

**Draft Report on the 2019-2020 Commission reports
on Albania** ([2019/2170\(INI\)](#), [AMs](#))

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PARAGRAPHS

COMP 1

Paragraph 1, 1a EU integration, future of Europe

Covered: AM 49 (van Dalen/EPP), AM 50 (Zovko/EPP), AM 51/52 (Zovko/Lega et al./EPP), AM 70 (Castaldo/NI), AM 267 (Šimečka et al./Renew)

Falls: AM 47 (ID), AM 48 (ID), AM 49 (EPP)

1. Welcomes the clear strategic orientation and commitment of Albania to European integration, manifesting itself in good neighbourly relations and the continued implementation of the accession-related reforms; ***in that regard commends the Council decision of 26 March 2020 on opening accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania, (AM 50) emphasises the importance of the integration process as a catalyst for reforms and welcomes the support which it enjoys among the Albanian people; (AM 51, 52)***

1 a. Believes that the Conference on the Future of Europe should appropriately include and actively engage representatives of Albania and other Western Balkan countries (AM 267), both at the governmental and at the civil society , including the youth, level; (AM 70)

COMP 2

Paragraph 2 accession talks

Covered: AM 56 (Azmani et al./Renew), AM 57 (McAllister/EPP), AM 58 (Lega et al./EPP), AM 59 (Waitz/Greens-EFA), AM 60 (Šimečka et al./Renew), AM 66 (Waitz/Greens-EFA), AM 67 (Waitz/Greens-EFA), AM 69 (Rapporteur et al./S&D)

Falls: AM 55 (ID)

2. Supports the convening of the first intergovernmental conference without further delay, following *the complete* (AM 56, 57, 58) *fulfilment of conditions set by the European Council* (AM 56, 57, 58) *and* the adoption of the negotiating framework by the Council; *reminds that Albania is a candidate country since 2014, and that since 2018 the Commission has recommended starting accession talks;* (AM 59)

2a new. *Recalls the transformative nature of the accession negotiations* (AM 66) *and notes that in order to ensure the credibility* (AM 60, AM 67) *of the accession process, the fulfilment of milestones must be reflected in progress towards EU membership;* (AM 60) *reminds that rival actors seek to undermine further integration and political stability of Western Balkan countries* (AM 67);

2b new. *Considers the appointment of the Chief Negotiator and the negotiating team, along with the adoption of the action plan to address the ~~conditions~~ and priorities set by Council's conclusions of March 2020, to be a sign of a clear political commitment to advance the EU integration process;* (AM 69)

COMP 3

Paragraph 3 overall reforms

Covered: AM 61 (van Dalen/EPP), AM 62 (Kouloglou/Left), AM 63 (Kefalogiannis et al./EPP), AM 64 (Lega et al./EPP), AM 65 (Fitto, Waszczykowski/ECR), AM 68 (McAllister/EPP), AM 82 (van Dalen/EPP)

3. *Stresses* (AM 61) that progress in accession under the revised enlargement methodology depends on lasting, in-depth and irreversible reforms across fundamental areas, *starting with* (AM 64) the rule of law, *the effective functioning of democratic institutions and public administration as well as the economy;* (AM 64) *recalls in this regard the importance of the judicial reform* (AM 62, 63) *and increasing the fight against corruption and organized crime* (AM 65, 68, 82), *along with good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation* (AM 62, 63);

N.B. AM 68 included in paragraph 3

COMP 4

Paragraph 5 Functioning of democratic institutions

Covered: AM 71 (van Dalen/EPP), AM 72 (Šimečka et al./Renew), AM 73 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 74 (Kokalari/EPP)

5. *Encourages Urges* (AM 71) political leaders to create a climate of confidence by *increasing transparency and* (AM 72, 73) overcoming the lack of dialogue and expresses its serious concern about the polarised political climate and lack of sustainable cross-party cooperation that continue to hamper the democratic process; *recalls the importance of constructive political dialogue to advance with the reform process* (AM 74) *and further progress in ensuring the normal democratic functioning of the institutions;*

6. Recalls the joint responsibility of political forces to move on from mutual accusations, unilateral decisions and boycotts, building instead on positive examples of the consensus-building efforts, such as those leading to the 5 June 2020 agreement on the electoral reform;

COMP 5

Paragraph 6a transparency

Covered: AM 75 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 76 (Šimečka et al./Renew)

6 a new. Calls on public institutions to act transparently and implement good governance practices; stresses the importance of proactive steps in making information ~~publicly and~~ timely and regularly available to civil society, media and the general public, in particular when related to issues of high public interest, such as the ongoing health emergency; (AM 75, 76)

COMP 6

Paragraph 7 elections

Covered: AM 78 (Šimečka, Loiseau/Renew), AM 79 (Zovko/EPP), AM 80 (Lega et al./EPP), AM 81 (McAllister/EPP); AM 94 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 95 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 96 (Lega et al./EPP).

7. Stresses that the general elections of 25 April 2021 will be key for the consolidation and *renewal* (AM 81) of country's democratic procedures and structures (AM 81) and to achieve a higher level of political stability (AM 78); *underlines that free and fair elections are fundamental for EU integration;* (AM 79, 80, 81)

7a. Expresses concern with the allegations of vote-buying and reminds that its prosecution is among conditions set by the Council on 25 March 2020 (AM 96); stresses the importance of ensuring that preparations for the 2021 parliamentary elections take place in a transparent and inclusive manner; (AM 94) notes that all political forces, state bodies, civil society and the media have a joint duty to ensure a transparent, credible and objective election campaign, free from disinformation, intimidation and false accusations; (AM 95)

N.B. AM 77 in Paragraph 14-a/COMP 10

Withdrawn: AM 83 (election observation)

COMP 7

Paragraph 8

electoral reform

Covered: AM 84/85 (Zovko/Lega et al./EPP), AM 86/87 (Kouloglou/Left / Kefalogiannis et al./EPP), AM 88 (Castaldo/NI), AM 89 (McAllister/EPP), AM 90 (Šimečka et al./Renew), AM 91 (Castaldo/NI), AM 92/93 (Zovko/Lega et al./EPP)

8. Underlines the importance of implementing the electoral reform measures codified in July 2020, which are in line with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) *and Council of Europe* (AM 84/85) recommendations; ~~welcomes the commitment to implement~~ *stresses the importance of the timely* (AM 89, 92, 93) *and full* (AM 88) *implementation of* (AM 86/87) the forthcoming Joint Opinion of the Venice Commission *and* (AM 90) the OSCE/ODIHR of December 2020; *Welcomes the positive outcome of the 5 June 2020 agreement, which implements some of the OSCE/ODIHR recommendations* (AM 91), notes the failure to build upon it and the fact that despite of repeated international appeals to await for the opinion of the Venice Commission (AM 84/85), *further steps have been taken without a wide cross-party consensus* (AM 91), *resulting in the adoption of the disputed* amendments to the Electoral Code in October 2020 (AM 84/85) *by the Albanian Parliament*;

9. Underscores the need to step up the Albanian Parliament's involvement in the EU integration process, further advancing its legislative, oversight and budgetary scrutiny capacities to ensure legal alignment with EU *acquis*;

Vote: AM 97 (public administration reform)

COMP 8

Paragraph 10-a, 10

judicial reform

Covered: AM 99/100 (Kouloglou/Left / Kefalogiannis et al./EPP), AM 101 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 114 (Zovko/EPP)

Falls: AM 98 (ID)

10. *Recalls the paramount importance of safeguarding the rule of law through implementation of judicial overhaul and a steady and consistent prosecution of high-level corruption*; (AM 101) commends the progress made in implementing the comprehensive judicial reform, underpinned by the unprecedented vetting process and the establishment of the relevant institutions and *specialized* bodies, *and calls for the acceleration of these procedures in order to achieve* (AM 99/100) a tangible shift towards an accountable, ~~and~~ independent and functional judiciary, *being a precondition for the first intergovernmental conference* (AM 114);

COMP 9

Paragraph 11, 12

Courts

Covered: AM 102 (Lega et al./EPP), AM 103 (Castaldo/NI), AM 104 (Šimečka et al./Renew), AM 105 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 106 (Zovko et al.), AM 107/108 (Lega et al. / Zovko /EPP), AM 109/110 (Kouloglou/Left / Kefalogiannis et al./EPP), AM 111 (Šimečka et al./Renew), AM 112 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 113 (Waitz/Greens-EFA), AM 141(Waitz/Greens-EFA)

11. *Stresses the need to develop a more strategic approach towards justice sector reform, which addresses the increasing backlog of cases (AM 113); calls for ensuring high transparency standards in the justice sector and to re-activate tools such as previously-operational online databases; (AM 141) welcomes the appointment of the new members of the Constitutional Court, restoring its functionality, (AM 103) and urges (AM 102, 106) Albanian institutions to swiftly (AM 102) conclude the appointment process, ~~complete the relevant steps towards re-~~establishing the Constitutional Court's ability to function fully and efficiently, ~~and~~ urges all involved to swiftly conclude the appointment process; *stresses the need to ensure the continued functioning and adequate staffing of the Court of Appeals* (AM 104, 105);*
12. Welcomes the fact that the High Court has *partly* (AM 107/108) regained its ability to function and that it has been reviewing *the admissibility of* (AM 109/110) more than a thousand cases, and encourages it to make further progress in the appointment of additional judges, *in order to become fully functional* (AM 109/110) *and to dramatically reduce its unsustainable backlog of pending cases;* (AM 111, 112)
13. Expresses satisfaction that the National Bureau of Investigation has been established, that its Director is performing her duties and that investigative staff are currently being recruited;

COMP 10

Paragraph 14-a, 14-b, 14, 14a

Corruption

Covered: AM 77 (Šimečka, Loiseau/Renew), AM 107/108 (Lega et al./ Zovko /EPP), AM 113 (Waitz/Greens-EFA), AM 115 (Šimečka, Loiseau/Renew), AM 116 (Fitto, Waszczykowski/ECR), AM 117 (Lega et al./EPP), AM 118 (van Dalen/EPP), AM 119 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 120 (Lega et al./EPP), AM 121 (Lega et al./EPP), AM 122 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 123 (Lega et al./EPP)

- 14-a.new Stresses the need for Albania to fight against corruption at all levels of society, government and administration, (AM 118) is concerned with the existing practice allowing the State Police to receive private donations and sponsorship (AM 121), notes with concern that corruption allegations continue to undermine the public's trust in government and democratic institutions more generally;*

(AM 77)

14-b. new *Stresses the need to ensure the effective functioning, cooperation (AM 117) and financial and operational independence of judicial, law enforcement (AM 120) and anti-corruption institutions through adequate financial, technical and human resources (AM 107, 108, 113, 116, 117, 120); underlines the importance of delivering tangible results in the form of independent and impartial investigations leading to successful prosecution of high-profile crime, including corruption;* (AM 115)

14. Welcomes the creation of anti-corruption bodies and *notes the progress achieved in anti-corruption legislation;* (AM 116) *acknowledges that in-depth investigations by the newly established Special Structure Against Corruption and Organized Crime (SPAK) are ongoing and that the Anti-Corruption and Organized Crime Courts are issuing indictments; stresses (AM 116) the need to maintain their independence and effectiveness in order to the effectively and proactively fight against (AM 117) impunity and *high-level corruption;* (AM 115, 117)*

14a new. *Calls for concrete integrity plans to be swiftly adopted and implemented within all ministries, as foreseen in the Inter-Sectorial Strategy against corruption and the Action Plan for its implementation (AM 123); recalls the need to improve transparency and control of political party funding under the amended Law on Political Party Financing;* (AM 119) *notes the importance of effectively implementing the recommendations of the Albanian Supreme State Audit Institution;* (AM 122)

COMP 11

Paragraph 15 Organised crime

Covered: AM 125 (Lega, Gahler/EPP), AM 126 (Rapporteur et al./S&D)

Falls: AM 124 (ID)

15. Notes the increase in proactive investigations, prosecutions and final convictions targeting illicit wealth and money laundering, leading to the systematic freezing and seizure of criminal assets, and calls for ~~further~~ *reinforced prosecution and final court convictions of these cases (AM 125), in line with the principles of judicial independence, due process and fair trial;* (AM 126); *underlines the extensive money laundering problems, notably in the construction and real estate sector;* (AM 125)

Vote: AM 127 (FATF)

COMP 12

Paragraph 17

trafficking, counter-criminal co-operation

Covered: AM 128 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 130 (van Dalen/EPP), AM 131 (Castaldo/NI), AM 132 (Lega et al./EPP)

Falls: AM 129 (ID)

17-a. Underlines the importance of the continuing efforts and systemic improvements in tackling human, firearms and counterfeit goods' trafficking, along with the cyber-crime and terrorist threats; (AM 128)

17. Calls for the ***exhaustive and rigorous*** (AM 130) efforts to dismantle local and international criminal networks, and to eliminate drug production and trafficking, to be intensified further, building on the significant efforts of recent years; welcomes the increased cooperation with Europol and the law enforcement institutions of EU Member States, ***that led to a number of successful large-scale law enforcement operations*** (AM 131), ***including through an exemplary cooperation under the Joint Investigation Team between the Albanian and Italian authorities;*** (AM 131) encourages the Albanian authorities to swiftly finalise the posting of an Albanian liaison prosecutor to the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust); ***recommends Albania to adopt a new strategy and action plan on drugs, filling-in, inter alia, the legislative gap on drug precursors;*** (AM 132)

COMP 13

Paragraph 18, 20

Fundamental rights

Covered: AM 133 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 134 (Waitz/Greens-EFA), AM 137 (Castaldo/NI), AM 138 (van Dalen/EPP)

18. Expresses its support for inclusive policies and calls for progress to be made in adopting measures to effectively protect the fundamental freedoms and rights of all citizens, ***with a special focus on women, children, persons with disabilities*** (AM 133, 134), ***ethnic minorities and LGBTQI+ persons;*** (AM 133, 134)
20. Welcomes the update on the anti-discrimination legislation and ***calls on the authorities to step up efforts to establish solid anti-discrimination case-law*** (AM 137); urges the authorities to ensure the effective prevention and prosecution of hate speech and hate crimes, ***including antisemitism*** (AM 138);

Note: AM 136 (Deletion of Paragraph 19)

COMP 14

Paragraph 20a

LGBTI

Covered: AM 135 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 139 (Šimečka et al./Renew), AM 140 (Rapporteur et al./S&D)

20a. Notes that the National Action Plan for LGBTI Issues 2016-2020 has expired and calls on the government to develop a new action plan in a transparent and inclusive consultation with civil society and ensure appropriate resources are assigned for its implementation; (AM 135) calls on Albanian authorities to foster social acceptance of LGBTI persons who continue to regularly experience discrimination and hate speech; (AM 139); welcomes the decision to eliminate the unacceptable "conversion therapy", strengthening the right to gender identity and gender expression; (AM 140)

COMP 15

Paragraph 21

antidiscrimination institutions

Covered: AM 142 (Šimečka et al./Renew), AM 143 (Lega et al./EPP),

21. Urges the authorities to ensure that sufficient *human, technical and financial* (AM 143) resources are provided to *relevant bodies, such as* (AM 143) the ***Ombudsperson Office*** ~~Ombudsman~~, the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner and the Commissioner for the Right to Information and Data Protection, and that their respective recommendations are implemented systematically; *stresses that only individuals whose independence and professionalism is beyond doubt should be appointed to these offices;* (AM 142)

COMP 16

Paragraph 22

gender-based and domestic violence

Covered: AM 145 (Lega et al./EPP), AM 146 (Rapporteur et al./S&D)

Falls: 144 (ID)

22. Calls for the creation of an effective mechanism for the prevention of gender-based *violence, including harassment* (AM 146), domestic violence *and violence against children*, (AM 145), *exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic* (AM 146), and for protection and support to be given to its victims, combined with the effective and efficient prosecution of its perpetrators;

COMP 17

Paragraph 23 minority groups

Covered: AM 150 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 151(Lega et al./EPP), AM 152 (Rapporteur et al./S&D, AM 153 (Rapporteur et al./S&D, AM 155 (Castaldo/NI)

Falls: AM 148 (ID), AM 149 (ECR)

23. Reminds Albania of its calls *to ensure non-discriminatory access to public services and* (AM 152) further improvements to be made in the education ~~and health~~, and the employment rates, living *and health* (AM 151) conditions of *people with disabilities* (AM 151) ~~and~~, Roma, *Egyptians* (AM 153, 155) and other ethnic minorities; *welcomes the 2019 Poznan Declaration on Roma Integration within the EU Enlargement Process, urges the authorities to advance Roma integration policies in line with the EU Roma strategic framework;* (AM 150)

COMP 18

Paragraph 24, 24 a national minorities

Covered: AM_ 147 (Zovko/EPP), AM 154 (Zovko/EPP), AM 155 (Castaldo/NI), AM 156/157 (Kouloglou/Left / Kefalogiannis et al./EPP), AM 158 (Zovko/EPP), AM 159 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 160 (Kovatchev/EPP), AM 161/162 (Kouloglou/Left / Kefalogiannis et al./EPP, AM 203 (Zovko/EPP)

24. *Urges Albania to swiftly adopt the remaining five by-laws to ensure full implementation of the 2017 framework Law on* (AM 155, 156, 157) the Protection of National Minorities *and the related rights to free self-identification*, (AM 156, 157) the use of *minority* (AM 156, 157) languages where necessary at local administration level and *the right to co-education in minority languages;* (AM 154, 156, 157) *calls on Albania to protect and promote cultural heritage, languages and traditions of its national minorities;* (AM 158) and *to provide dedicated media space in the state and local outlets in minority languages;* (AM 203)

24 a. new Welcomes in this context the adoption of the law on the population census; (AM 159, 160, 161, 162), *to be carried out in the autumn of 2021* (AM 160); *and calls on Albania to take all the necessary steps in order to effectively implement it, including through the preparation of the questionnaire and the manual* (AM 161, 162), covering *all recognized minority groups* (AM 160)

24 b. Calls on Albania to ensure that minority groups have equal opportunities and adequate representation in political life, public administration and the judiciary; (AM 147)

COMP 19

Paragraph 25 **property rights**

Covered: AM 163 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 164/165 (Kouloglou/Left / Kefalogiannis et al./EPP)

25. Encourages Albania to make further progress on measures consolidating property **registration, restitution and compensation** (AM 163) rights, implementing the law on transitional **procedures of** ownership, **mainly by advancing in a transparent manner the process of registration of properties** (AM 164/165), and completing the comprehensive land sector reform;

COMP 20

Paragraph 26 **tolerance, freedom of belief**

Covered: AM 166 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 167 (Lega et al./EPP), AM 168 (van Dalen/EPP)

26. Welcomes Albania's efforts in promoting tolerance, inter-religious harmony and addressing prejudice and discrimination, including antisemitism, **as affirmed by the parliamentary approval of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of anti-Semitism; being the first Muslim-majority country to accept the formulation** (AM 166, AM 167), **calls for continued efforts to ensure respect for freedom of expression and freedom of belief or religion** (AM 168);

COMP 21

Paragraph 26 a, 26b **freedom of assembly, violence**

Covered: AM 169 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 170 (Waitz/Greens-EFA), AM 185(Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 186 (Šimečka, Loiseau/Renew)

- 26a. **Calls on the authorities to ensure freedom of assembly as ~~that~~ a fundamental right** (AM 170), **respecting the principle of proportionality** (AM 170), **including during state of emergency or state of natural disaster** (AM 169), **stresses the recommendations made by the Ombudsperson in this respect;** (AM 170)
- 26b. **Notes the importance of addressing allegations of police misconduct** (AM 185) **and investigating and prosecuting disproportionate use of force, also in the context of the COVID-19 pandemics;** (AM 186) **recalls the need to eradicate ill-treatment of suspects and prisoners;** (AM 185)

COMP 22 (separate vote)

Paragraph 27, 28, 28 a, 29, 30 migration, asylum, trafficking

Covered: AM 172 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 173 (Fitto/ECR), AM 175 (Fitto/ECR), AM 176 (Zovko/EPP), AM 177 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 178 (Lega et al./EPP), AM 179 (Gál et al./EPP), AM 180 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 183 (Lega et al./EPP), AM 184 (Rapporteur et al./S&D)

Falls: AM 171 (ID), AM 174 (ID), AM 182 (ID)

Vote: AM 181 (trafficking)

27. Recalls the authorities' obligation to ensure due process for asylum seekers in compliance with Albania's international obligations, and to properly address the needs of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, ***while increasing preparedness for potential increases in migratory flows*** (AM 172) ***and enhancing cooperation with the authorities of the Member States*** (AM 173, 175); calls for increased capacities to process asylum requests and investigations into the reported cases of breaches of the return procedures, ***including human rights***;
28. Stresses that border protection and the prevention of cross-border crime must be ***a priority and*** (AM 176, 178) conducted in full respect for fundamental rights (AM 175), ***enshrined in applicable international and regional laws and principles*** (AM 177); ***welcomes the launch of the first fully fledged joint operation*** with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) ***outside the European Union*** (AM 176);
- 28a. ***Underlines that the contribution of Albania to the protection of the European Union's external border is of crucial importance and calls on the EU to intensify its support to border protection in the region*** (AM 179), ***and to support the needs of the Albanian authorities dealing with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants***;
29. Welcomes the ongoing efforts being made and urges the authorities to take a robust approach in preventing, investigating, prosecuting and punishing human trafficking and the exploitation of its victims, who include children and other vulnerable groups, ***and to increase reintegration services and ensure witness protection***; (AM 180)
30. Welcomes the ongoing measures and calls for further progress to be made in considerably reducing ***irregular migration and*** (AM 183) the number of unfounded asylum claims by Albanian nationals, including the arrivals of unaccompanied minors, in the EU Member States; ***notes that Albania continues to fulfil visa liberalisation benchmarks***; (AM 184)

COMP 23

Paragraph 31, 31a, 31b

Civil society

Covered: AM 187 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 188 (Waitz/Greens-EFA), AM 189 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 191 (Lega et al./EPP),

31. Underlines the need to improve the climate for the functioning of civil society and urges the authorities to ensure meaningful, timely and representative consultations *throughout the decision-making at different governance levels* and to enhance *the legal and fiscal framework, improving* (AM 187) the financial sustainability of the non-governmental sector;
 - 31 a. *Stresses the importance of participation of civil society organizations and regular consultations on the functioning of society, enabling the participation of citizens in the life of the country*; (AM 189)
 - 31 b. *Stresses the need to improve conditions and an environment for accountability and scrutiny of public institutions, in particular cooperation with civil society and journalists, as well as their access to justice and legal certainty*; (AM 188) *is very concerned about the alarming allegations on the widespread use of disinformation against investigative journalists, civil society activists and others seeking to hold powerful interests to account*; (AM 191)
32. Notes with concern the lack of progress on freedom of expression and the obstacles to the proper functioning of the independent media;

COMP 24

Paragraph 33, 33a, 33b, 34

Media freedom

Covered: AM 190 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 191(Lega et al./EPP), AM 192 (Waitz/Greens-EFA), AM 193 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 194 (Kokalari/EPP), AM 195 (Castaldo/NI), AM 200 (Waitz/Greens-EFA)

33. Recalls the importance of ensuring quality journalism and *increasing the levels of* (AM 190) media literacy for the functioning of democracy and in tackling disinformation, *hate speech and fake-news*; (AM 190) *calls on the EEAS and Commission to improve coordination and address disinformation and hybrid threats that seek to undermine the European perspective by more strategically underscoring the EU's relevance to citizens in the region* (AM 192) and *urges them to foster the creation of a Balkan-focused Centre of Excellence to counter disinformation* (AM 192);
 - 33 a. *Calls for initiatives to foster a media environment free from external influences and conducive to a professional media conduct, including investigative journalism*; (AM 194);

- 33b. *Underlines the need to strengthen self-regulation, ethical standards, independence, impartiality, financial sustainability and reporting quality of public and private media outlets and to enhance transparency of the media ownership (AM 200), funding and public advertising (AM 193); calls for measures ensuring transparency of media ownership of broadcasting companies; (AM 200); notes the need to improve labour and social conditions of the media professionals in order to ensure quality journalism; (AM 193)*
34. Condemns the violence, intimidation, smear campaigns (AM 191) and indirect political and financial pressure directed against journalists, which seriously stifle media freedom, induce self-censorship and gravely undermine efforts to uncover crime and corruption; *calls on the authorities to open an investigation into the recent string of violence and unjustified detentions of journalists and immediately respond to allegations of reporters being assaulted by police, including while in custody; (AM 195)*

COMP 25

Paragraph 35

media law/defamation

Covered: AM 197 (Castaldo/NI), AM 198 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 199 (Zovko/EPP), AM 201 (Lega et al./EPP) , AM 202 (Waitz/Greens-EFA);

Falls: 196 (ECR)

35. *Welcomes the commitment of authorities to withdraw the proposed draft amendments to the Media Law, and encourages the full implementation of the Venice Commission's recommendations of 19 June 2020 on all future proposals (AM 199, 201); Expresses *reiterates its* concerns about the initially proposed measures under the so-called 'anti-defamation package' (AM 197) and notes that any revision of the media and communication laws and the Criminal Code should take place in a transparent and inclusive manner, making sure that the voices and opinions of the civil society, media and journalists are heard, (AM 198, 202) with the aim of improving media freedom and the work environment of independent journalists (AM 198, 202),*

COMP 26

Paragraph 36

Socio-economic situation, COVID-19,

Covered: AM 204 (Šimečka et al./Renew), AM 205 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 206 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 217 (Rapporteur et al./S&D),

36. Encourages the Albanian Government to prioritise measures aimed at mitigating the *health and* (AM 204) socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, *with particular consideration for marginalised and vulnerable groups such as Roma, Egyptians, the LGBTQI+ community,* (AM 205) *people with disabilities and single parents,* while taking further steps to *improve diversification, competitiveness, and digitalisation,* (AM 206) enhance the representativeness of the social dialogue and to tackle the widespread informal economy;
- 36 a. new *Recalls that sustainable growth depends on eradication of endemic corruption, improved transparency, legal certainty and efficiency, fair competition and ~~reduction of bureaucracy~~ simplification of administrative procedures;* (AM 217)

COMP 27

Paragraph 37

social exclusion

Covered: AM 207/208 (Zovko/Lega et al./EPP), AM 209 (Rapporteur et al./S&D)

37. *Encourages the Albanian authorities to* strengthen social care coverage and improve access to social and healthcare services *especially for vulnerable groups* (AM 207/ 208), *in order to reduce the risk of poverty and social exclusion;* (AM 209)

COMP 28

Paragraph 38

labour market and education

Covered: AM 210 (Fitto/ECR), AM 211 (Kokalari/EPP), AM 212 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 213(Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 214 (Gál et al./EPP), AM 215 (Paet/Renew)

38. Calls ~~for the~~ ***to step up concrete*** (AM 214) measures addressing the demographic decline and the brain drain through active labour market policies that ~~address~~ ***tackle*** skills mismatches and reduce long-term unemployment, ***particularly among the youth and the most marginalised groups*** (AM 213); ***stresses the importance of creating sustainable long-term job opportunities for young people*** (AM 211, 214), ***promoting accessible*** (AM 212), ***quality and inclusive educational reforms*** (AM 210) ***and addressing problems relating to housing*** (AM 212); ***calls on the Albanian government to improve availability and affordability of internet access, including for schooling*** (AM 215);

Vote: AM 216 - Paragraph 39 (gender imbalances)

COMP 29

Paragraph 40a, 40b new

Economic and investment plan

Covered: AM 53/54 (Lega et al./Zovko /EPP) AM 119 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 218 (Rapporteur et al./S&D) , AM 219 (Waitz/Greens-EFA), AM 220 (Rapporteur et al./S&D); AM 221 (Zovko/EPP)

- 40 a. ***Stresses the need to improve the visibility and communication concerning EU aid and Union financing in Albania; in this regard, reminds of the performance reward under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance to North Macedonia and Albania and notably the substantial support the EU has provided to the Western Balkans to fight the COVID-19 pandemic;*** (AM 53, 54)
- 40b. ***Welcomes the Commission's efforts to invest more strategically in the Western Balkans through a dedicated Economic and Investment Plan (EIP) (AM 219); stresses that any investment must be in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement Agreement and the EU's decarbonisation target*** (AM 219); ***recognises the importance of the EIP in supporting sustainable connectivity, human capital, competitiveness and inclusive growth as well in reinforcing regional and cross-border cooperation*** (AM 221); ***calls for adequate co-financing and further improvements in transparency and visibility of the EU funding;*** (AM 218) ***in the context of Albania, stresses the need to focus funding on the ongoing democratic transition*** (AM 119), ***fight against the demographic decline and the brain drain*** (AM 220);

41. Recalls that substantial efforts are still needed to meet the goals of energy efficiency, security of supply, emissions

reductions and renewable energy and its diversification through the transition to sustainable energy, heating and transport;

COMP 30

Paragraph 42, 43, 44

energy and transport

Covered: AM 222 (Waitz/Greens-EFA), AM 224 (Waitz/Greens-EFA), AM 225 (Šimečka et al./Renew), AM 226 (Lega et al./EPP), AM 227 (Grošelj, Šimečka/Renew), AM 228 (Fajon, Schieder/S&D), AM 229 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 230 (Kouloglou/Left), AM 231 (Šimečka et al./Renew), AM 232 (Grošelj, Šimečka/Renew), AM 233 (Fajon, Schieder/S&D), AM 234 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 241 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 242 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 243 (Rapporteur et al./S&D)

42. Encourages the diversification of energy production, *ensuring economically and environmentally sound investments in* (AM 226) hydropower operations, (AM 229) and *increasing cost-efficient* (AM 225, 227, 228) *investments, enabling transition towards* wind and solar sources; urges the authorities to minimise the impact on biodiversity by ~~restricting~~ curbing (AM 224) hydropower development in protected areas (AM 230), *in particular the Valbona and Vjosa rivers* (AM 227, 228), **and to establish as soon as possible the Vjosa National Park covering the whole length of the river, in line with the announcement of the Albanian government** (AM 224); underlines the need to improve both environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments (AM 227, 228, 230) *and transparency of procedures* (AM 222) across eco-sensitive sectors and boost the prosecution of environmental crimes; *stresses the importance of improving Albania's strategy on nuclear safety and radiation protection, recalls Albania is yet to fully align with the 2013 Council (Euratom) Directive setting out basic safety standards for protection against the dangers arising from exposure to ionising radiation* (AM 231);;
43. Urges the authorities to ensure full compliance with the Energy Community Treaty, *including through making its power exchange operational, continued market opening, functional unbundling of distribution system operators and market coupling in electricity*; (AM 232, 233); underlines the contribution of the newly launched trans-Adriatic pipeline, *and upcoming connection of the converted Vlora thermal plant*, (AM 234) to regional energy security; *recalls the need to complete the electricity market reform and put in place Bitola-Elbasan electricity interconnector with North Macedonia*; (AM 243)
44. Calls for continuing progress in strengthening strategic transport networks in line with the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) regulatory framework, ***and to advance work on the Albanian sections of the “Blue Highway”***; (AM 241), *complete the railway sector reforms and advance the Tirana-Podgorica-Durrës rail connection*; (AM 242)

COMP 31

Paragraph 43a, 43b

environment and climate

Covered: AM 222 (Waitz/Greens-EFA), AM 223 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 235 (Waitz/Greens-EFA), AM 236 (Castaldo/NI), AM 237 (Grošelj, Šimečka/Renew), AM 238 (Fajon, Schieder/S&D), AM 239 (Grošelj, Šimečka/Renew), AM 240 (Fajon, Schieder/S&D)

- 43a.** *Expresses deep concern about certain economic projects that have led to environmental damage in protected areas; (AM 222) underlines that planning and construction of eco-sensitive tourist and energy infrastructure (AM 222) projects must be conducted under a broad country-wide stakeholder consultation with the civil society and local communities prior to decision-making (AM 222) and must comply with international and EU norms on impact assessments and environmental protection; (AM 223)*
- 43b.** *Urges the authorities to develop a national energy strategy which guarantees full alignment and implementation of the Paris Agreement, (AM 235) relevant EU (AM 236) climate policies (AM 236), decarbonisation targets and carbon pricing instruments, in line with the European Green Deal and the political commitments made in the 2020 Sofia Declaration; (AM 235, 236, 239, 240); invites the authorities to adopt without delay the draft Climate Law and the law and decision on a mechanism for monitoring and reporting of greenhouse gas emissions; (AM 237, 238), requests the accelerated finalization of the draft integrated National Energy and Climate Plan for review by the Energy Community Secretariat; (AM 237, 238)*

Vote: AM 244 (agriculture)

COMP 32

Paragraph 44a

waste management

Covered: AM 245 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 246 (Waitz/Greens-EFA), AM 247 (Picula/S&D), AM 248 (Šimečka et al./Renew), AM 249 (Glavak/EPP)

- 44a.** *Recalls the need to prioritise the implementation of the new 2020-2035 national waste management strategy (AM 246, 248), setting up of an integrated regional waste management system, to promote recycling, close hazardous dumpsites (AM 245, 248), align with the EU standards, especially as regards incineration, (AM 246), prevent deforestation, and marine plastic waste (AM 247, 249); warns of the pollution of the Adriatic Sea and the frequent dumping of garbage carried by sea currents, (AM 249) underlines the need to step-up water quality monitoring and wastewater treatment capacities and strengthen the capacities of the agencies on environment and protected areas; (AM 245)*

COMP 33

Paragraph 45, 45a, 46, 47a, 48a, 49, 49a Regional cooperation and foreign policy

Covered: AM 250 (Šimečka, Loiseau/Renew), AM 251/252 (Kouloglou/Left / Kefalogiannis et al./EPP), AM 253 (Lega et al./EPP), AM 254/255 (Kouloglou/Left / Kefalogiannis et al./EPP), AM 256 (Šimečka et al./Renew), AM 257(Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 258 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 259 (Šimečka et al./Renew), AM 260 (Castaldo/NI), AM 262 (Lega et al./EPP), AM 263 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 264 (Šimečka et al./Renew), AM 265 (Nistor/EPP), AM 266 (Šimečka et al./Renew)

Falls: AM 261 (ID)

45. Welcomes Albania's ~~unremitting~~ *continuing* (AM 250, 251, 252, 253) efforts in promoting good neighbourly relations and regional integration; *underlines the importance of taking further steps to promote reconciliation with neighbours and regional cooperation* (AM 256), *which should be underpinned by respect for fundamental European values and a common future in the EU;* (AM 257)
- 45 a. *Calls for the creation of new opportunities for high level political and policy dialogue with the Western Balkans countries, through regular EU-Western Balkans summits and intensified ministerial contacts, in order to strengthen the the credible commitment to the political objective of the enlargement process and ensure high-level engagement;* (AM 264)
46. Welcomes the constructive steps towards the resolution of outstanding bilateral issues, including a joint undertaking by Greece and Albania to *refer the delimitation of the* (AM 254, 255) *maritime zones to the International Court of* (AM 254, 255) *Justice;*
- 47 a. *Welcomes Albania's participation in the mini-Schengen initiative as a means to improve neighbourly relations and provide new opportunities for Albanian citizens and business;* (AM 260)
- 48a. *Calls upon all political leaders to take urgent steps to set up the Regional Commission tasked with establishing the facts about all victims of war crimes and other serious human rights violations committed on the territory of the former Yugoslavia (RECOM), building upon the significant work carried out by the Coalition for RECOM;* (AM 258) *urges political leaders to promote regional reconciliation and refrain from instrumentalising these topics in internal political struggles;* (AM 259)
49. Welcomes Albania's ongoing full alignment with the common foreign and security policy decisions and declarations since 2012 and *commends* its active ~~contribution/~~ *participation in* (AM 262) ~~to~~ the EU crisis management missions and operations, *as well as its active contribution to NATO missions of strategic importance to the EU;*

(AM 262); *urges Albania to comply with the EU position on the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court*; (AM 263)

49a. new *Underlines the need for the EU and the United States to strengthen their partnership and coordination in the Western Balkans in order to advance key reforms, improve governance and reconciliation* (AM 266); *calls on the EEAS and Commission to enhance support to Albania in countering malicious foreign interference from countries such as Russia, China, Iran and others*; *having in mind the above-mentioned alignment and Albania's EU accession process, Tirana should develop ever-closer cooperation with the EU and NATO member states on security and defence issues*; (AM 265);

RECITALS

COMP 34

all recitals

Recitals -A, A, Aa, B, C-a, Ca, Cb, Db, Dc, Dd, De, Df, Dg, Dh, Di, Dj, Dk

Covers: AM 18 (Lega et al./EPP), AM 20 (Lega, Gahler/EPP), AM 21 (McAllister/EPP), AM 22 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 23 (van Dalen/EPP), AM 24 (McAllister/EPP), AM 25 (Lega et al./EPP), AM 26 (Gál et al/EPP), AM 27 (Kokalari/EPP), AM 28 (Fitto, Waszczykowski/ECR), AM 29 (Castaldo/NI), AM 30 (Castaldo/NI), AM 32 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 33 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 34 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 35 (Gál et al/EPP), AM 36 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 37 (Zovko/EPP). AM 38 (Gál et al/EPP), AM 39 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 40 (Zovko/EPP), AM 41 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 42 (Zovko/EPP), AM 43 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 44 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 45 (Rapporteur et al./S&D), AM 46 (Rapporteur et al./S&D)

Vote: AM 31 (Kosovo)

Falls: AM 19 (EPP)

-A. *whereas enlargement is one of the EU's most effective foreign policy instruments, contributing to extending the reach of the Union's fundamental values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, the rule of law, fostering peace and respect for human rights*; (AM 18)

A. *whereas Albania has continued making sustained efforts on its path towards the EU, meeting **most** (AM 21) of the conditions put forward by the EU, ~~while meeting the necessary ones~~ for holding the first intergovernmental conference;*

Aa. *whereas the rule of law is a key benchmark for assessing the progress towards the EU accession*; (AM 22)

B. *whereas the country **still** (AM 23) needs to keep making progress in the consolidation of democratic institutions and procedures, in ensuring the proper functioning of its judicial institutions, **the fight against corruption** (AM 24) and ~~by~~ safeguarding media freedom and minority rights;*

C. *whereas consistent efforts on the key reforms require the joint engagement of all stakeholders;*

C-a. whereas the merit-based prospect of a full EU membership of Albania is in the Union's own political, security and economic interests, (AM 25, 26) and the quality and dedication to the necessary reforms should determine the timetable for accession; (AM 25)

Ca. whereas EU enlargement and the advancement of democracy, rule of law and prosperity in the Western Balkans (AM 27) contributes to strengthening the security and stability of the Western Balkan region of which Albania is part; (AM 28)

Cb. whereas the general elections will take place on 25 April 2021 (AM 29) and the OSCE/ODIHR recommendations have not been implemented in their entirety; (AM 30)

D. whereas the Commission submitted a draft negotiating framework on 1 July 2020;

Db. whereas the ongoing pandemic has clearly demonstrated that the EU and the Western Balkans must continue tackling common challenges together; (AM 32)

Dc. whereas the country has to recover from the widespread damage caused by the 26 November 2019 earthquake and the COVID-19 pandemic; boost preparedness for civil protection and disaster response and advance preparations for joining the Union Civil Protection Mechanism; (AM 33)

Dc. whereas the EU has mobilised grants worth €115 million for the post-earthquake rehabilitation and reconstruction within the €400 million European support pledge; (AM 34)

Dc. whereas Albania's economy was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, and measures to prevent the spread of the virus negatively affect the national budget; (AM 35)

Dd. whereas the EU has mobilised EUR 3.3 billion to address the coronavirus pandemic in the Western Balkans (AM 37, 38), including EUR 38 million in immediate support to the health sector, EUR 389 million for the social and economic recovery, EUR 750 million for macro-financial assistance, EUR 455 million for economic reactivation and EUR 1.7 billion in preferential loans from the European Investment Bank; (AM 28)

Dd. whereas the EU mobilised €51million to assist Albania in tackling COVID-19 and made available up to €180 million in macro-financial assistance; (AM 36, 42)

De. whereas the EU is Albania's biggest trading partner and the largest donor (AM 39, 40), and the country has benefited from €1.25 billion in EU pre-accession funding since 2007; (AM 40)

Dg. whereas the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans will facilitate a long-term recovery, following the COVID-19 pandemic, supporting the economic development and reforms in the region; (AM 41)

Dh. whereas Albanian citizens enjoy visa-free travel to the Schengen area since December 2010; (AM 43)

Di. *whereas since 2015 Albanian citizens participate in student, academic and youth exchanges under Erasmus+;* (AM 44)

Dj. *whereas the EU remains fully committed to supporting Albania's strategic choice for European integration, based on the rule of law and good neighbourly relations;* (AM 45)

Dk. *whereas Albania remains a trustworthy foreign policy partner, advancing regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations;* (AM 46)

CITATIONS

COMP 35

all citations

Covers: AM 1 (Lega et al./EPP), AM 2 (Lega et al./EPP), AM 3 (Gál et al./EPP), AM 4/5 (Zovko / Gál et al./EPP), AM 6 (Zovko/EPP), AM 7 (Kovatchec/EPP), AM 8 (Zovko/EPP), AM 9 (Glavak/EPP), AM 13 (Castaldo/NI), AM 15 (Lega et al./EPP), AM 16 (Castaldo /NI), AM 17 (Zovko/EPP);

Falls: AM 10, 12, 14 (ID)

Vote: AM 11 (DEG work programme)

Citation -1 a (new) *having regard to the EU-Albania Stabilisation and Association Agreement,* (AM 1)

- having regard to the European Council conclusions of 28 June 2018, the Council conclusions of 18 June 2019 and the European Council conclusions of 17-18 October 2019, which postponed the decisions on opening accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia,
- having regard to the European Council conclusions of 26 March 2020 on opening accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia, which endorsed the Council conclusions of 25 March 2020 on the enlargement and stabilisation and association process,
- 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),

Citation 3 a (new) *having regard to the European Council conclusions of 19-20 June 2003 and the Thessaloniki Agenda for the Western Balkans,* (AM 2)

- having regard to the Commission communication of 29 May 2019 entitled '2019 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy' (COM(2019)0260), accompanied by the Commission Staff Working Document entitled 'Albania 2019 Report (SWD(2019)0215),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 6 October 2020 entitled '2020 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy' (COM(2020)0660), accompanied by the Commission Staff Working Document entitled 'Albania 2020 Report (SWD(2020)0354),

Citation 5 a (new) *having regard to the Commission communication of 24 July 2020 entitled '2020-2025 EU action plan on firearms trafficking' (COM(2020)608),*

Citation 5 b (new) *having regard to the Commission communication of 29 April 2020 entitled 'Support to the Western Balkans in tackling COVID-19 and the post-pandemic recovery',* (AM 3)

Citation 6 having regard to the *EU-Western Balkans Sofia summit in the framework* of the Berlin Process *of 10 November 2020*, (AM 8)

- having regard to the European Councils decision of 26-27 June 2014 to grant the status of candidate country for EU membership to Albania,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 November 2020 on strengthening media freedom: the protection of journalists in Europe, hate speech, disinformation and the role of platforms,
- having regard to its resolution of 24 October 2019 on opening accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania,

Citation 9 a (new) *having regard to the Commission communication of 6 October 2020 entitled ‘An Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans’ (COM(2020)0641)*, (AM 4/5)

Citation 9 b (new) *having regard to the Sofia declaration of the EU-Western Balkans summit of 17 May 2018 and the Sofia Priority agenda, annexed thereto* (AM 6, 7)

Citation 9 c (new) *having regard to the Zagreb Declaration agreed during the EU-Western Balkans summit that took place via videoconference on 6 May 2020*, (AM 9)

Citation 9 d (new) *having regard to the ~~last~~ Final Report of the ODIHR Election Observation Mission of 5 September 2019* (AM 13) *and a Joint Opinion of the Venice Commission and the OSCE/ODIHR of December 2020* (AM 16)

Citation 9 e (new) *having regard to its recommendation of 19 June 2020 to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the Western Balkans, following the 2020 summit (2019/2210(INI))*, (AM 15)

Citation 9 f (new) *having regard the joint statement of 8 December 2020 by Members of the European Parliament on accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania*, (AM 17)

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Albania,