

# EU - Western Balkans relations

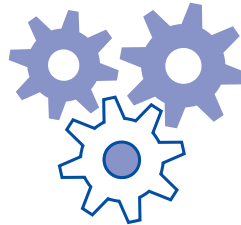
October 2021  
#WesternBalkans

## A new momentum in EU-Western Balkans relations

**February 2020:** Revised methodology, presented by the Commission, to drive forward the enlargement process with a **stronger political steer** and in a more **credible, predictable, dynamic way**

**April 2020:** EU financial support package of **over €3.3 billion** to tackle coronavirus-related health needs & post-pandemic socio-economic recovery

**October 2020:** Commission proposes **Economic & Investment Plan of up to €30 billion** to support economic development and convergence with the EU



**June 2021:** Political agreement on the new **Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance** (finally adopted in September 2021)

**July 2021:** **Western Balkans Summit of the Berlin process**

**September 2021:** **Visit of President von der Leyen** to the region

**October 2021:** **EU27- Western Balkans Summit** under the Slovenian Presidency of the EU Council

## Overview: EU relations with the Western Balkans

**Bosnia and Herzegovina** – Population: 3.5 million  
**Potential candidate**  
Commission Opinion on EU membership application in May 2019; EU Council conclusions endorsing the 14 key priorities in Dec 2019.

**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 2020: draft negotiating framework presented to the Member States.



**Serbia** – Population: 7 million  
**Candidate country**  
Opened chapters - 18 Provisionally closed chapters - 2

**Kosovo\*** – Population: 1.8 million  
**Potential candidate**  
In April 2016, the Stabilisation and Association Agreement entered into force.

**North Macedonia** – Population: 2.1 million  
**Candidate country**  
March 2020: EU decides to open accession negotiations  
July 2020: draft negotiating framework presented to the Member States.

## Economic relations between the EU and the Western Balkans



EU companies are by far the **leading investors**, accounting for **over 61% of FDI stock** in the region in 2019



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



EU accounts for **almost 70%** of the region's **total trade** in 2020