateral issues should be resolved bilaterally and should not be used to block or further politicise the enlargement process;
- G. whereas the EU remains Montenegro's main economic and financial partner and largest trading partner; whereas the smooth functioning of trade and transport flows between Montenegro and the EU is essential for economic stability, the resilience of the supply chain and the country's gradual integration into the EU internal market;
- H. whereas Montenegro's stability is essential for the security of the Western Balkans and the EU; whereas external political projects seeking cross-border influence based on ethnic or religious affiliation risk undermining the sovereignty and constitutional order of countries in the region; whereas the future of the Western Balkans lies in European integration and not in competing geopolitical spheres of influence or ethnically driven regional alignments;
- I. whereas Montenegro remains vulnerable to attempts to manipulate the information space from abroad and from within; whereas the Commission has underlined the need to close the space for foreign interference and information manipulation, including disinformation, and to strengthen societal resilience; whereas Russia has sought to advance its influence in the Western Balkans, including in Montenegro, through the strategic deployment of religious, cultural and so-called value-based narratives aimed at shaping public discourse and undermining Euro-Atlantic integration;
- J. whereas, despite some institutional progress, corruption and organised crime remain present in several sectors of Montenegro's economy and public institutions;
- K. whereas alignment with the EU *acquis* on taxation and tax good governance remains a cornerstone of financial stability and trust in the context of EU accession;

Commitment to EU accession

1. Welcomes Montenegro's steady progress on EU-related reforms, underpinned by broad political engagement and ambition to complete negotiations by the end of 2026; welcomes the provisional closure of 6 more negotiating chapters in 2025 and 4 in 2026, bringing the total to 16; reiterates its full support for the country's future in the EU; welcomes the establishment in the Council of an ad hoc working group on the drafting of an accession treaty with Montenegro, as an important and timely step in advancing the final phase of Montenegro's EU accession process and reaffirming the EU's commitment to enlargement;

2. Reaffirms that Montenegro remains the frontrunner in the EU accession process and stresses that the pace and sequencing of enlargement must continue to be determined by the principle of individual merit; underlines that progress towards membership should be assessed strictly on the objective fulfilment of established benchmarks; calls for sustained reform efforts to be met with an equally credible, predictable and timely EU perspective; emphasises that the integrity of the enlargement policy rests on consistency, fairness and equal treatment, reflecting each candidate's demonstrated level of preparedness;
3. Welcomes the broad and consistent public support among Montenegrin citizens for the country's European path, with a strong majority of citizens expressing confidence in Montenegro's future within the EU;
4. Encourages all political actors to stay focused, maintain the momentum towards successfully concluding the accession negotiations and intensify their efforts to bring about the necessary reforms; underlines the need for political stability and constructive cross-party cooperation in this regard; stresses that genuine progress depends on the effective implementation of the reforms that have been adopted and on enduring, measurable results in the area of the rule of law, including the handing down of final convictions in high-level corruption and organised crime cases; encourages Montenegro to further advance its implementation of the closing benchmarks, particularly for Chapters 23 and 24;
5. Calls on all state authorities to act in a spirit of institutional responsibility, ensuring that political differences do not delay the adoption and implementation of EU-related reforms; stresses that safeguarding the strategic objective of EU membership must remain a shared national priority above partisan considerations; urges the Montenegrin Parliament and Government to prevent identity politics from diverting attention from the EU agenda or straining relations with its neighbours, ensuring Montenegro remains firmly on the EU path;
6. Encourages Montenegro, as the most advanced candidate country, to continue playing a constructive and stabilising role in the region and to demonstrate through leadership that sovereignty, civic identity and European integration are mutually reinforcing;
7. Welcomes Montenegro's steadfast full alignment with the EU's common foreign and security policy, including EU restrictive measures, in particular those concerning Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, as well as its principled stance in the United Nations and participation in EU crisis management missions and operations, and in NATO and other international multilateral missions, including EU Naval Force ATALANTA, the EU Military

Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine), and the Kosovo Force; commends the Montenegrin Parliament's decision to approve the country's participation in EUMAM Ukraine; reaffirms that Montenegro's consistent alignment with the EU's common foreign and security policy, including restrictive measures against Russia, is a key indicator of its strategic orientation; stresses that this must remain unwavering; underlines that unwavering commitment from Montenegro's political representatives to the country's independent statehood and strategic European orientation remains a key political criterion alongside technical reform benchmarks;

8. Welcomes the EU-Montenegro Security and Defence Dialogue, including structured exchanges on security and defence cooperation, resilience to emerging threats and cooperation on support for Ukraine;
9. Welcomes the decision of the Montenegrin Parliament to send members of its armed forces to participate in EUMAM Ukraine, signalling a clear and unwavering alignment with EU and NATO security priorities; recalls that Montenegro is a key EU ally in the region; welcomes the decision of the Montenegrin Government to meet the 2 % defence spending pledge;
10. Remains gravely concerned by persistent and intensifying malign foreign interference, destabilising activities, hybrid threats and disinformation campaigns by third-country actors in Montenegro, aimed at undermining Montenegro's democratic institutions, societal cohesion, strategic orientation towards the EU and NATO membership; underlines that such interference represents a direct challenge to the rule of law, democratic governance and national sovereignty; notes in particular the malign influence of China, Russia and Serbia;
11. Notes with serious concern the reports that Serbian President Vučić's supporters travelled to Tivat on 3 June 2026 in an attempt to destabilise Montenegro and to disrupt the EU-Western Balkans Summit; further notes that some of the individuals involved had previously been identified at pro-government mobilisations, were involved in efforts to suppress student protests in Serbia and had records of violent criminal offences or misdemeanours; strongly condemns the actions of structures linked to the Serbian ruling party aimed at destabilising Montenegro and undermining its progress towards EU accession;
12. Calls for the development of tailored support by the EU and NATO and their enhanced cooperation with Montenegro to establish stronger measures to counter such hybrid threats, foreign information manipulation and covert political financing and to enhance societal and institutional resilience, including strengthening

cybersecurity, improving media literacy across all levels of education, ensuring adequate teacher training and modern teaching resources, strengthening strategic communication, improving counter-disinformation capacities and strengthening media ownership transparency; encourages the Commission to ensure that Montenegro can fully benefit from the European Democracy Shield; calls for stronger vetting and integrity mechanisms within Montenegro's security and intelligence services;

13. Expresses concern about the political instrumentalisation of religious institutions by external actors; stresses that religious organisations must operate transparently and independently of foreign political influence, in full respect of Montenegro's constitutional and secular framework;
14. Calls for the EU and Montenegro to continue pursuing and significantly strengthen targeted strategic communication on the benefits of enlargement and EU membership, by adopting a more proactive and locally adapted approach in close cooperation with national institutions and civil society; notes with concern that only 39 % of Montenegrin citizens feel well- or very well-informed about the EU, according to the latest Special Eurobarometer survey;
15. Welcomes the Montenegrin Parliament's active engagement in the EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee;
16. Welcomes the holding of the citizens' forum entitled 'Citizens at the Heart of the Enlargement of the European Union' on 20 and 21 September 2025 in Podgorica, Montenegro;
17. Welcomes the designation of the cities of Nikšić as the 2030 European Capital of Culture and Podgorica as the 2028 European Youth Capital, highlighting their role in fostering youth engagement, innovation, cultural exchange and closer ties between Montenegro and the EU;

Democracy and the rule of law

18. Highlights the importance of the Montenegrin Parliament in the accession process and underlines its key role in ensuring democratic accountability, parliamentary oversight and transparency of the legislative process; encourages constructive dialogue and cooperation across the political spectrum with a view to adopting high-quality legislation that solves or meaningfully improves structural problems and enables Montenegro to advance on its accession path; stresses that close cooperation between the Government and Parliament of Montenegro is crucial for the timely and effective implementation of reforms; underlines that accelerating the legislative process should not limit meaningful parliamentary debate or the role of the opposition, and calls for an

appropriate balance between the pace of reforms and the quality of legislative scrutiny;

19. Welcomes the amendments made to Montenegro's electoral law, particularly those concerning the oversight of campaign finance and media, electoral integrity, gender quotas on electoral lists and a single local election day; urges Montenegro to fully align with EU standards and to fully implement all outstanding recommendations issued by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the Group of States against Corruption, particularly on transparency in political party expenditure, including the use of funds dedicated to women's organisations in political parties, on online political advertising, including disclosure of sponsors and targeting criteria, and on preventing the abuse of state resources, updating the voter register and addressing residence registration; recalls that this should be done through a transparent and inclusive consultation process with all relevant stakeholders; calls on the Montenegrin authorities, in the run-up to the elections, to systematically protect the electoral information environment by establishing rapid cooperation channels between the election administration, the media regulator and the competent authorities, in order to detect and respond to coordinated disinformation and illicit interference, while fully respecting freedom of expression;
20. Welcomes Montenegro's inclusion in the Commission's 2025 Rule of Law Report;
21. Calls for judicial appointments to be made more quickly, using merit-based and transparent procedures that are free from political influence and based on expertise and integrity, and are free from delays in processing times, including appointments to the Constitutional Court and the Judicial and Prosecutorial Councils, fully in line with the closing benchmark requirements; stresses the crucial role of a fully functioning Constitutional Court for the stability of the legal order and the electoral framework; is seriously concerned about continued delays in the appointment of a Constitutional Court judge, which risk undermining the full functioning of one of the key institutions for safeguarding the rule of law and EU integration;
22. Urges Montenegro to further align its legal framework with the EU *acquis* and European standards on judicial independence, accountability, impartiality, integrity and professionalism, and to implement outstanding recommendations; calls for greater efficiency in the justice system, including the reduction of backlogs, particularly on corruption and organised crime cases, which is crucial for boosting public confidence and meeting the conditions for EU membership; recalls that the closing benchmarks require demonstrated results in practice, including improved working

conditions, sufficient staffing and effective case management, as persistent structural shortcomings continue to affect judicial efficiency; welcomes measures to boost the appeal of judicial careers; calls for the adoption of the Montenegrin Law on Salaries and Other Rights Related to the Performance of Judicial and Constitutional Court Functions to ensure adequate, stable and predictable salaries and working conditions of judges and prosecutors, which are essential safeguards of their independence and the proper functioning of the justice system;

23. Notes that civil society experts have raised serious concerns about the substance of the government's draft amendments to the Prosecutorial Council, in that they do not meaningfully strengthen its independence and may even make it more difficult to ensure genuinely independent membership of the Prosecutorial Council; notes with concern the adoption of the amendments to the Law on Internal Affairs and the Law on the National Security Agency despite strong criticism from the opposition and civil society; urges transparent procedures and genuine cooperation and consultation, in particular on all laws pertaining to the EU integration process, with all relevant stakeholders, including the opposition, legal experts and the Commission;
24. Strongly condemns the frequent political and public pressure on judges and prosecutors and calls on the competent institutions to react promptly and effectively to protect their independence and integrity;
25. Calls for further improvement of the track record on investigations and prosecutions regarding high-level corruption, including confiscation of assets; urges Montenegro to step up the proactive investigation and prosecution of high-level corruption and to strengthen the capacity and performance of judicial and anti-corruption bodies; notes that the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption continues to operate with leadership gaps, limited staff and insufficient financial independence, which restrict its overall impact, and calls for measures to ensure its full operational, financial and functional independence in line with European standards; calls for further alignment with the EU *acquis* and EU standards in the fight against corruption and urges Montenegro to address all outstanding recommendations in this area;
26. Calls for comprehensive integrity policies to safeguard law-enforcement agencies and the judiciary from corruption and organised crime; calls for the establishment of disciplinary mechanisms and stronger and more efficient ethical accountability mechanisms, particularly in cases involving the failure to declare assets, in order to ensure meaningful and effective accountability in practice; welcomes progress made in areas such as lobbying regulation, whistleblower protection and public procurement

transparency, which demonstrates that targeted and properly implemented reforms can deliver tangible results;

27. Urges Montenegro to increase the efficiency of prosecutions and judicial proceedings for serious and organised crime, with a view to establishing a solid track-record of final convictions and confiscation of assets; notes that in the area of anti-money laundering, Montenegro has made significant progress in improving its anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing framework, as well as in implementing EU sanctions;
28. Welcomes Montenegro's ongoing cooperation with Frontex, Europol, Eurojust and the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training in tackling cross-border crime, including the trafficking of weapons, drugs and human beings, and in combating terrorism and extremism; emphasises the need to reinforce cooperation in the fight against drugs;
29. Reiterates its calls on Montenegro to fully align its visa policy with that of the EU, especially as regards countries posing security risks; notes the Montenegrin Government's decision to remove several countries from its visa-free list in 2025; recalls that this is a closing benchmark requirement under Chapter 24;
30. Underlines the importance of a transparent and accountable public administration, stronger administrative capacity, and a professional, merit-based civil service; notes with concern that continuing large-scale hiring in public administration, without transparent criteria and clear needs assessments, undermines the principles of merit-based recruitment and professionalisation; calls for further depoliticisation of senior civil service appointments, the introduction of clear performance-based evaluation mechanisms, and continuity of expertise;

Fundamental freedoms and human rights

31. Regrets the fact that national minorities, vulnerable groups, including Roma and Egyptians, persons with disabilities and LGBTIQ+ persons, still experience discrimination, hate speech, in particular online, and hate crimes in Montenegro; welcomes the recent adoption of the Law on the Protection of Equality and Prohibition of Discrimination; calls for strengthening the implementation of equal treatment for ethnic communities, ensuring that all ethnic, religious and social groups are guaranteed equal rights and opportunities, and can fully and effectively participate in social, political and economic life; recognises that safeguarding minority rights is fundamental to fostering social cohesion and democratic governance and upholding European values; urges Montenegro to adopt and enforce comprehensive legislation and policies that prevent discrimination and promote inclusivity;

32. Calls on Montenegro to fully implement the Law on Registered Partnerships;
33. Calls on Montenegro to implement a de-institutionalisation strategy for persons with disabilities, as well as a strong child protection system grounded in community-based care;
34. Acknowledges the multi-ethnic character of Montenegrin society and calls for enhanced respect for all languages, traditions and cultural heritage of local communities and national minorities; calls on Montenegro to intensify efforts towards the non-discriminatory use of minority languages in education and in dedicated media space in state and local outlets; calls for respecting the multi-ethnic identity of the Bay of Kotor, in particular by acknowledging the cultural heritage of the Croatian community; expresses deep concern over massive ongoing construction work at the Bay of Kotor UNESCO site, which has an impact on the preservation of heritage and the protection of the natural site, and calls for finalising the legal protection of Miločer Park;
35. Notes the need for sensitive and inclusive handling of identity-related discussions with a view to preventing polarisation and building broad consensus on issues of crucial interest for Montenegro's independence, sovereignty and European path; reiterates its concern about attempts to amend the law on Montenegrin citizenship in the country's Parliament in order to allow the acquisition of dual citizenship, which could have serious and long-term implications for the country's decision-making process and identity; encourages the authorities to continue consulting and coordinating with the EU on any possible changes in legislation to ensure that it fully aligns with the EU *acquis* and international standards and upholds fundamental rights;
36. Strongly condemns all hate speech, including online, and hate crimes; welcomes the increase in the number of prosecutions for racism and hate speech, but expresses concern over insufficient action against speeches, public statements or symbolic acts that glorify war criminals or revise historical facts; encourages Montenegro to step up its institutional response to hate speech, ensure effective investigations and prosecutions and fully align with the EU *acquis*;
37. Urges Montenegro to ensure the effective application of its fundamental rights frameworks, including access to justice and protection of vulnerable persons, and to implement all recommendations from international monitoring bodies;
38. Stresses the need to address discrimination against women, in particular those from minority groups; expresses concern over child marriage disproportionately affecting girls from the Roma and

Egyptian communities in Montenegro; regrets the widespread nature of gender-based violence and victim-blaming attitudes, as well as gender-based hate speech and disinformation, including online, particularly towards women in public and political life; urges Montenegro to adequately fund, resource, coordinate and enforce its gender equality framework; calls for the respective authorities to maintain more vigilance and establish support systems for victims of gender-based and domestic violence; calls for improved data collection on domestic and gender-based violence, incomes and salaries, health and social security; calls on the Montenegrin authorities to ensure the increased political participation of women;

39. Notes Montenegro's zero-tolerance policy towards violence against journalists and condemns intimidation and all instances of strong verbal attacks on media and civil society representatives, particularly including women working in the media and human rights defenders, by public officials and political parties; expresses concern over the use of informal summonses and investigative interviews against journalists, columnists and civil society actors for their criticism of public officials; calls for the swift and effective enforcement of the law and for effective judicial protection, prioritising conducting investigations and fully and effectively following up on unresolved cases, such as the murder of Duško Jovanović, as well as deterrent sanctions; notes that the Montenegrin legal system lacks a specific definition of, or expedited procedure to identify and dismiss, strategic lawsuits against public participation, and calls for the establishment of such mechanisms;
40. Underlines the key role of free and pluralistic media as a fundamental pillar of democratic society; recalls that ensuring the independence of the public broadcaster and the media regulatory authority remains a Chapter 23 benchmark; highlights the importance of ensuring full media ownership and funding transparency, including for online outlets; welcomes the recent appointment of members to the Council of the Agency for Audiovisual Media Services and stresses that the Agency must be able to operate independently, free from political influence; expresses concern over continued political influence at the public broadcaster and calls on the authorities to respect judicial proceedings, restore legality and guarantee the broadcaster's institutional and editorial independence; calls on Montenegro to align its media legislation with the European Media Freedom Act⁴ and to increase resilience to foreign influence and disinformation; calls for the full transparency of media ownership structures and

⁴ Regulation (EU) 2024/1083 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 establishing a common framework for media services in the internal market and amending Directive 2010/13/EU (European Media Freedom Act) (OJ L, 2024/1083, 17.4.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1083/oj>).

foreign funding sources, particularly where linked to political actors or foreign state interests, in order to prevent covert external influence on Montenegro's public discourse;

41. Welcomes Montenegro's vibrant and constructive civil society, which plays a crucial and positive role in the reform process; calls for the meaningful involvement of civil society in policymaking, including by ensuring more systematic engagement and timely access to relevant information; urges the authorities to ensure that EU-accession-related lawmaking does not bypass public consultation requirements and established standards of participatory governance; calls for resuming, after a long hiatus, the work of the Council for Cooperation between the Government and Non-governmental Organisations, with a view to building collaborative relationships and genuinely involving civil society in a transparent legislative process from an early stage;
42. Urges Montenegro to fully implement all recommendations of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; notes with concern the rising number of complaints of torture and coercion of statements, case backlogs, and the limited use of safeguards such as the audio-visual recording of interrogations; regrets the inconsistent suspensions and disciplinary action, as well as lenient sanctions, in cases of police ill-treatment, and calls for prompt, effective and impartial investigations;

Reconciliation and good neighbourly relations

43. Welcomes Montenegro's hosting of the EU-Western Balkans Summit on 5 June 2026 in Tivat, which offers an important platform to strengthen regional cooperation, advance the accession agenda, enhance economic integration and address common challenges;
44. Underlines the key role of good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation in the enlargement process; recalls that good neighbourly relations are one of the key criteria for evaluating progress in Montenegro's accession process, in accordance with the EU Negotiating Framework; calls for constructive solutions, in a spirit of mutual respect, to outstanding bilateral issues, with citizens' interests as the priority; recalls that using unresolved bilateral and regional disputes to block candidate countries' accession processes should be avoided; welcomes bilateral consultations between Croatia and Montenegro as a constructive mechanism for resolving outstanding issues and strengthening trust;
45. Commends Montenegro for its consistent progress in the domestic handling of war crime cases; notes, however, that since June 2024 the Special State Prosecutor's Office has not opened any new investigations or filed any indictments in war crimes cases, and that

no progress has been made on command responsibility; underlines the need to intensify efforts and continue building a credible and sustained track record of effective investigations, prosecutions and trials in respect of war crimes cases, including in high-level cases, in line with international law and standards; stresses the importance of access to archives in this regard;

46. Encourages Montenegro to continue taking a proactive approach to ensuring access to justice and effective reparations, including institutional support, for victims, including ensuring adequate and fair compensation for all persons who were prisoners of war in camps in Montenegro during the 1990s; welcomes regional cooperation on these issues, and calls for full cooperation in the region and with EU Member States, including the exchange of evidence and on clarifying the fate of missing persons; welcomes the arrest in Montenegro, following a request by Croatia, of an individual sentenced in absentia for war crimes against prisoners of war, and commends the cooperation between the competent authorities of both countries in this case;
47. Reiterates its concern over expressions of political revisionism by certain political actors, which undermine accountability and deepen societal divisions; strongly condemns any glorification of war criminals and public denial of war crimes;
48. Expresses concern over political concepts and narratives in the region, with which cross-border unification or coordination based on ethnic identity are advocated, including the so-called Serbian World, and which question the sovereignty and territorial integrity of neighbouring states; calls on all regional actors to respect Montenegro's independence and refrain from interference in its domestic affairs; stresses that such narratives are incompatible with the principles of good neighbourly relations and the EU accession process; stresses that the future of the Western Balkans lies in EU integration, not in competing geopolitical spheres of influence;
49. Reiterates its call to open the archives that concern the former republics of Yugoslavia and for access to be granted to the files of the former Yugoslav Secret Service and the Yugoslav People's Army Secret Service, in order to enable communist era crimes to be thoroughly researched and addressed;
50. Calls for the resolution of outstanding property issues; stresses that resolving outstanding property rights issues, including restitution, is essential for meeting Montenegro's obligations under Chapter 23 and remains a key benchmark for closing negotiations on fundamental rights;

Socio-economic reforms

51. Welcomes Montenegro's engagement in the EU Growth Plan for the Western Balkans; commends its progress in implementing its reform agenda, with EUR 18 million disbursed, and encourages further implementation; highlights the importance of measurable and lasting results in implementing reforms, particularly in the areas of the rule of law and public finance management;
52. Continues to encourage Montenegro to make full and effective use of all EU funding granted to it, including by improving administrative capacity, speeding up programming and contracting, and improving coordination; highlights the importance of the broad and meaningful involvement of stakeholders, including local authorities, business associations, social partners and civil society at all stages, including in the design of reform measures, the implementation of projects and the monitoring of results; recalls the conditionality of EU financial support, whereby funding depends on making tangible progress in reforms and respect for the rule of law;
53. Welcomes Montenegro's operational participation in the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA), marking a key step toward deeper financial integration with the EU and lower transaction costs for citizens and businesses; notes initial findings indicating significant savings in transaction costs since SEPA became operational in October 2025;
54. Welcomes the Commission's proposal to open negotiations with the Western Balkan partners, including Montenegro, to extend the EU's 'roam like at home' regime, thereby enabling citizens and businesses to benefit from seamless mobile connectivity at domestic rates across the EU and the Western Balkans, fostering people-to-people contacts, boosting economic ties, supporting educational exchanges and facilitating tourism; underlines that this initiative constitutes a concrete step towards deeper pre-accession integration, supports cross-border social and economic ties and brings tangible benefits to citizens well ahead of full EU membership; welcomes the Council's authorisation of the opening of negotiations on extending the 'roam like at home' regime to the Western Balkan partners, and calls for the timely conclusion of bilateral agreements with those partners;
55. Notes Montenegro's economic growth and urges it to continue with the fiscal discipline, structural reforms, improved governance, and measures needed to boost competitiveness, private sector growth, foreign investment and social and economic development; encourages Montenegro to align customs, social and tax policies with EU standards, including transparency and the effective exchange of tax information, in order to make progress under Chapter 16; calls on Montenegro to align with the EU framework for screening foreign direct investment, particularly in strategic sectors such as energy, telecommunications, critical infrastructure and media, in order to prevent strategic dependencies and safeguard critical infrastructure and key economic sectors; welcomes the first EU-Montenegro

Investment Conference as a strong signal of deepening economic ties;

56. Calls on Montenegro to boost the digitalisation of public services and enhance business-linked vocational training; emphasises that the protection of citizens' personal and sensitive data must be ensured in all digital systems; welcomes the calls to integrate all Western Balkan countries into the EU's digital single market before EU membership;
57. Urges Montenegro to intensify its fight against corruption in public procurement by strengthening the legal framework and improving the detection of irregularities, and calls on it to ensure that all intergovernmental agreements fully comply with EU rules and principles;

Energy, environment and connectivity

58. Urges Montenegro to step up its efforts towards a sustainable and green transition and to finally adopt and implement its national energy and climate plan; highlights the importance of energy security, the diversification of supply, reducing strategic dependencies on external actors, and full integration within the regional and European energy market; calls for full alignment with the Electricity Integration Package, and for stronger energy efficiency measures; calls for alignment with EU security-of-supply standards and transparent procurement procedures;
59. Calls on Montenegro to increase its efforts to meet Chapter 27 closing benchmarks and accelerate alignment with and effective implementation of the EU environmental *acquis* across all relevant sectors, including air quality, water, nature protection, waste management, industrial pollution and climate change, and to adopt air quality and nature protection strategies and action plans, and local waste management plans; welcomes the fact that Montenegro has joined the EU LIFE programme; calls on all parties to reach an agreement on the waste water treatment plant in Zeta municipality in a way that respects both the need to build the plant and addresses the concerns of the local population;
60. Calls on Montenegro to safeguard areas of high biodiversity value, including Emerald sites and those with a future Natura 2000 designation, ensuring their legal protection and alignment with relevant EU directives; calls on Montenegro to significantly accelerate the establishment and implementation of the Natura 2000 network in full alignment with the EU *acquis*, ensuring that the identification, designation and management of protected sites are based on scientific criteria and transparent public consultation processes; calls for stronger enforcement of animal welfare legislation;

61. Calls on Montenegro to boost its administrative and inspection capacities at national and local levels and to improve inter-institutional coordination and its decision-making on infrastructure projects, including establishing effective coordination between strategic environmental assessments, environmental impact assessments and appropriate assessment procedures; invites Montenegro to shift its transport policy towards sustainable and smart mobility;
62. Highlights the importance of regional transport and energy connectivity as a key element of economic development and stability in the Western Balkans, and calls for projects that deepen integration with the EU Member States; is concerned about the recent blockades at border crossings into the Schengen area by professional drivers from Western Balkan countries in relation to the implementation of the EU entry-exit system from October 2025; underlines that prolonged disruptions risk negatively affecting supply chains, trade flows and economic relations between the EU and Montenegro; calls on the Commission, in close cooperation with the Member States, to assess possible pragmatic and legally sound solutions that balance operational realities in the transport sector with the need to preserve the integrity of the Schengen *acquis*, ensuring appropriate safeguards and preventing any abuse;

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63. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States, and to translate it into Montenegrin and forward it to the President, Government and Parliament of Montenegro.