



European  
Commission

## A WESTERN BALKAN AGENDA ON INNOVATION, RESEARCH, EDUCATION, CULTURE, YOUTH & SPORT

*EU cooperation with Western Balkans offers unparalleled opportunities. The Agenda for the Western Balkans will open these opportunities to students, researchers, innovators and cultural operators so that they access new markets, become more competitive and build sustainable prosperity. It's a positive and forward-looking vision for all.*

**Mariya Gabriel** EU Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth

The European Union developed with the **Western Balkans** a forward-looking Agenda on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport. The Agenda outlines a comprehensive, **long-term strategy for cooperation with the region**.

Through **increased investments** in Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, the Western Balkans Agenda and its proposed actions **will contribute to the region's economic and societal development and cooperation**.

**EU SUPPORTS STRONGER COOPERATION** between the Western Balkans' stakeholders and EU Member States' to facilitate the successful implementation of the Agenda deliverables.

The Agenda and its Action Plan build on **three main pillars**: Political, Thematic, and Regional.

### POLITICAL AGENDA

**Towards a sustainable future by stimulating an economy that supports the recovery and helps to create jobs**

- Reflecting the strategic importance of the region and supporting its integration process through an increased EU engagement;
- Nurturing knowledge-based societies and evidence-informed policy making;
- Supporting the association to all the Union programmes covering Research, Innovation, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport;
- Supporting the implementation of systemic changes and reforms.

### THEMATIC AGENDA

**Towards closer alignment with the EU strategic priorities**

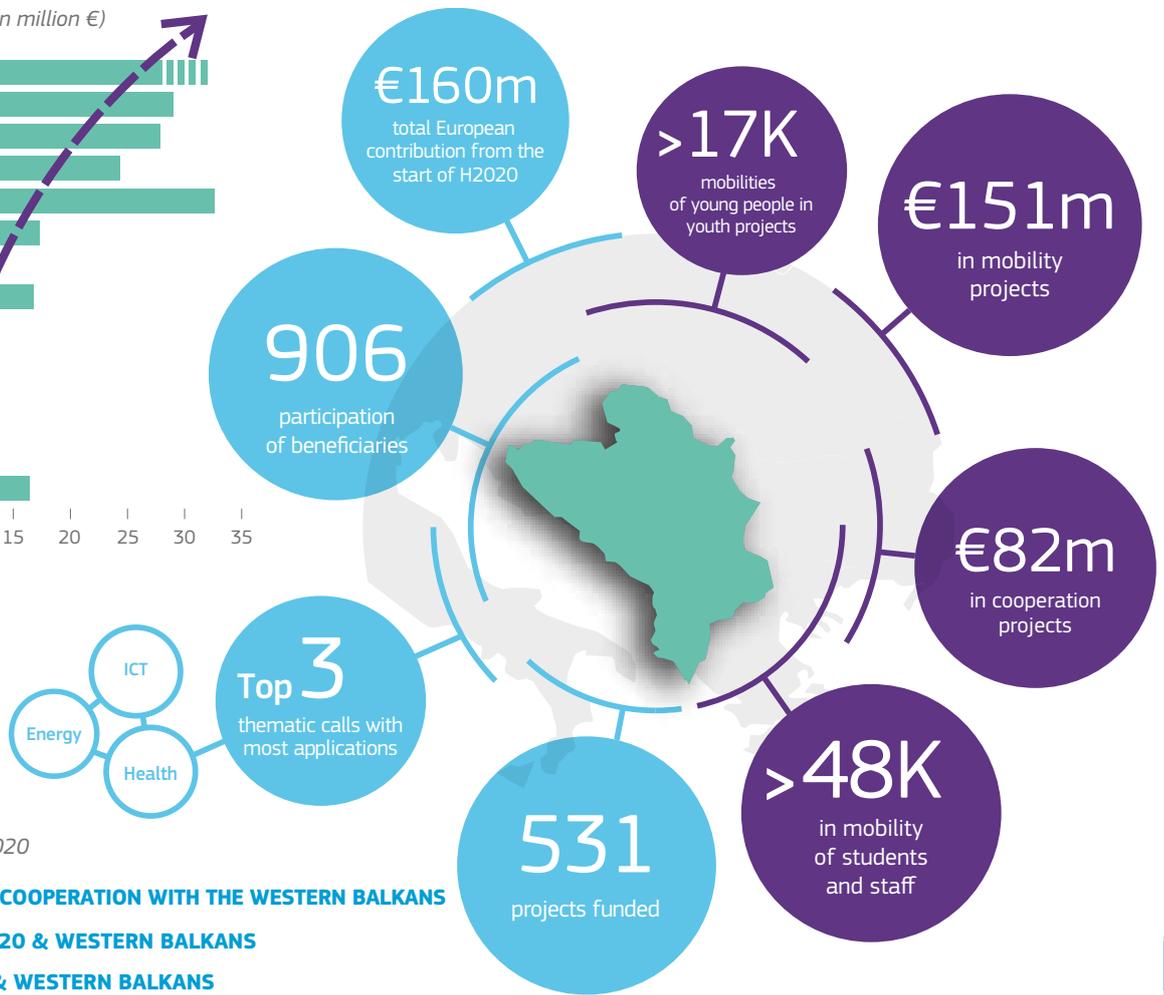
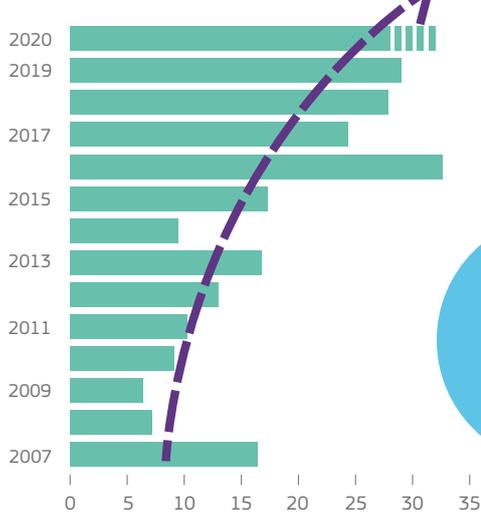
- Transforming the national research and innovation eco-systems;
- Counteracting climate change and supporting the digital transformation;
- Promoting the implementation of the EU Green Deal in the Western Balkans.

### REGIONAL AGENDA

**Towards a closer regional economic integration through planned investments in human capital development and digital transformation**

- Enhancing the quality of education and training;
- Boosting human capital development;
- Reducing the gender and digital divide;
- Improving mobility and connectivity;
- Fostering cultural and regional cooperation.

EU research funding (in million €)



For the period 2014-2020

- INCREASING COOPERATION WITH THE WESTERN BALKANS
- HORIZON 2020 & WESTERN BALKANS
- ERASMUS+ & WESTERN BALKANS

## THE EU-WESTERN BALKANS LEADING PROJECTS IN R&I

**EUSCREEN:** the project works on comparing vision and hearing screening programmes for children in EU. A cost-optimisation model is used by the project to address the existing inequity in the provision of childhood vision and hearing screening programmes.

**SEEIIST:** the project aims towards a green research facility for cancer therapy by promoting scientific and technical cooperation in the region.

**ANTARES:** the projects aims at developing a European Centre of Excellence for advanced technologies in sustainable agriculture and food security.

**IMARECULTURE:** the project uses immersive technologies such as augmented and virtual reality to make Europe's underwater cultural heritage more accessible.

**EU4TECH:** the project offers support to 40+ promising technology based projects from the region. It offers support to help validate and protect technology, develop a robust business model and move local projects closer to the market.

**Smart Specialisation Strategies:** aim to enhance the innovation potential in all the Western Balkan economies, which are part of the S3 Platform and in the process of developing their national Smart Specialisation Strategies.

**More information** on the EU-Western Balkan cooperation in R&I is available at [here](#)

© European Union, 2021

Reuse is authorised provided the source is acknowledged. The reuse policy of European Commission documents is regulated by Decision 2011/833/EU (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39). For any use or reproduction of elements that are not owned by the European Union, permission may need to be sought directly from the respective rightholders. All images © European Union unless otherwise stated. Images: © Garfieldbigberm, #1237028015, 2020. Source: adobestock.com