

JOINT CIVIL SOCIETY STATEMENT

Civil Society Calls on Parliament Not to Undermine Transparency, Parliamentary Scrutiny, and Public Consultation in Accelerated Procedures for EU Integration Legislation

Joint Statement on the Draft Decision to Amend the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of Albania

13 March 2026

Tirana, Albania

The civil society organisations signing this statement have closely followed the draft decision submitted on 2 March 2026 proposing amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of the Republic of Albania.

We welcome the Parliament's commitment to strengthening its role in Albania's European Union accession process and to improving the efficiency of parliamentary work. Accession negotiations have entered an intensive phase, and a functional parliament is essential for fulfilling the obligations arising from the European integration process.

At the same time, we support the European integration process and efforts to align legislation with the EU acquis. However, the efficiency of the legislative process must be accompanied by high standards of transparency, public participation, and meaningful parliamentary debate. The European Commission's monitoring framework assesses not only the pace of legislative alignment but also the quality of the legislative process and the inclusion of stakeholders, as part of the proper functioning of democratic institutions. These standards are also reflected in the parliamentary practices of EU member states, in guidance from international organisations such as the OECD and the SIGMA Programme, as well as in the European Parliament's engagement with the enlargement process — all underlining the importance of transparency, public consultation, and substantive parliamentary scrutiny as essential elements of a high-quality legislative process.

In this regard, these principles constitute the foundation of a functional democracy and a transparent legislative process, in line with European standards of democratic governance and as reflected in the Roadmap on the Functioning of Democratic Institutions under Cluster 1 — Fundamentals. For this reason, any reform of the Parliament's procedural rules should aim not only to increase the efficiency of the legislative process, but also to strengthen transparency, accountability, and public participation in law-making as a whole, particularly in the context of the European integration process.

This statement raises concerns regarding two elements of the draft decision: the proposed accelerated procedure for legislation related to European integration, and the standards of transparency and public consultation in the legislative process.

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Accelerated Procedure for EU Integration Legislation

The proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure introduce an accelerated procedure for the examination of legislation related to the European integration process. Given the significant volume of legislation required for alignment with the EU acquis and the intensification of accession negotiations, the existence of such a mechanism may, in principle, be considered reasonable. However, the way this procedure has been designed raises several concerns related to the functioning of the parliamentary process.

According to the draft, the accelerated procedure would apply automatically to the entire category of draft laws related to European integration, without case-by-case parliamentary scrutiny. This bypasses the procedural filter currently in place, which requires that urgency be proposed, justified, and approved by Parliament for each individual draft law.

In the absence of this safeguard, there is a risk that the accelerated procedure could become the standard mode for adopting an increasing number of laws — many of which are technically complex and carry significant institutional and societal implications. The draft also provides no minimum timeframe for committee review, and no mechanism to return a draft law to the ordinary procedure when complexity so requires.

Such safeguards do not hinder the efficiency of the legislative process; rather, they help preserve the balance between the pace required by EU integration and Parliament's constitutional role in legislative scrutiny and debate. The purpose of legislative examination is to achieve the broadest possible consensus so that the interests and concerns of citizens are reflected in law — contributing to more effective implementation by public institutions and society as a whole. Circumventing this process limits the participation of members of parliament, civil society, and citizens in decision-making, an essential element for the functioning of an effective democracy.

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Consultation with Civil Society and Transparency

The proposed amendments do not include provisions that guarantee consultation with civil society and stakeholders, the engagement of experts, or public transparency within the context of the accelerated procedure. Even in accelerated legislative procedures, the involvement of civil society organisations, experts, and stakeholders contributes to improving the quality of legislation and strengthening the legitimacy of the decision-making process. When consultation remains solely at the discretion of parliamentary committees, it does not constitute a structured institutional mechanism and limits the predictability of the legislative process.

It is also concerning that, even under the ordinary legislative procedure for laws considered part of the EU integration interim benchmarks, the consultation climate often remains largely formal. A recent example is the December 2024 Penal Code amendment process, where organisations that contributed during the consultation phase did not see their recommendations reflected in the final proposals.

In light of this situation, it is necessary for the Rules of Procedure to establish clear standards to guarantee effective consultation with civil society organisations on legislative initiatives stemming from the country's EU integration process. This approach does not fully reflect the legal framework governing the EU integration process in Albania. Law No. 15/2015 "On the Role of the Parliament in the Process of the European Integration of the Republic of Albania," as amended by Law No. 19/2023, establishes clear standards for institutional transparency and continuous cooperation with civil society in this process. The Rules of Procedure of Parliament serve as the procedural instrument through which these principles should be operationalised in practice.

In this regard, transparency also requires that the public, civil society, and the media be able to clearly identify which draft laws are examined under the accelerated procedure, on what procedural basis, and with what accompanying documentation — including the publication of the explanatory memorandum and the documents justifying their classification as acts subject to this procedure.

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Recommendations

Comparative parliamentary practices show that the use of accelerated procedures should not lead to the elimination of the stages of parliamentary scrutiny. Studies on fast-track legislation in European parliaments indicate that such procedures should preserve all stages of parliamentary examination, but with shorter intervals between them, so that parliamentary oversight is not eliminated or restricted. For this reason, recommended standards suggest that accelerated procedures should be accompanied by minimum procedural safeguards: the obligation to provide a specific justification of urgency for each draft law; the preservation of committee scrutiny and public consultation stages; and increased transparency regarding the reasons and procedural basis for acceleration.

The experience of countries that have gone through EU accession negotiations demonstrates that the pace of legislative alignment must be accompanied by strong standards of transparency, public consultation, and parliamentary scrutiny. These elements do not hinder the efficiency of the legislative process; rather, they serve as guarantees for the quality, implementability, and democratic legitimacy of reforms linked to the European integration process.

In this context, we consider it necessary that, prior to the adoption of the draft decision, the Parliament of Albania take into consideration and reflect in the final text the following procedural safeguards:

1.	The accelerated procedure should not apply automatically but should require a reasoned parliamentary decision for each individual draft law.
2.	A minimum review period in parliamentary committees should be guaranteed — at least ten working days — even when the accelerated procedure is used.
3.	A requirement for structured public consultation should be established, including the publication of draft acts on the Parliament's consultation platform (e-Parliament) , enabling civil society organisations, experts, and stakeholders to contribute even under accelerated procedures. Parliament should also foresee dedicated consultation and communication mechanisms for such acts to ensure that procedural acceleration does not undermine the quality of the legislative and public consultation process.
4.	Full transparency for accelerated legislation should be ensured , including the publication of the explanatory memorandum and the tables of concordance with the EU acquis.
5.	The role and capacity of sectoral parliamentary committees in examining draft laws related to the European integration process should be guaranteed and strengthened.

The European integration process requires both institutional efficiency and democratic legitimacy. It demands not only institutional speed, but also high democratic standards. Accelerating procedures should not weaken transparency, public consultation, and the constitutional role of Parliament in reviewing legislation.

We present this statement in a constructive spirit and remain ready for dialogue with Parliament and the relevant institutions on the issues raised.

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Signatory Organisations

1.	Center for Science and Innovation for Development (SCiDEV)
2.	Albanian Women in Audiovisual (AWA)
3.	Partners Albania for Change and Development
4.	Academy of Political Studies (ASP)
5.	Center for the Study of Democracy and Governance (CSDG)
6.	Gender Alliance for Development Centre (GADC)
7.	Albanian Helsinki Committee (AHC)
8.	Albanian Center for Economic Research (ACER)
9.	Institute for Political Studies (ISP)
10.	LGBTI Anti-Discrimination Alliance
11.	Children's Rights Centre Albania — CRCA / ECPAT Albania

12.	BIRN Albania
13.	Association of Journalists of Albania (AJA)
14.	Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM)
15.	Faktoje — Center for Fact-Checking in Albania
16.	Erasmus Student Network Tirana (ESN Tirana)
17.	Together Foundation
18.	Cooperation and Development Institute (CDI)
19.	Albanian Institute of Science / Open Data Albania
20.	Active Citizenship and Information Network (ACIN)
21.	Albanian Media Council (AMC)
22.	Center for Comparative and International Studies (CCIS)
23.	Amfora Center
24.	Qëndresa Qytetare (Civic Resistance)
25.	Albanian Center for Quality Journalism (ACQJ)
26.	Together for Life (TFL)
27.	"Strehëza Edlira Haxhiymeri" Center
28.	Women's Network — Equality in Decision-Making
29.	All Green Centre
30.	European Movement in Albania (EMA)
31.	AWEN — Albanian Women Empowerment Network
