

EU - Western Balkans relations

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#WesternBalkans

The EU enlargement policy is a **geo-strategic investment** in Europe's peace, security, stability and prosperity.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine underlines the **need to accelerate the accession process** of the Western Balkans.

The EU will continue its **strong political, technical, and financial support to all six Western Balkan partners**, to help them advance key political, institutional, social and economic reforms that are necessary to progress on their path toward the EU.

The EU is the biggest investor and trading partner in the Western Balkans



EU companies are by far the **leading investors**, accounting for **over 61% of FDI stock** in the region in 2020



EU accounts for **almost 70%** of the region's **total trade** in 2021



Western Balkans is a market of **18 million consumers**



The European Commission and the European Investment Bank mobilised **€3.3 billion** to tackle COVID-19 pandemic and socio economic recovery in the Western Balkans

up to **€30 billion**

in total public and private investments



Under the **Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans**, the EU supports the post pandemic socio-economic recovery of the region and helps the region closing the development gap with the EU.

So far the EU approved funding for **24 flagship investments**, worth **€3.3 billion** in total investment

Key developments of EU-Western Balkans relations

Bosnia and Herzegovina – Population: 3.5 million
Potential candidate
May 2019: Commission Opinion on EU membership application
Dec 2019: EU Council conclusions endorsed the 14 key priorities to fulfill before opening EU accession negotiations

Montenegro – Population: 0.6 million
Candidate country
Opened chapters - 33
Provisionally closed chapters - 3

Albania – Population: 2.9 million
Candidate country
March 2020: EU decides to open accession negotiations
July 2022: first Intergovernmental Conference on accession negotiations and start of the screening



Serbia – Population: 7 million
Candidate country
Opened chapters - 22
Provisionally closed chapters - 2

Kosovo* – Population: 1.8 million
Potential candidate
April 2016: Stabilisation and Association Agreement enters into force

North Macedonia – Population: 2.1 million
Candidate country
March 2020: EU decides to open accession negotiations
July 2022: first Intergovernmental Conference on accession negotiations and start of the screening