



TEXTS ADOPTED

P10_TA(2026)0217

2025 Commission report on Albania

European Parliament resolution of 17 June 2026 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 EU negotiating framework with Albania approved by the Council in July 2022, which lays out the guidelines and principles for Albania's EU accession talks,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 8 November 2023 entitled 'New growth plan for the Western

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>.

Balkans' (COM(2023)0691),

- having regard to the Reform Agenda of Albania submitted under the EU's Reform and Growth Facility for the Western Balkans, 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), and to the accompanying 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), and to the accompanying 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 on Albania's 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 the EU-Western Balkans summits, held in Sofia, Zagreb and Brdo pri Kranju in 2018, 2020 and 2021 respectively, and to the declarations thereof,
- having regard to its previous resolutions on Albania,
- having regard to its resolution of 11 March 2026 on the EU enlargement strategy⁴,
- having regard to the 2025 Corruption Perceptions Index, published by Transparency International in February 2026,
- having regard to the World Press Freedom Index 2025, published by Reporters Without Borders in March 2025,
- having regard to the report of 11 June 2025 by the World Economic Forum, entitled 'Global Gender Gap Report 2025',
- having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A10-0141/2026),

A. whereas EU enlargement remains a strategic investment in peace,

⁴ Texts adopted, P10_TA(2026)0077.

security, stability, and democratic and socio-economic development across the European continent;

- B. whereas Albania has maintained a clear and consistent strategic orientation towards EU membership, and has demonstrated full alignment with the EU's common foreign and security policy, including on EU restrictive measures against Russia and Belarus, and by supporting Ukraine in UN General Assembly resolution votes;
- C. whereas Albania was granted the status of EU candidate country in 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 EU's enlargement process depends on strict conditionality, merit-based progress and the effective implementation of reforms, rather than formal adoption of legislation alone; whereas Albania's EU accession depends on lasting, in-depth and irreversible reforms across the areas covered by the 'Fundamentals' cluster of the accession negotiations, starting with the rule of law and the functioning of democratic institutions; whereas the quality of reforms undertaken by a candidate country determines the timetable for accession;
- F. whereas the strengthening of democratic institutions, judicial independence, anti-corruption efforts, media freedom and fundamental rights, including minority rights, remains essential for Albania's accession trajectory;
- G. whereas safeguarding the integrity of democratic processes has become a central element of the EU's enlargement policy; whereas in July 2025, the Albanian Parliament adopted the country's first national strategy against foreign interference and disinformation;
- H. whereas the ODIHR's recommendations of 23 October 2025, which followed Albania's parliamentary elections of 11 May 2025, and the ODIHR's previous recommendations for further improving 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 its political parties and overwhelming support among its citizens, and commends the fact that Albania opened all clusters for the accession negotiations within just 13 months; notes that Albanian citizens' support for EU membership remains consistently high and reflects the strong European

aspirations of Albanian society; encourages the country to maintain the current momentum on reform and continue its alignment with the EU *acquis*, stressing that Albania's progress on its European path contributes to the stability, security and resilience of the European continent;

2. Takes note of Albania's ambition of closing accession negotiations by the end of 2027 and welcomes the swift progress made in recent years, in this regard; highlights the need for the Albanian authorities to ensure the thorough implementation of legislation;
3. Notes that both the 2025 Commission report on Albania and the ODIHR's report on the May 2025 parliamentary elections assess Albania's electoral framework as broadly adequate for conducting competitive elections, while reiterating concerns related to an uneven playing field for political actors, misuse of administrative resources that blurs the lines between state institutions and party structures, the funding of political parties, vote-buying allegations and pressure on voters; calls, therefore, on Albania's political majority and its opposition to pursue, constructively and inclusively, a comprehensive electoral reform, in close cooperation with civil society, and to fully implement outstanding ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations well ahead of future electoral cycles; stresses that such a reform should strengthen the electoral framework, including on campaign finance transparency, equitable media access and safeguards against the misuse of administrative resources, and ensure that the framework is effectively enforced; underlines that broad political consensus and the genuine implementation of these reforms are essential for ensuring public trust in future elections;
4. Expresses concern about continued political polarisation and confrontational political discourse, which undermine parliamentary oversight, public trust and the effective functioning of democratic institutions; encourages political actors to re-engage in constructive parliamentary dialogue, ensuring that the Albanian Parliament remains the central forum for democratic debate and democratic oversight; underlines that a functioning democracy requires meaningful participation of the opposition in parliamentary procedures; recalls that violent protests have no place in a functioning democracy;
5. Encourages stronger parliamentary scrutiny of the executive, enhanced transparency in legislative procedures and more meaningful consultation, at an early stage, with civil society organisations, social partners and independent institutions; stresses that progress in the EU integration process should be pursued without compromising on the quality and inclusiveness of reforms; underlines the importance of adequate stakeholder engagement and national ownership in order to ensure sustainable implementation

and lasting impact; stresses the importance of strengthening the role and capacities of Albania's parliamentary committees, including through improved access to information, expert support and transparent legislative procedures;

Rule of law, judiciary and combating corruption

6. Welcomes the continued implementation of Albania's judicial reform process, including the vetting of judges and prosecutors, which has contributed to increased accountability and integrity within its judiciary; commends the High Judicial Council for the new appointments of magistrates, contributing to a reduction in the number of vacancies; underlines that safeguarding judicial independence remains essential to the rule of law, alongside continued efforts to further enhance the accountability, quality and efficiency of the judiciary; notes, however, persistent challenges related to judicial efficiency, the effective enforcement of final court decisions, case backlogs, the consistency of jurisprudence and attempts to exert undue influence;
7. Recalls that parliamentary immunity is part of Albania's constitutional framework, designed to ensure the proper functioning of democratic institutions; emphasises that any decisions in this regard should be taken strictly in accordance with constitutional provisions and established legal procedures, without political interference and without undue delay;
8. Commends the Albanian authorities for the continuous improvement in the efficiency of its Constitutional Court; calls, however, for the broader judicial governance bodies to be strengthened further, and for sustained investment in court infrastructure and digitalisation; recalls that the judiciary continues to face political pressures and threats which risk undermining judicial independence; underlines the importance of timely and full implementation of decisions of the Constitutional Court by both the executive and the legislative powers, as an essential element of the rule of law and institutional balance;
9. Regrets that, according to the rankings published in Transparency International's 2025 Corruption Perceptions Index, Albania has fallen to 91st place, compared to its 2024 ranking of 80th place; stresses that corruption remains a serious concern and that, despite progress made concerning its legal and institutional framework, Albania must further increase its dedicated policing capacity and consolidate its track record of investigations, prosecutions and final convictions, particularly in high-level corruption cases; welcomes the adoption of key anti-corruption legislation, including on whistleblower protection and conflicts of interest, and calls for its thorough implementation; welcomes the continued work of specialised anti-corruption institutions and institutions for combating organised crime, including

the Special Structure against Corruption and Organised Crime (SPAK), and calls for their sustained independence, adequate resourcing and sufficient operational capacity to be ensured, without applying limits to their investigative powers or undermining their work; calls for strengthened efforts to ensure the effective tracing, freezing, confiscation and management of criminal assets, including through systematic financial investigations, improved inter-agency and cross-border cooperation, and the full use of confiscation tools in line with fundamental rights;

10. Insists that corruption needs to be addressed at all levels to strengthen citizens' trust in state institutions and allow for a predictable business environment; calls for strengthened transparency, conflict-of-interest controls, integrity risk assessments and targeted preventive measures in high-risk sectors, notably public procurement and concessions, licensing and inspections, and construction and spatial planning;
11. Calls on Albania to make decisive progress on the initial registration of property and on fair, commonly accepted compensation, improving the transparency of the state property register and the quality of cadastral data in the real estate register, and to ensure that the right to a fair trial and the right to effective judicial protection are respected in cases of expropriation and removal of real estate;
12. 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; calls on the authorities to accelerate efforts on aligning Albania's legal framework on organised crime with the EU *acquis*, strengthen law enforcement capacity and improve the efficiency of investigations;
13. Welcomes the fact that banks in Albania have officially begun to execute cross-border euro transactions through the SEPA system; commends Albanian authorities for their major efforts in fighting money laundering by adopting the National Strategy for the Prevention of Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism 2024-2030; notes the 'Cashless Albania 2030' initiative, which aims to tackle the high level of informality in business and illicit cash flows;

Fundamental rights and media freedom

14. Welcomes the fact that, in the 2025 World Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders, Albania has risen in the rankings from 99th place in 2024 to 80th place in 2025; calls for further efforts to be made to protect freedom of expression and media pluralism in Albania, including greater transparency of possible conflicts of interest of media owners, safeguards against

political and economic pressure on journalists and the effective investigation of threats and attacks made against media professionals; calls also for increased transparency of media ownership structures and transparent distribution of state advertising, in order to safeguard editorial independence and media pluralism;

15. Strongly condemns the hostility towards independent journalists and media professionals in Albania, including verbal attacks and anti-media rhetoric by high-ranking officials, smear campaigns and misogynistic online harassment, often targeting journalists reporting on the rule of law, corruption and judicial matters; expresses concern, furthermore, regarding the high number of lawsuits against journalists; welcomes the recent changes to Albania's Criminal Code; regrets, however, that they have not led to the full decriminalisation of defamation and insult, in line with EU and international standards;
16. Calls on the Albanian authorities to promote media and digital literacy as a complementary measure to strengthen the resilience of the information environment, including by integrating media literacy initiatives across the education system, supporting teacher training and modern learning resources, and enhancing cooperation with independent media and relevant EU programmes to promote critical thinking and responsible digital engagement;
17. Encourages Albania to strengthen the institutional framework for the protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities and vulnerable groups, including Roma and Egyptians, persons with disabilities, migrant workers and LGBTIQ+ persons, and to ensure the effective implementation of anti-discrimination legislation and improved access for ethnic and religious minorities and vulnerable groups to public services, and their meaningful participation in social, economic and political life; is concerned by the anti-gender rhetoric present in Albania's political discourse; notes that the strengthening of the institutional framework for the protection of minority rights must be accompanied by effective measures that ensure the full and effective implementation of those rights in practice;
18. Calls on the Albanian authorities to ensure sustainable access to education in minority languages for recognised national minorities, and to support the corresponding training of teachers, the development of textbooks and the preservation of cultural identity;
19. Commends the adoption in Albania of the Law on Gender Equality, which is in line with the EU *acquis* and international human rights standards; expresses alarm, however, at the waves of disinformation and hatred against LGBTIQ+ persons, including smear campaigns against the work of civil society organisations working towards equality for LGBTIQ+ persons; calls on the Albanian authorities to

hold persons spreading discriminatory rhetoric accountable before the law; calls for the Albanian Government to draft legal measures, such as registered partnership, to recognise and protect same-sex couples, as per its commitment in the National Action Plan for LGBTI People 2021-2027, and in order to bring Albania's legislation on human rights in line with the EU *acquis*;

20. Welcomes the recognition of the long-standing historical presence of the Bulgarian community in regions such as Prespa, Gollobordë and Gora, and encourages the Albanian authorities to ensure full respect for their linguistic, cultural and educational rights, as well as for those of Albania's other recognised national minorities;
21. Regrets that persistent issues of discrimination and social exclusion affecting minority groups in Albania, particularly regarding access to education, employment and public services, still remain; calls on the Albanian Government to fully align anti-discrimination policies and minority rights with the EU *acquis*; underlines the need to improve access to justice and political participation, particularly for vulnerable and marginalised groups;
22. Acknowledges that the Greek national minority retains its strong historical presence, especially in Southern Albania and calls on Albania to ensure the protection of the right of property;
23. Highlights, also, the importance of preserving sites of memory related to the communist dictatorship and of supporting remembrance and educational initiatives that promote historical awareness and strengthen democratic culture, particularly among younger generations;
24. Welcomes Albania's vibrant and constructive civil society, which is playing a crucial and positive role in the reform process; encourages the Albanian Government to build collaborative relationships, genuinely implicating civil society in a transparent legislative process from an early stage onwards; regrets, however, that civil society organisations in Albania continue to face challenges and receive limited public funding; calls, furthermore, on the Albanian Government to ensure an enabling, safe and non-discriminatory environment for civil society;
25. Is concerned that, in the global rankings published in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2025, Albania fell from 23rd place in 2024 to 36th place in 2025, indicating a widening gender gap; regrets that the legal framework for combating gender-based violence is not yet aligned with the Istanbul Convention; urges the Albanian Government to enhance support services for victims, particularly in healthcare, funding for women's shelters, free legal aid, and reintegration and rehabilitation programmes;
26. Is concerned about the fact that Albania's National Agenda on the

Rights of the Child (NARC) 2021-2026 is not yet fully implemented, and access to justice for children is hindered by delays, limited legal aid and inadequate institutional coordination; regrets the fact that the majority of children in Albania remain at risk of poverty; calls on the Albanian authorities to effectively implement the NARC by providing assistance to children facing exclusion and poverty;

Public administration reform and governance

27. Acknowledges the progress made in public administration reform, including strategic planning and coordination; welcomes the adoption of the Cross-Cutting Public Administration Reform Strategy 2025-2030; stresses, however, that further efforts are required to ensure merit-based recruitment and the depoliticisation of the civil service, including the adoption and implementation of a new legislative framework for the civil service;
28. Is concerned that neither the legal framework for public procurement nor company law legislation is fully aligned with the EU *acquis*; calls on the Albanian authorities to continue their efforts to fully align Albania's legislation with the EU *acquis*; calls for strengthened parliamentary oversight, independent audits and full transparency in public procurement procedures, in order to ensure compliance with EU standards on competition, data protection and anti-corruption;
29. Welcomes the ongoing work of Albania's cross-party parliamentary committee on territorial reform; stresses that any reform in this area should be conducted through an inclusive process and based on objective socio-economic criteria and European standards of local self-government;
30. Calls for improved policy planning, evidence-based decision-making and transparent budgetary processes, including strengthened parliamentary oversight of public finances; insists that the financial resources, administrative capacity and fiscal autonomy of local authority units be improved;
31. Commends the Albanian authorities for the recent adoption of the National Cyber Security Strategy 2025-2030; welcomes the alignment of Albania's current Law on Cybersecurity with the EU's NIS 2 Directive⁵; commends the Albanian authorities for adopting an updated list of operators of critical and important information

⁵ Directive (EU) 2022/2555 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 on measures for a high common level of cybersecurity across the Union, amending Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 and Directive (EU) 2018/1972, and repealing Directive (EU) 2016/1148 (NIS 2 Directive) (OJ L 333, 27.12.2022, p. 80, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2022/2555/oj>).

infrastructure;

32. Welcomes Albania's continuous improvement in its transmission of data to Eurostat; calls on the Albanian authorities to further increase its production and distribution of high-quality data;
33. Commends the Albanian Government for adopting the new laws on trademarks and patents; calls on the Albanian authorities to fully align Albania's intellectual property law with the EU *acquis* and to continue to strengthen it;

Socio-economic reforms and the environment

34. Welcomes Albania's engagement in implementing the EU's Growth Plan for the Western Balkans; notes, however, that structural weaknesses persist, including informality in business, limited productivity growth and a challenging business environment; regrets that the large informal economy impedes the business environment and competition; reiterates the importance of improving the transport infrastructure between the Western Balkan countries and further developing their train and air connections with EU Member States; commends the Albanian authorities for providing VAT exemptions for EU-financed projects in Albania;
35. Recalls the potential of the EU's Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans to enhance regional connectivity through rail and road; urges, in that respect, the authorities in all countries concerned to complete the Corridor VIII projects connecting Albania, North Macedonia and Bulgaria;
36. Calls for the implementation of a comprehensive foreign direct investment screening mechanism as a strategic initiative for protecting Albania's national interests, enhancing security, and ensuring predictability for investors and consistency with EU standards;
37. Highlights the fact that the internal control system of Albania's Public Internal Financial Control remains partially effective; calls on Albania to increase the accountability and transparency of state-owned enterprises by making their annual financial performance reports publicly available; calls on the Albanian authorities to fully implement the recommendations of the Albanian Supreme Audit Institution;
38. Welcomes the adoption of Albania's Strategy for the Modernisation and Harmonisation of Albanian Customs Information Systems with the EU systems for the period 2025-2030; commends the Albanian authorities for their efforts to meet EU standards by harmonising and improving customs infrastructure; stresses that customs IT systems require significant upgrading in order to achieve full harmonisation with EU standards and calls on the Albanian

authorities to accelerate the necessary investments and reforms in this regard;

39. Commends the Albanian authorities for aligning the private pension fund legislation with the EU *acquis*; calls on Albania to complete its alignment with the EU *acquis* on insurance, capital markets, securities markets, investment funds and financial market infrastructures;
40. Warmly welcomes the Commission proposal and the Council's authorisation to open negotiations to extend the EU 'roam like at home' regime to the Western Balkans, and calls on the Commission and the Western Balkan partners to swiftly take the necessary steps for the reciprocal opening of the EU's and the Western Balkan partners' roaming markets, enabling citizens and businesses to benefit from roaming services without additional charges;
41. Highlights the importance of investing in education, skills development and innovation to support sustainable growth and social cohesion; commends the Albanian Government for the adoption of legislative acts to reform higher education and for the continuous implementation of the National Strategy for Education 2021-2026; calls on the Albanian authorities to finalise the implementing legislation for the Law on Cultural Heritage and Museums; encourages the development of policies aimed at reducing youth emigration and brain drain, and at strengthening opportunities for young professionals through improved labour market conditions, education reform and innovation support;
42. Calls for the further development and effective implementation of the social housing framework in Albania, based on the continuation and improvement of the National Strategy for Social Housing 2016-2025, so as to ensure stable and decent living conditions for lower-income and vulnerable groups; underlines, in particular, the importance of accessible and affordable social housing for young people, including students and apprentices, as this supports their geographical mobility, access to education and training, and successful integration into the labour market;
43. Underlines the key importance of genuine social dialogue for delivering the benefits of EU enlargement to different segments of the population; welcomes the improvement of database transfer and early connection to the European Employment Services (EURES), which were made possible by the full alignment of the national list of occupations with the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) multilingual classification; regrets, however, the low frequency of National Labour Council meetings; calls for the strengthening of the tripartite consultation process, including adequate trade union representation; stresses the need to further support the capacity building of social partners;

44. Calls for increased efforts to foster compliance with EU labour law and the EU occupational health and safety framework, including the full implementation of non-discriminatory policies and equality measures, and urges the relevant national authorities to ensure effective monitoring, enforcement and adequate sanctions in cases of non-compliance;
45. Underlines that progress towards EU accession requires an actual track record of implementation and enforcement of the environmental *acquis*, notably on environmental assessments, nature protection laws and public participation rights;
46. Takes notes of the Albanian Government's announcement that it will reform the country's waste management sector, centralising and improving waste collection and management; notes with concern, however, that, according to the Commission's assessment, there has been no progress on environment and climate change over the reporting period; urges the Albanian Government to prioritise the implementation of climate adaptation strategies and the development of renewable energy sources, and to support sustainable economic growth;
47. Deeply regrets the fact that Albania's 2015 Law on Strategic Investments has been extended, in view of its provisions enabling accelerated permitting procedures and reduced environmental scrutiny, which risk adversely affecting protected areas and other environmentally sensitive zones; calls for the repealing of the 2024 amendments to the Law on Protected Areas, which allow the development of large-scale tourism infrastructure within protected areas and transfer key governance and decision-making competences to the National Council of Territory, thereby weakening environmental oversight;
48. Highlights the fact that the Commission has cautioned Albania against actions that may impact its EU accession path amid ongoing national protests over a large-scale luxury development project that threatens a protected wildlife area home to flamingos, seals and turtle nesting sites; echoes, in this regard, the Commission's criticism and recalls that alignment with EU environmental rules, including the Birds Directive⁶ and the Habitats Directive⁷, is a prerequisite for EU accession;
49. Expresses serious concern that ongoing developments within the Vjosa-Narta protected area demonstrate the practical consequences

⁶ Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (OJ L 20, 26.1.2010, p. 7, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2009/147/oj>).

⁷ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/1992/43/oj>).

of these legislative changes and the resulting risks to areas of recognised ecological value; closely follows the ongoing peaceful mass protests in this regard; calls on the Albanian authorities to immediately establish a moratorium on all new permitting procedures, construction works and development interventions within protected areas until the incompatible provisions of the amended Law on Protected Areas have been repealed, on the basis of a long-standing request by the Commission and Parliament and in line with the closing benchmarks of Chapter 27, and until full compliance with EU nature protection standards has been ensured; underlines that any projects in this area need to undergo comprehensive environmental impact assessments fully in line with EU standards, including a transparent public participation process with local communities, scientists and civil society;

Foreign policy and regional cooperation

50. Commends Albania's continued full alignment with the EU's common foreign and security policy, including restrictive measures, Albania's continued engagement in EU common security and defence policy missions and operations, and its constructive role in promoting regional stability, which confirms the country's strong Euro-Atlantic orientation; welcomes the enhanced cooperation on security and defence issues through the EU-Albania Security and Defence Partnership and Security and Defence Dialogues; stresses the importance of further cooperation, such as joint training initiatives, shared intelligence capabilities, and enhanced border security measures to address regional and global security challenges;
51. Stresses that participation in international initiatives and organisations should remain consistent with EU values, regional stability and Albania's EU integration objectives; emphasises the importance of transparency and appropriate parliamentary scrutiny in decisions related to international commitments;
52. Underlines the importance of good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation as essential components of the EU enlargement process, and welcomes Albania's active participation in regional initiatives; underlines the need for deeper security cooperation within the Western Balkans, fostering closer coordination among regional partners to combat organised crime, cyberthreats, and hybrid challenges; recognises the strategic importance of the Adriatic-Ionian region for European security and economic stability; calls on Albania to enhance its maritime security capabilities in coordination with the EU and NATO, including strengthening naval infrastructure, improving surveillance systems and intensifying efforts to combat illicit activities such as human trafficking; encourages Albania to cooperate more closely with EU coastal states to ensure the protection of critical maritime routes and environmental sustainability in the region;

53. Warns that initiatives developed outside the EU framework, including the 'Open Balkan' initiative, risk creating parallel structures that could undermine the Berlin Process and the Western Balkans Common Regional Market;

EU support

54. Welcomes the EU financial and technical assistance provided to Albania under IPA III and the Reform and Growth Facility, and stresses that such support must remain firmly linked to the concrete implementation of reforms and measurable results; calls for strengthened EU support for regional security initiatives that enhance stability and resilience across the Western Balkans; welcomes the European Peace Facility's bilateral assistance measures in support of Albania's armed forces, which enhance Albania's potential to contribute to EU common security and defence policy missions and operations;
55. Calls for strengthened oversight and meaningful participation of civil society organisations, business associations and social partners in all stages of the Western Balkans Reform and Growth Facility, including the design of reform measures, implementation of projects and monitoring of results;
56. Calls on the EU to provide additional financial and technical assistance to Albania, to support sustainable rural development and reduce the urban-rural divide, in line with EU cohesion policies;
57. Expresses concern over the serious irregularities identified by the European Anti-Fraud Office in the implementation of the EU's Instrument for Pre-Accession for Rural Development (IPARD II) programme in Albania; underlines the importance of ensuring full transparency, accountability and effective control mechanisms in the use of EU financial assistance, in order to safeguard the EU's financial interests and maintain public trust; calls for the immediate implementation of the necessary corrective measures;
58. Calls on the Commission to continue providing clear guidance on reform priorities, and to ensure transparent and rigorous monitoring of the progress of reforms; calls, furthermore, on the Commission to set up an information campaign in all Member States and in Albania to explain the positive impact of EU enlargement to citizens;
59. Encourages the Commission, together with the European External Action Service, to further help boost Albania's resilience to hybrid threats, in the area of cybersecurity, information manipulation and the protection of critical infrastructure; stresses the need to improve coordination and address disinformation and hybrid threats that seek to undermine public support in Albania for EU accession by more strategically emphasising the EU's relevance to people in the Western Balkans;

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60. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, and to the President of the European Council, 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.