

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

FINAL COMPROMISE AMENDMENTS

Draft Report on the 2019-2020 Commission reports on North Macedonia ([2019/2174\(INI\)](#), [AMs](#))

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PARAGRAPHS

COMP 1

Paragraph 1, 1a, 1b, 1c

EU integration, accession talks, future of EU

Covered: AM 56 (Zovko/EPP), AM 57 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 58 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 59 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 60 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 61 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 69 (Castaldo/NI), AM 71 (Glavak/EPP), AM 278 (Picula et al./S&D) AM 279 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 280 (Rapporteur et al./Renew)

Falls: AM 54 (Zimniok et al./ID), AM 55 (Rivière, Mariani/ID)

1. Welcomes North Macedonia's clear strategic orientation and commitment to ~~European~~ *the EU* (AM 57) integration, as manifested by continued implementation of accession-related reforms and *the work on resolving bilateral issues with neighbouring countries* (AM 56);

1-a new. Reiterates its full support of to the ~~promise~~ pledge of Thessaloniki, made by the European Council in 2003, ~~namely that the future of the Western Balkan countries lies in the EU~~; (AM 278)

1a new. Calls on EU Member States to stand by their commitments and show clear political will, enabling the Council to approve the negotiating framework and hold the first IGC with North Macedonia as soon as possible to prevent further delays (AM 58, 59, 244), confirming the credibility, objectivity (AM 60) and reliability of the accession process (AM 59);

1 b new. Expresses its solidarity with the people of North Macedonia (AM 61) and considers it important to ensure continuity of committed and active support to the Macedonian progress towards European Union; (AM 71)

1c new. Welcomes the fact that North Macedonia will exercise the function of the OSCE Chairmanship in 2023; (AM 280)

*1d new. Believes that the Conference on the Future of Europe should appropriately include and actively engage representatives of North Macedonia (AM 69, 279) and other Western Balkan countries (AM 279), both at the governmental and at the civil society, ~~and~~ *the including the youth, level(s); (AM 69)**

Vote: AM 60

COMP 2

Paragraph 2, 2a

democratic consolidation

Covered: AM 63 (Dzhambazki/ECR), AM 65 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 66 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 67 (Castaldo/NI), AM 68 (Kouloglou/Left), AM 70 (Rapporteur et al./Renew)

Falls: AM 64 (Zimniok, Vilmsky/ID)

2. Urges the (AM 67) authorities *and political parties of North Macedonia* (AM 63) to sustain consensual efforts to strengthen *democracy* (AM 66) and the transformation process, *to continue the* (AM 65) fight against corruption, and *to reinforce* (AM 65, 66) the rule of law, *good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation* (AM 68), while improving the climate for media *freedom* (AM 67) and civil society;

2a. Recalls that the progress in accession negotiations under the revised enlargement methodology continues to depend on persistent, in-depth and irreversible reforms across fundamental areas (AM 70);

Vote (paragraph 3): AM 72 (ID)

COMP 3

Paragraph 4

rule of law

Covered: AM 73 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 74 (Picula et al./S&D)

4. Commends the *progress achieved in addressing* (AM 73, 74) the ‘Urgent Reform Priorities’ and *following up on the* (AM 73, 74) recommendations of the Venice Commission and the Senior Experts’ Group on systemic Rule of Law issues;

COMP 4

Paragraph 5, 5a

corruption

Covered: AM 76 (Castaldo/NI), AM 77 (Rapporteur et al./Renew)

5. Acknowledges the adoption of legislation on the prevention of corruption and conflicts of interest, lobbying, access to information, whistle-blower protection, the public prosecutor office, and calls for their effective *and steady* (AM 76) implementation;

5 a new. Recalls that sufficient financial and human resources are needed to ensure an effective and consistent application of dissuasion, prevention, detection, pro-active investigation and sanctions mechanisms for public office holders through measures covering conflicts of interest, lobbying, codes of ethics and whistle-blower protection (AM 77);

Vote (paragraph 6): AM 79 (ID), AM 80 (NI)

COMP 5

Paragraph 7, 7a **judicial reform**

Covered: AM 78 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 81 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 83 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 84 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 85 (Sagartz/EPP)

Falls: AM 82 (ID)

7. Urges the ***effective implementation*** (AM 83, 84, 85) of measures to ~~secure~~ ensure judicial and prosecutorial professionalism, independence, integrity and accountability, including through an efficient implementation of codes of ethics and of the landmark law on the Public Prosecutor's Office, ensuring sustainable ***solution for the*** cases ***of*** (AM 83, 84) the Special Prosecutor's Office, and accountability for crimes stemming from the large-scale illegal wiretapping case; ***calls for additional efforts of all judicial institutions to contribute to restoring public trust in the judiciary*** (AM 85);

7a new. Welcomes steps strengthening impartiality, transparency and accountability of the judiciary through the pro-active ~~action~~ steps of the Judicial Council and calls for the effective implementation of the revised law on the Council of Public Prosecutors; calls for a full use of mechanisms to confirm professionalism and integrity of judiciary through verifications, financial investigations and asset confiscations (AM 81); is concerned over the impeded access to justice during the COVID-19 pandemic, encourages the authorities to speed up the digitalisation of the judiciary and the related administration; (AM 78)

COMP 6

Paragraph 8 **intelligence**

Covered: AM 86 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 87 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 88 (Sagartz/EPP)

8. Encourages the conclusion of institutional reforms and the ***implementation of the ongoing reforms in*** (AM 86, 87) the security and intelligence sectors, ***ensuring financial and operational functional independence of the ~~new~~ National Security Agency and the Operational Technical Agency*** (AM 88) ***and a meaningful parliamentary oversight over secret services*** (AM 86, 88);

COMP 7

Paragraph 9, 9 a, 9b, 9 c and 9d **corruption, organised crime, antiterrorism**

Covered: AM 89 (Sagartz/EPP), AM 90 (McAllister/EPP), AM 91 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 93 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 94 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 95 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 96 (Dzhambazki/ECR), AM 97 (Paet/Renew), AM 98 (Dzhambazki/ECR),

Falls: AM 92 (ID), AM 99 (ID)

9. Calls for continued **proactive** (AM 89) efforts to tackle organised crime and corruption in a systematic manner and through **systematic** prevention measures, financial investigations, prosecution of financial crimes, including money laundering, and financing terrorism and adoption of appropriate sanctions; calls for continued efforts to launch operations aimed at dismantling criminal networks involved in various forms of trafficking - firearms, human beings, drugs; **urges the country to further align with the acquis and conduct systematic financial investigations, stepping up identification, tracing, freezing, confiscation and management of illicit ~~illegally-acquired~~ assets** (AM 91);

9 a new. *Encourages to strengthen the newly-established Asset Recovery Office and improve fight against money laundering and economic crimes; calls to step up joint efforts in tackling organised, economic and cyber-crime* (AM 95), *including through improved co-ordination and partnership with Europol* (AM 89, 95);

9 b new. *Acknowledges the progress achieved* (AM 90) *in addressing the widespread* (AM 89, 94) *corruption, including through a strengthened track record in investigating, prosecuting and trying the cases of high level corruption, abuses of official position and illicit enrichment; notes the importance of the reinforced leading role of the Commission for Prevention of Corruption and cooperation with it in this regard* (AM 94);

9 c new. *Urges the Public Prosecutor's Office to process the serious cases and to pro-actively follow up on major cases referred by anti-corruption and audit agencies as well as whistle-blowers* (AM 93);

9 d new. *Urges authorities of North Macedonia to continue and intensify their efforts to combat radicalisation,* (AM 97, 98) *terrorism* (AM 96) *and to address the issue of foreign terrorist fighters* (AM 97, 98) *through the continuous cross-border exchange of information and an increased cooperation between security agencies and CSOs, religious leaders, local communities and educational, healthcare and social institutions and proper reintegration efforts* (AM 97);

COMP 8

Paragraph 10, 11

Political dialogue

Paragraph 14

Electoral reform

Covered: AM 28 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 101 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 102 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 103 (Sagartz/EPP), AM 104 (Castaldo/NI), AM 105 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 106 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 107 (Sagartz/EPP), AM 108 (López-Istúriz White/EPP), AM 112 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 113 (Picula et al./S&D)

10. **Recalls that a constructive** (AM 104) **role of the *opposition* is essential for functioning of the Parliament and the** adoption of key legislation, **such as the EU and NATO-related reform** (AM 101) process;

11. Commends engagement of the fact that governing and opposition parties ~~remained engaged~~ in the Sobranie, the Assembly of North Macedonia, ~~and supported on~~ key decisions in the common national interest; *notes that stronger policy dialogue between all political parties is prerequisite of good governance and legislative functionality (AM 107, 108); calls on all parties [in Parliament] to remain constructive and refrain from using nationalist and inflammatory rhetoric (AM 106) and to engage in a political dialogue in good faith, on the basis of good-will, especially on key health, economic, social and political efforts aimed at tackling the COVID-19 crisis; (AM 107, AM 108)*

14. Takes note of the smooth conduct of the 15 July 2020 parliamentary elections (AM 28, AM 102), recalls that the legal stability was nonetheless undermined by substantial frequent revisions of the legal and regulatory framework (AM 103) Underlines the need to thoroughly implement the outstanding recommendations contained in the final OSCE/ODIHR report special election assessment mission (AM 102, 103, 112, 113) including a complete timely, inclusive and comprehensive review of the Electoral Code, *in advance of future elections* (AM 102); *further efforts need to be carried out in order to ensure the continuous accuracy of voter's lists; (AM 103)*

COMP 9

Paragraph 13 legislative transparency and inclusivity

Covered: AM 109 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 111 (Rapporteur et al./Renew)

Falls: AM 110 (ID)

13. *Urges the Assembly* (AM 109) to improve the legislative process by minimising the use of fast track procedures, *increasing transparency, ensuring a timely and inclusive access to information on law-making processes, and conducting* (AM 109) proper consultations and impact assessments; recalls the need to upgrade the parliamentary rules of procedure by consensus *in order to empower the Parliament and strengthen legislative, oversight and budgetary scrutiny mechanisms* (AM 111); *reiterates the importance of cooperation with and sustainable funding for the civil society in order to ensure a sound scrutiny of public institutions* (AM 109);

COMP 10

Paragraph 15 political party financing

Covered: AM 114 (Dzhambazki, Weimers/ECR), AM 115 (Rapporteur et al./Renew)

15. Calls for additional measures to improve the transparency of political party financing *and ensure democratic, and competitive and representative* (AM 159) *intra-party functioning mechanisms* (AM 115), *including through proper independent oversight* (AM 114); recalls the need to effectively implement the recommendations of the State Audit Office;

COMP 11

Covered: AM 75/118 (Dzhambazki, Weimers/ECR), AM 116 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 117 (Sagartz/EPP)

Paragraph 15 a new public administration reform

15a new. *Urges the ~~new~~ government to prioritise the public administration reform (AM117, 118) by embedding and systematically applying (AM 117) merit-based standards (AM 75/118, 116, 117) in public appointments and promotions, advancing the culture of transparency, professional independence, accountability (AM 75/118), integrity and equitable gender and ethnic representation across the civil service, (AM 116, 117) and state-owned enterprises (AM 117), while ensuring adequate whistle-blower protection; (AM 116); calls for a thorough follow up of the recommendations of State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (AM 117).*

COMP 12

Paragraph 15b new access to information

Covered: AM 119 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 120 (Strik/Greens-EFA)

15b new. *Urges authorities to ensure comprehensive transparency (AM 120) by further improving access to information (AM 119, 120), including on the COVID-19 (AM 120), by ensuring regular cross-agency updates through the open governmental data portal and a full functionality of the Agency for Protection of Free Access to Public Information (AM 119); encourages the authorities to retrieve and open up the relevant Yugoslav secret service archives (AM 121);*

Vote: AM 121, 2nd part: “*takes the view that transparent handling of the totalitarian past ...step towards further democratization*”

COMP 13

Paragraph 17 fundamental rights

Covered: AM 123 (Gál et al./EPP), AM 126 (Strik/Greens-EFA)

17. Expresses its support for the efforts to ensure inclusive policies to protect the fundamental freedoms and rights of all citizens, with special attention to women, youth, persons with disabilities, ethnic communities (~~AM 122~~, 123), non-majority ethnic groups, LGBTIQ+ persons, and the low-skilled unemployed; *calls on the authorities to mitigate a disproportionately detrimental impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on non-majority communities and to increase the fight against inequality*; (AM 126)

COMP 14

Paragraph 17-a new, 17 a new, 17 b new inclusion

Covered: AM 125 (Lega/EPP), AM 128 (Rapporteur et al./Renew) AM 129 (Sagartz/EPP), AM 130 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 131 (Sagartz/EPP)

17-a new. *Welcomes the fact that the freedom of religion, thought and conscience continued to be guaranteed, and generally, discrimination on the grounds of religion prohibited* (AM 131)

17a new. *~~Emphasises the need for~~ Calls upon the national coordination body for implementing the national action plan on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to systematically engage with disability support organisations; underlines the need for further deinstitutionalisation and ~~to the repeal of~~ provisions allowing involuntary deprivation of liberty; stresses the need for adequate resources and infrastructure to uphold necessary social protection and ensure decent living conditions for people with disabilities;* (AM 125) *welcomes the national action plan on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and that the national coordination body for implementing the Convention meets regularly* (AM125)

17 b new. Welcomes the increased attention and funding to Roma inclusion/integration policies and urges the authorities to improve the pace and capacity of implementation, coordination, monitoring and the use of funds (AM 128, 129, 130), *including in the areas of housing and active labour market policies* (AM 129), *in line with the 2019 Poznan Declaration on Roma Integration within the EU Enlargement Process* (AM 128); *encourages the authorities to ensure unimpeded implementation of the Law on persons without regulated civil status and to resolve the issue of lack of personal documents for Roma;* (AM 130)

COMP 15

Paragraph 17 c new hate speech

Covered: AM 133 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 134 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 135 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 136 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 193 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 199 (Kovachev/EPP), AM 200 (Alexandrov Yordanov/EPP)

17 c. *Notes with concern the widespread hate speech [including on social media], particularly towards Roma, LGBTI+ persons and other vulnerable ~~marginalised~~ groups* (AM 133, 135) *countries and peoples* (AM 199, 200); *calls for an effective implementation of the relevant regulatory framework* (AM 135), *ensuring a clear cleavage between a free public debate as opposed to hate speech, defamation or incitement to violence* (AM 193), *stepping up prosecution capacities for protection from hate crimes, hate speech and gender-based violence* (AM 134); *is concerned with cases of police brutality against vulnerable ~~marginalised~~ communities* (AM 136);

Vote: AM 135, AM 147

COMP 16

Paragraph 18

anti-discrimination, gender recognition

Covered: AM 140 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), 141 (Strik/Greens-EFA), 142(Picula et al./S&D, 143 (Sagartz/EPP), 144 (López-Istúriz White/EPP)

Falls: AM 139 (ID)

18. Welcomes the renewed adoption of anti-discrimination legislation ***voted by all political parties*** (AM 143, 144), and urges the authorities to follow up with an inclusive and transparent process establishing an independent Commission for Protection from Discrimination, ensuring protection and inclusion of all marginalised groups; encourages the Sobranie to adopt legislation which will enable a simplified, transparent and accessible procedure for legal gender recognition, ***based on self-determination*** (AM 140, 141, 142), and prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity; ***notes the organisation of the first-ever Skopje Pride in June 2019*** (AM 140);

COMP 17

Paragraph 18 a, 18 b, 18 c new

ethnic communities

Covered: AM 122 (Zovko/EPP), AM 124 (Sagartz/EPP), AM 137 (Sagartz/EPP), AM 138 (Zovko/EPP), AM 145 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 146 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 147 (Dzhambazki et al./ECR),

18 a. Calls for continued constructive endeavours to strengthen generally calm (AM 124) inter-ethnic relations, to recognise, protect and provide adequate support to all communities (AM 127, 146, AM 147), [and their cultural heritage (AM 138)] and to safeguard the rights and an adequate integration and representation of non-majority communities in public life and media (AM 137, AM 138) by ensuring sufficient human and financial resources for the institutions in charge of minority-related policies (AM 137), [making full use of the strengthened mandate of the Agency for Communities Rights Realisation to monitor and guide public institutions in upholding their legal obligations [towards minorities] (AM 146, AM 124);

18 b. Calls on North Macedonia to continue implementing the Ohrid Framework Agreement,; (AM 122) supports the re-examination of the Law on Use of Languages in line with the Venice Commission's recommendations (AM 137) in consultation with all stakeholders concerned, welcomes the creation of an agency and inspectorate overseeing the overall implementation of the law on the use of languages (AM 124) and recalls the need to provide equal and non-discriminatory education in minority languages (AM 138);

18 c. Invites the Ministry of Political System and Inter-Community Relations to advance social cohesion through the implementation of the 'one society for all' strategy (AM 145) and urges to address the remaining challenges of discrimination, exclusion and underrepresentation (AM 145, AM 147);

COMP 18

Paragraph 19, 19a

civil society and rights' bodies

Covered: AM 148 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 150 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 151 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 152 (Strik/Greens-EFA)

Falls: AM 149 (ID)

19. Welcomes the steady improvement in public consultations ~~(AM 117)~~ and calls for further progress (AM 148) in ensuring meaningful and timely inclusion of civil society in the decision-making processes (AM 117, 148) across different policy areas, as well as in safeguarding the financial sustainability (AM 148) of the non-governmental sector; *notes that budget restructuring should undergo proper consultation processes and should not undermine the sustainability of the civil society sector* (AM 148);

19a. Calls upon North Macedonia to guarantee functional independence of and appropriate allocation of funds to fundamental rights' bodies and complete transparent, inclusive and merit-based appointments of their members, thereby helping to strengthen the human rights situation in the country (AM 152), ~~including the selection process of~~ welcomes the appointment of the new Ombudsperson and calls for increased cooperation with civil society; commends the strengthening of the Ombudsperson's office and urges the authorities to step up implementation of its recommendations (AM 150); *welcomes the set-up of the external oversight mechanism of the police in the Ombudsperson's Office and calls for continued efforts to address police impunity through systematic implementation of safeguards against ill-treatment by police, the use of genuinely independent investigators, and strengthening of control mechanisms of the police* (AM 151);

COMP 19

Paragraph 20

Violence against women and children, gender equality

Covered: AM 132 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 153 (Nistor/EPP), AM 155 (Sagartz/EPP)

Falls: AM 154 (ID)

20. Welcomes the recent update to the Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and domestic violence; urges the authorities ~~Sebranie to adopt laws on preventing~~ effectively implement these laws and prevent implement (AM 132) gender-based violence and violence against children (AM 153, 155), providing protection (AM 153) by establishing an effective mechanism for evidence gathering and the prosecution of perpetrators; *stresses the importance of* prevention measures, and the protection and support of victims of gender-based *violence* and domestic *abuse* (AM 153), which *have* been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic;

COMP 20

Paragraph 21-a, 21

Gender equality

Covered: AM 156 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 157(Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 158 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 159 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 160 (Sagartz/EPP), AM 161 (Kouloglou/Left)

21-a. *Urges North Macedonia to increase efforts aimed at gender equality and women's rights, including by prioritising gender mainstreaming and increased cooperation with civil society, in particular women's organisations* (AM 156);

21. Calls on lawmakers and all political parties (AM 159) of North (157, 158, 159, 160, 161) Macedonia to take steps to *improve* ~~ensure an adequate~~ representation of women in all elected and appointed (AM 159) decision-making positions, *following the positive trends in women's parliamentary representation in the Parliament, facilitated by mandatory gender quotas* (AM 158); encourages authorities to further address the *lack of implementation of women workers' rights*, (AM 157) gender imbalance and gender pay gap in the labour force, to take action on gender stereotyping, discrimination in legal provisions related to maternity leave and harassment in the workplace (AM 157) and to ensure adequate childcare capacities (AM 157);

COMP 21

Paragraph 22

Migration

Covered: AM 162 (Gál et al./EPP), AM 163 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 164 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 165 (Dzhambazki et al/ECR); AM 166 (Sagartz/EPP), AM 168 (Rapporteur et al/Renew), AM 170 (Rapporteur et al/Renew), AM 171 (Dzhambazki et al/ECR), 173 (Dzhambazki et al/ECR), AM 174 (Dzhambazki et al/ECR)

Falls: AM 167 (ID)

22. Welcomes the country's efforts in improving cooperation on managing irregular (AM 162) migration, border protection and addressing the *basic* (AM 163, 168) needs of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants; *calls to further strengthen international protection of those in need* (AM 163, AM 168) and *prevent violations of international law, such as alleged pushbacks; notes the progress made in tackling human trafficking and smuggling* (AM 173, 174) and recalls the need to establish a viable mechanism for managing irregular migratory flows and to *combat* (AM 162) people smuggling networks, *as the country remains on one of the main migratory transit routes* (AM 165); *notes the ongoing co-operation and supports the finalisation/signature of the status agreement with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) that would facilitate better protection of borders and fighting cross border crime in full respect for fundamental rights* (AM 166, 170, 172); *encourages the country to move forward with the adoption of a strategy on the integration of migrants, including re-integration of returnees;* (AM 163, AM 164);

Vote: AM 172, AM 169 2nd part "*calls on the authorities to put in place an active monitoring mechanism... international law*".

COMP 22

Paragraphs 23, 24, 25, 25 a, 26, 26a

Media reforms

Covered: AM 176 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 177 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 178 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 179 (McAllister/EPP), AM 180 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 181 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 182 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 184 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 185 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 186 (López-Istúriz White/EPP), AM 187 (Sagartz/EPP), AM 188 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), 189 (Sagartz/EPP)

Falls: AM 175 (ECR), AM 183 (ECR)

23. Acknowledges that the generally favourable environment for freedom of expression and media independence must be *further* (AM 179) enhanced through improved *legal framework*, (AM 177, 178) self-regulation, transparency of ownership and advertising market, while increasing financial sustainability and impartiality of public and private media outlets, *ensuring rules-based budgetary financing of media, transparency and reduction of political advertising* (AM 176, 177, 189), *thus safeguarding fair competition* (AM 189) *and independent editorial policies* (AM 177);

24. *Urges the authorities to swiftly implement* (AM 180) systemic media reforms that would reinvigorate competition, *increase* the independence *and capacity* (AM 180) of the public service broadcaster, *and the media regulator and support* (AM 181, 182) investigative journalism;

25. *Notes the steps taken to enhance* (AM 184, 185) media self-regulation *through the Register of Professional Online Media and by stepping-up* professional standards *through the Charter on journalists' working conditions and draft Fair Working Contract for digital media* (AM 184);

26. Urges the adoption of measures to safeguard the financial and operational independence of the public service broadcaster and the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services; *commends the Agency's efforts in monitoring transparency of media ownership and tackling the instances of hate speech, discrimination and threats against reporters*; (AM 188)

26a. *Encourages all actors in the political and media landscape to remain inclusive-open to all media outlets and political entities, thus ensuring fair representation of all relevant political viewpoints with the aim of helping citizens make an informed fair and democratic choice*; (AM 186, AM 187)

COMP 23

Paragraph 27

safety of journalists

Covered: AM 190 (Strik/Greens-EFA), 191 (Picula et al./S&D), 192 (Bogdan/EPP)

27. *Encourages further improvement of the legal framework, ensuring effective measures increasing the safety of journalists and tackling impunity of crimes against the*

reporters (AM 190, AM 191) ~~ensure~~; (AM 190, 191, 192) and calls for effective investigations into physical threats and verbal attacks against media professionals;

COMP 24

Paragraphs 28-a, 28

disinformation

Covered: AM 194 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 195 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 196 (Vitanov et al./ S&D), AM 197 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 198 (Castaldo/NI), AM 199 (Kovatchev/EPP), AM 200 (Alexandrov Yordanov/EPP)

28-a. Is concerned with disinformation (AM 197) and foreign interference campaigns (AM 194), aimed at exacerbating ethnic tensions, harming the country's international relations and reputation, distorting public opinion (AM 198) and electoral process (AM 198), posing severe risks to media freedom (AM 194), democratic societies and institutions, fundamental rights and freedoms, and the rule of law (AM 196);

28. Notes the significance of ensuring media freedom, (AM 195) and promoting (AM 196) quality journalism and media literacy for tackling widespread disinformation, ~~and~~ fake news, nationalist rhetoric (AM 196) and hate speech (AM 199, 200); underlines the need to investigate the sources of disinformation campaigns (AM 197) and foreign interference in the media (AM 194); calls on the EEAS and Commission to improve coordination and strategically address disinformation and hybrid threats that seek to undermine the European perspective across the region (AM 195) and urges to foster the creation of a Balkan-focused Centre of Excellence to counter disinformation (AM 195);

COMP 25

Paragraph -29a

COVID-19

Covered: AM 201 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), 202 (Sagartz/EPP), 203 (Rapporteur et al./Renew)

-29a. Notes the detrimental economic and social impact of (AM 202) COVID-19 and expresses support for a range of measures ~~the authorities have taken in order to mitigate it~~ (AM 202); urges the authorities to make full use of continuing COVID-related EU support and related mechanisms, using the opportunities offered by the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans, aimed at bringing the region closer to the EU Single Market; (AM 201) welcomes the EUR 4 million of immediate support for the health sector, and EUR 62 million in support of the social and economic recovery that the EU provided North Macedonia at the onset of the pandemic, complemented by a macro-financial assistance package of EUR 160 million in loans (AM 202);

-29 b. Welcomes the €70 million IPA II package of grants to fund the access of Western Balkans partners to COVID-19 vaccines; calls on the European Commission and the Member States to allocate a sufficient amount of COVID-19 vaccines to the citizens of all Western Balkan countries; encourages regional cooperation in the field of health, in particular on cross-border diseases in order to mitigate the burden in the region; (AM 203)

COMP 26

Paragraph 29, 29a, 30b

Socio-economic measures

Covered: AM 204 (Sagartz/EPP), AM 205(Picula et al./S&D), AM 206(Picula et al./S&D), AM 207(Picula et al./S&D), AM 208 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 209 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 210 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 211 (Gál et al./EPP), AM 212 (Strik/Greens-EFA)

29. Encourages the Government to prioritise measures aimed at mitigating economic contraction *and addressing structural needs, such as shortcomings in education and training, as well as the outflow of skilled workers and infrastructure investment gaps* (AM 204), boosting diversification, competition and digitalisation and tackling of the informal economy; *recalls the importance of strengthening the competitiveness of small-and medium enterprises (SMEs);* (AM 204, AM 211);

29a. *Notes Government's efforts in establishing the Law on Minimum Wages* (AM 205), and a *broadening of the social support base* (AM 209); *encourages the authorities to modernise the tax code* (AM 206) *and to improve the capacity, staffing, working conditions and access to the public health system and health insurance* (AM 207, 208); *urges for targeted measures addressing child poverty* (AM 209) *and energy poverty* (AM 212), *aggravated by the pandemic;*

30b. *Stresses the need to advance efforts to ensure a non-discriminatory access to the labour market for the EU citizens, freedom to provide services, a mutual recognition of professional qualifications and elimination of non-tariff barriers to trade;* (AM 210)

COMP 27

Paragraph 34, 34 a, 35

IPA/EIP, energy market and connectivity

Covered: AM 62 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 213 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 214 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 215 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 216 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 217 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 218 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 219 (Kovatchev/EPP), AM 220 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 222 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 223 (Vitanov et al./S&D), AM 224 (Dzhambazki/ECR), AM 225 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 233 (Dzhambazki et al/ECR),

Falls: AM 221 (Left)

34. *Commends the adoption of the Energy Efficiency Law and encourages its implementation* (AM 213); welcomes *the progress achieved in further ensuring* compliance with the obligations of the Third Energy Package, and *creating* (AM 215) an integrated regional energy market *through future electricity and gas interconnectors with neighbouring countries* (AM 216); *calls for steps to ensure competition in the rail market, advance construction of relevant rail corridors and ensure functionality of the relevant border crossings;* (AM 214)

34a new. *Calls upon the European Commission to implement the “more for more” principle rigorously, in particular in relation to North Macedonia, in the context of IPA III or the Western Balkans Economic and Investment Plan, given the significant progress ~~and good~~*

~~steps by the country over the reporting period and as a sign of solidarity from our Union;~~
(AM 62)

35. Welcomes the adoption of the Economic and Investment Plan (EIP) and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans to support green and digital transition of the region; (AM 217, AM 222) and to foster broader regional and cross-border cooperation (AM 220) and energy security (AM 233) ~~Recalls its the potential of the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans to enhance~~ the public infrastructure (AM 219) and regional connectivity (AM 233), notably (AM 218) through Rail and Highway (AM 219) Corridor VIII to Bulgaria, ~~and gas interconnectors to~~ with Greece, Kosovo, and Serbia and Greece, along with the Alexandroupolis LNG terminal project (AM 233); reiterates the importance of developing air connections within the Western Balkans countries and with the EU Member States (AM 219); stresses that EIP investments must contribute to in-line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement and the EU decarbonisation targets and envisage ex ante environmental impact assessments (AM 220); highlights the strategic value of enhancing connectivity and economic integration between North Macedonia and its neighbours (AM 223, 224);

Vote: AM 225

COMP 28

Paragraph 36-a, 36, 37, 37a

environmental protection

Covered: AM 226 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 227 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 228 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 229 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 230 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 231(Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 232 (Sagartz/EPP)

36-a. Commends North Macedonia on being the first of the Western Balkan countries to develop a draft Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan, which provides a solid basis for an ambitious final plan, to be developed in line with Energy Community obligations (AM 226, 228);

36. Calls for political will to implement *the Paris Agreement and* (AM 228) ambitious environmental protection and sustainable development plans, *including through restrictions on hydropower development in protected areas, ~~protecting~~ preserving biodiversity and ensuring environmental liability;* (AM 227)

37. Reiterates its calls to address an alarming level of air pollution, *in particular in urban areas* (AM 229), via a transition to sustainable energy, heating and transport and through investment into renewables, by improving inter-sectoral coordination, increasing local and national funding (AM 229), ensuring compliance with the emission ceilings for large combustion plants and developing a national strategy for coal phase out (AM 230);

37a. Welcomes the progress made in improving water quality (AM 232) *and recalls the need to step-up wastewater treatment capacities* (AM 231, 232), *reduce the high rates of marine plastic leakage* (AM 231), *prioritise setting up of an integrated regional waste management system* (AM 228, 231, 232) and promote recycling (AM 231);

37 b new. Calls on authorities to take necessary action to preserve Ohrid's natural and cultural heritage by ensuring full implementation of the UNESCO recommendation on the Ohrid region;

COMP 29 (separate vote)

Paragraphs -38a, 38, 38c

regional co-operation, bilateral issues

Covered: AM 234 (Castaldo/NI), AM 236 (Kouloglou/Left), AM 237 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 238 (Nistor/EPP), AM 239 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 241 (Sagartz/EPP), AM 242 (Glavak/EPP), AM 243 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 244 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 248 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 249 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 251 (Sagartz/EPP), AM 252 (Zovko/EPP), AM 253 (Vitanov et al./ S&D), AM 254 (Alexandrov Yordanov/EPP); AM 255(Picula et al./S&D, AM 256 (McAllister/EPP) , 257 (Kovatchev/EPP), AM 258 (Zovko/EPP) , AM 259 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 260 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 261 (Dzhambazki et al./ECR);

Falls: AM 235 (EPP), AM 240 (EPP), 245 (S&D), AM 246 (EPP), AM 247 (ID), AM 250 (ECR)

-38a. Recalls the cooperative and constructive approach adopted by North Macedonia throughout the negotiations of the Prespa agreement with Greece and the Treaty on Good Neighbourly Relations with Bulgaria, showing the country's strategic interest in commitment to pushing forward its European accession path integration (AM 234), notes that in order to acknowledge country's efforts in the EU accession process, the EU Member states (AM 234) should enable holding of the intergovernmental conference (IGC) with North Macedonia as soon as possible, also in order to prevent that further delays harm the reconciliation gains in the region; (AM 244, 238)

38. Reiterates its full support to the enhanced regional cooperation and appeals to all parties to ensure the full, ***consistent and good faith*** (AM 236, 237) implementation of the Prespa agreement with Greece and the Treaty on Good Neighbourly Relations with Bulgaria, ***as an important part both of the bilateral relations;*** (AM 236) ***urges the partners to continue engaging and resolve all outstanding bilateral issues bilaterally, not having a bearing on the accession process (AM 242, 249), to act in a constructive manner and to refrain from actions that might undermine the European integration and the EU's wider interests;*** (AM 238);

38a. Notes that regional cooperation must be based on a common future in the EU (AM 239, 259), an open-minded dialogue overcoming regional disputes and difficult past (AM 259) and the respect of the fundamental European values; 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 political ownership of the enlargement process, to ensure stronger steering and high-level engagement, as also called— aimed for by the revised enlargement methodology; (AM 239)

39. Regrets that ***the Council was not able to adopt the Negotiating Framework*** (AM 251), looks forward to ***a swift adoption of the negotiating framework, with the aim of*** (AM 255, 248) ***holding of the first Intergovernmental Conference kick-starting accession talks as soon as possible to avoid further delay; supports all the efforts to facilitate dialogue, and thus pave the way to a viable agreement;*** (AM 252), ***Points out that the idea of the European Union is***

to overcome regional disputes and a difficult past, in order to work and prosper together on a better peaceful future; AM 259

39a. Regrets that Bulgaria and North Macedonia have yet to find *understanding* (AM 254) on *pending bilateral* (AM 248, 252, 255, 256) issues: *recalls the importance of continued dialogue in order to achieve sustainable* (AM 258) *results in the implementing in good faith bilateral agreements;* (AM 248, 257, 261); *making full use of the framework and objectives of the Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighbourliness and Cooperation between the two countries, welcomes the appointment of North Macedonia's Special Representative for Bulgaria and stresses the importance of continued dialogue in order to achieve sustainable agreement on the current bilateral issues* (AM 258); *encourages Bulgaria and North Macedonia to reach a compromise over an action plan of concrete measures, the implementation of which will be regularly assessed in accordance with the Friendship Treaty* ; (AM 248, 257)

39 a. *Commends North Macedonia and Bulgaria on their successful Joint Chairmanship of the Berlin Process for the Western Balkans and ~~the~~ its [important] achievements* (AM 241);

39 b. *Calls for setting up the implementation and adequate public funding of an institutionalized ~~sufficiently public-financed~~ youth dialogue between North Macedonia and Greece, and North Macedonia and Bulgaria based on the model of the Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO);* (AM 260)

Vote (paragraph 41): AM 264 (ID)

COMP 30 (non-block vote)

Paragraphs 39b, 41 a NATO, transatlantic cooperation

Covered: AM 100 (Gál et al./EPP), AM 262 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 263 (Dzhambazki et al./ECR), AM 265 (Zoko/EPP), AM 266 (Sagartz/EPP),

41a. *Welcomes North Macedonia's accession to the NATO alliance on 27 March 2020 (AM 100, 265, AM 266) and its continuing commitment to the Euro-Atlantic security framework;* (AM 265, 270) *welcomes the country's contribution to the NATO-led missions (AM 266); as well as KFOR through the Host Nation Coordination Centre and its formal cooperation with the European Defence Agency;* (AM 266) *calls on North Macedonia to further continue its alignment to military and operational standards in order to enhance the interoperability and coherence with the EU and NATO member states;* (AM 265) *welcomes North Macedonia's commitment to the 'Clean Network' initiative* (AM 263)

39b. *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 262);

COMP 31

Paragraph 42

CFSP, CSDP

Covered: AM 269 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 270 (Dzhambazki et al./ECR), AM 271 (Castaldo/NI), AM 272 (Sagartz/EPP), AM 273 (Zovko/EPP), AM 274(Dzhambazki et al./ECR), AM 275 (Dzhambazki et al./ECR), AM 276 (Dzhambazki et al./ECR), ~~AM 277 (Dzhambazki, Tertsch/ECR)~~

Falls: AM 267 (ID), 268 (ID)

42. *Acknowledges the improving [level of] alignment of (AM 269) North Macedonia **with the Common Foreign and Security Policy and invites the country** (AM 269) to continue increasing ~~it its alignment~~, in particular regarding **the restrictive measures against Russia** (AM 272); ~~invites the country to~~ **commends continued contributions** to the **ongoing** (AM 270, 271, 275) EU crisis management and **CSDP missions and** operations (AM 270, 271, 273, 275) and **stresses the need to maintain its commitment in the future** (AM 271); **expresses concern over the increasing economic and energy dependence from third countries** (AM 274, 276)]*

RECITALS

COMP 32

all recitals

Recitals A-De

Covered:

AM 22 (Zovko/EPP), AM 23 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 24 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 25 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 26 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 30 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 31 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 32 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 33 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 34 (Zovko/EPP), AM 35 (Gál et al./EPP), AM 36 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 37 (Zovko/EPP), AM 38(Gál et al./EPP),, AM 39 (Zovko/EPP), AM 40 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 41(Gál et al./EPP), AM 42 (Zovko/EPP), AM 43 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 45 (Gál et al./EPP), AM 46 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 48 (Picula et al./S&D), AM 49 (Sagartz/EPP), AM 50 (Dzhambazki et al./ECR), AM 51 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 52 (Dzhambazki et al./ECR), AM 53 (Gál et al./EPP)

Falls: AM 20 (ID), AM 21 (ID), AM 29 (ID)

Vote: AM 44 (ID), AM 47 (Greens-EFA)

- A. whereas North Macedonia has made consistent progress **and has shown dedicated commitment** (AM 22) on its path towards the EU, **strengthening the mutual climate of confidence** (AM 23), **resulting in the decision of the European Council of 26 March 2020 to open accession negotiations;** (AM 22)

- A-a. whereas North Macedonia should be evaluated individually on its own merits against progress made on the criteria set by the European Council, and the speed and quality of reforms determine the timetable for accession to the EU; whereas the prospect of EU membership has been a fundamental incentive for reforms and ~~in the Western Balkan countries~~; whereas the enlargement process has played a decisive role as regards in the stabilisation of the Western Balkans; (AM 25)*
- Aa. whereas the rule of law is a key benchmark for assessing the state of the democratic transformation and progress towards the EU accession; (AM 26)*
- B. whereas the country is maintaining a steady pace in advancing EU reforms, in particular in key areas such as the rule of law, fight against corruption and organised crime, intelligence services and public administration reform (AM 30, 31) and functioning of democratic institutions and procedures;*
- Ca. whereas the EU remains fully committed to supporting North Macedonia's strategic choice for European integration and the ultimate EU membership (AM 24), based on the rule of law, multi-ethnic harmony and good neighbourly relations (AM 32), in line with the 2003 'Thessaloniki agenda for the Western Balkans' (AM 24)*
- Cb. whereas the EU's engagement with the Western Balkans surpasses that of any other region and demonstrates a mutual strategic commitment (AM 33)*
- Cc. whereas the EU should continue promoting investment and developing trade relations with North Macedonia [as the economic development of the country is of paramount importance]; (AM 41)*
- Da. whereas the EU is by far North Macedonia's largest trading partner, accounting for 75 % of the country's exports and 62 % of its imports (AM 42) and the biggest provider of financial assistance, with the country benefiting from over €1.25 billion in EU pre-accession funding since 2007; (AM 34, 40)*
- Da. whereas North Macedonia's economy was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, and measures to prevent the spread of the virus have slowed the economic activity, which in turn has begun to are negatively impact affecting the national budget; (AM 35)*
- Db. whereas the EU offered is the biggest support to North Macedonia for in mitigating the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic (AM 37), mobilising €66 million to assist urgent health needs and post-pandemic economic and social recovery ~~North Macedonia in tackling COVID-19~~ (AM 36, 37) and made available up to EUR 160 million in macro-financial assistance; (AM 36)*
- Dc. whereas the EU has mobilised EUR 3.3 billion to address (AM 38, 39) the coronavirus pandemic in the Western Balkans, including EUR 38 million in immediate support to the health sector, EUR 467 million to build-up resilience of health systems and to cushion the socio-economic impact, EUR 750 million for in macro-financial assistance, EUR 385 million for support and reactivation of the private sector and EUR 1.7 billion in preferential loans from the European Investment Bank]; (AM 38)*
- Dd. whereas North Macedonia remains one of the main transit routes for irregular*

migration; (AM 43)

-De. whereas regional cooperation between the countries of the Western Balkans ~~are indispensable~~ is essential in order to maintain and strengthen the stability and improve the prosperity of the region; whereas good neighbourly relations are indispensable for North Macedonia's progress towards EU accession; (AM 45)

-Df. whereas the Prespa Agreement and the Treaty on Good Neighbourly Relations are landmark agreements that represent a model for stability and reconciliation in the whole region of the Western Balkans and have improved the spirit of good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation; (AM 46)

Da. whereas European Council has so far failed to approve the negotiating framework for North Macedonia (AM 48), ~~jeopardizing the Union's credibility and reducing the EU's transformative power in the Western Balkans~~ (AM 51);

Db. whereas in March 2020, following the entry into force of the historic Prespa agreement and the Friendship Treaty between North Macedonia and Bulgaria, ~~when the country became the 30th NATO member state, and the EU also decided to open the membership accession negotiations;~~ (AM 49)

Dc. whereas joining of the NATO in 2020 marks a clear step towards greater stability, interoperability and defence integration into the Euro-Atlantic community, advancing ~~their~~ potential for eventual EU accession (AM 50)

Dd. whereas the Conference on the Future of Europe can ~~assist~~ contribute to the EU accession aspirations of the Western Balkans countries; (AM 52)

De. whereas the full EU membership for North Macedonia is in the Union's very own political, security and economic interest; (AM 53)

CITATIONS

COMP 33

all citations

Covered: AM 1 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 2 (Zovko/EPP), AM 3 (Rapporteur et al./Renew), AM 4 (Kovatchev/EPP), AM 5 (Zovko/EPP), AM 6 (Zovko/EPP), AM 7 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 8 (Gál et al./EPP), AM 10 (Glavak/EPP), AM 11 (Zovko/EPP), AM 12 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 13 (Strik/Greens-EFA), AM 14 (Gál et al./EPP), AM 15 (Zovko/EPP)

Vote: AM 16 (ID), AM 17(ID), AM 18(ID), AM 19(ID)

N.B. AM 9 - technical adaptation, no vote

Citation 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 *the Republic of* North Macedonia and *the Republic of* Albania, (AM 1)

Citation 2a (new)

- *having regard to the Council conclusions of 5 June 2020 on enhancing cooperation with Western Balkans partners in the field of migration and security*, (AM 2)

Citation 3

- *having regard to the Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighbourliness, and Cooperation between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of North Macedonia, signed on 1 August 2017 and ratified in January 2018*, (AM 3)

Citation 4 a (new)

- *having regard to the Sofia declaration of the EU-Western Balkans summit of 17 May 2018 and the Sofia Declaration, annexed thereto*; (AM 4)

Citation 4 b (new)

- *having regard to the EU-Western Balkans summit in the framework of the Berlin Process of 10 November 2020*, (AM 5)

Citation 7 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), its Annex, and the Commission staff working document entitled ‘Guidelines for the Implementation of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans’ of 6 October 2020*, (AM 6, 7, 8)

Citation 8 a (new)

- *having regard to the Zagreb Declaration agreed during the EU-Western Balkans summit that took place via video conference on 6 May 2020* (AM 10, 11)

Citation 8 b (new)

- *having regard to the joint communication of 8 April 2020 of the Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy entitled ‘Communication on the Global EU response to COVID-19’ (JOIN(2020)0011), and the Commission communication of 29 April 2020 entitled ‘Support to the Western Balkans in tackling COVID-19 and the post-pandemic recovery’*, (AM 12, 14)

Citation 9 a (new)

- *having regard to the Presidency conclusions of the Thessaloniki European Council meeting of 19-20 June 2003*, (AM 13)

Citation 13 a (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 15)