



Western Balkans Info Hub

POLICY ANSWERS

Updates from the PA7 Flagship Project
6 June 2025

Western Balkans Info Hub

- News, events and calls announcements are published by the project team on a daily basis.
- We are happy to receive inputs from the community via info@westernbalkans-fohub.eu
- Latest themes
 - Meetings of the Western Balkans Steering Platforms (May 2025), European Institute of Innovation and Technology (April 2025), Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management (March 2025), Smart Specialisation Strategy (February 2025), Erasmus+ and the WB (January 2025)
- Continuous updates of previous themes
 - see e.g. <https://westernbalkans-fohub.eu/theme/macro-regional-strategies/>
- Using Mailchimp as a new tool. Resubscription campaign launched.
- Social media limited to LinkedIn, soon 5000 followers

The screenshot displays the Western Balkans Info Hub website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Glossary, Archive, Submit, Contact us, About, Themes, News, Opportunities, Resources, Steering platforms, and Ecosystem of engagement. A 'Subscribe' button and search icon are also present. The main header features the text 'Welcome to the Western Balkans Info Hub!' and a brief description of the hub's purpose. Below this, there are several featured articles with illustrations and text:

- European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT)**
26 March 2025
The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is an independent body of the European Union, working to drive innovation [...]
- Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management**
4 March 2025
The global economy is gradually recovering, but uncertainty still lies ahead. Entrepreneurs play a vital role in ensuring a strong, [...]
- Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3)**
28 November 2024
Smart Specialisation Strategies foster knowledge-based growth in EU regions and countries. They are crucial to achieving a smarter, sustainable and [...]

At the bottom, there is a section titled 'Choose to stay connected' with a 'SUBSCRIBE' button and a link to 'to the Western Balkans Info Hub now!'. To the right, there are QR codes and a 'Follow us' button with a LinkedIn icon.

Latest developments

In relation to EUSDR

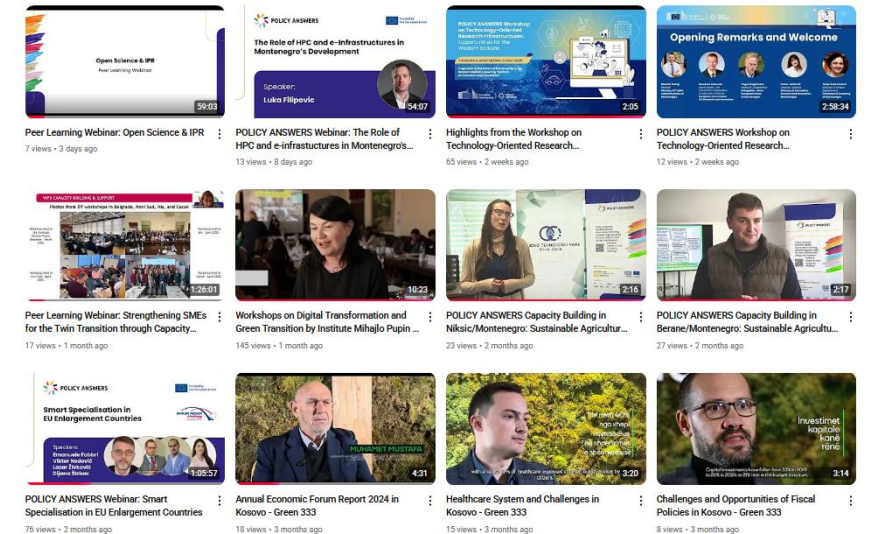
- 15 November 2024: Latest update from the PA7 Flagship Project
- Exchanges on policy recommendations for FP10
- 13 March 2025: Co-organized webinar on Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3)
- 26/27 March 2025: Participation at the PA7/PA8 Capitalisation Workshop
- Exchanges on Science Diplomacy (COST Action)
- Presentation of Western Balkans Mobility Scheme (including successful cooperation with EUSDR / DRC) at event (hybrid/Tirana) “*Enhancing Mobility-Driven Research and Innovation in Western Balkans for Sustained Economic Growth and Convergence with the European Union*”

Webinars

- <https://www.youtube.com/@westernbalkansinfohub1309>
 - ~200 webinar participants.
 - ~ 800 views to date
 - reflects strong interest in the topics
 - 66 videos are now available

Highlights

- Smart Specialisation in EU Enlargement Countries (POLICY ANSWERS co-organised with EUSDR PA7). This webinar explored the state of play of RIS3 in the region, cooperation potential and pathways for strengthening joint initiatives and R&I excellence.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDFN-o4gNts>
- Insights into role of High-Performance Computing, Technology-Oriented Research Infrastructures, capacity building results, instruments such as BIOEAST, Water4All, Raw Materials networks, etc.
- Montenegro joined the European Partnership on Blue Economy



Register for the webinar via the link provided in the description

**WESTERN
BALKANS
Info Hub**

Steering Platform Meeting in Podgorica, 13-15 May

- Discussing regional progress and good practices
- International cooperation opportunities, e.g. COST, EUREKA, EIT, RCC, etc.
- Focused session on S3 (JRC) and on skills for S3 (agro-food theme in particular) (ETF)
- Dedicated session on MSCA

Preparation of Ministerial meeting in 20-21 October 2025

will include also public events (by COST, JRC, ScienceBusiness)



<https://westernbalkans-infohub.eu/documents/policy-answers-review-of-the-steering-platform-meeting-on-research-and-innovation-in-podgorica-montenegro-13-15-may-2025>

Monitoring of the Western Balkans Agenda

3rd monitoring round:
> 2025 edition (progress compared to 2024)

- Research and Innovation
- Digital Competitiveness
- Environment
- Youth, Culture & Sports
- Education & Skills
- Common Regional Market

2024 edition is published here:

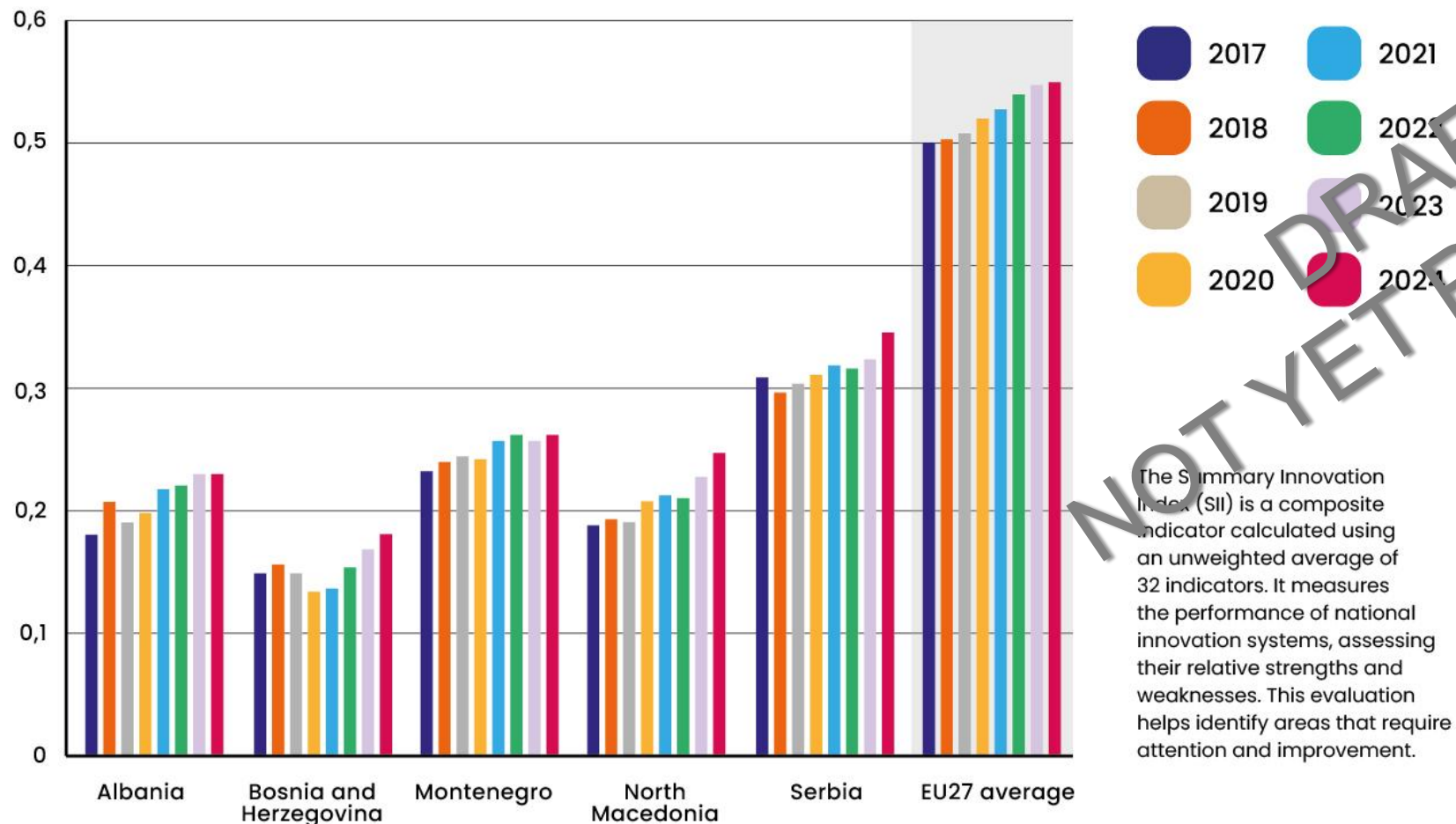
<https://www.westernbalkans-fohub.eu/news/implementing-the-western-balkans-agenda-monitoring-cards-published-by-policy-answers-july-2024/>



WP2 MONITORING FOR AGENDA SETTING

Achievements in a wider context of the Western Balkans Agenda

Summary Innovation Index



Note

Data for Kosovo* not available

Source

European Innovation Scoreboard 2024. EU countries and neighbouring countries database <https://tinyurl.com/3z4nztcv> (accessed 10 February 2025)

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

WP2 MONITORING FOR AGENDA SETTING

Agenda Priority

Boosting the WB Innovation Capacity by bringing Research and Innovation (R&I) eco-systems closer to the EU



POLICY ANSWERS

Regional Indicators

WB Steering Platform
on R&I meetings



WB policy dialogue under
the Berlin Process



POLICY ANSWERS
project






































Highlights

Strong participation of the Western Balkans in the 2024 EIT Jumpstarter Cohort
Improving innovation support and trans-national R&I cooperation by continuous growth of the EIT Community



WP2 MONITORING FOR AGENDA SETTING

Western Balkans Economy Indicators

	Supporting Western Balkans' reforms for science and research alignment with the EU acquis									
	Participation in European programmes, initiatives and schemes									
	Technical assistance to Chapter 25 (Science and Research)		Governments to increase GDP allocations to R&I		Integration in the new European Research Area (ERA)		Participation in European Partnerships under Horizon Europe		Western Balkans participation in the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) initiatives	
Albania	Low level of bilateral R&D projects and Twinning projects Low uptake of TAIEX missions		No new funding schemes reported % of GDP dedicated to R&I remains low		No new joint projects, increased number of mobilities with EU MS and WB		Participation in 2 Partnerships / no new participation in the monitoring period		Participation in EIT HEI (higher education institution) initiative EIT Community RIS (Regional Innovation Scheme) Hub established 11 pledging organisations to the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Increased number of bilateral R&D projects, Twinning projects and TAIEX missions		No new funding schemes reported % of GDP dedicated to R&I remains low		Increased number of joint projects and mobilities with EU MS and WB		No participation in Horizon Europe Partnerships		Participation in EIT HEI initiative EIT Community RIS Hub not yet established 7 pledging organisations to the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative	
Kosovo*	Low level of bilateral R&D projects and Twinning projects Low uptake of TAIEX missions		Increased number of funding schemes % of GDP dedicated to R&I remains low		Increased number of joint projects and mobilities with EU MS and WB		Not involved		Participation in EIT HEI initiative 5 pledging organisations to the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative	
Montenegro	Low level of bilateral R&D projects and Twinning projects Low uptake of TAIEX missions		No new funding schemes reported % of GDP dedicated to R&I remains low		Increased number of joint projects and mobilities with EU MS and WB		Participation in 2 Partnerships / no new participation in the monitoring period		Participation in EIT HEI initiative EIT Community RIS Hub established 4 pledging organisations to the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative	
North Macedonia	Low level of bilateral R&D projects and Twinning projects Low uptake of TAIEX missions		Decreased number of funding schemes and beneficiaries % of GDP dedicated to R&I remains low		Increased number of joint projects and mobilities with EU MS and WB		Participation in 1 Partnership (+1 in the monitoring period)		Participation in EIT HEI initiative EIT Community RIS Hub established 3 pledging organisations to the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative	
Serbia	Increased number of bilateral R&D projects, Twinning projects and TAIEX missions		Increased number of funding schemes % of GDP dedicated to R&I remains low		Increased number of joint projects and mobilities with EU MS and WB		Participation in 2 Partnerships (+1 in the monitoring period)		Participation in EIT HEI initiative EIT Community RIS Hub not yet established 13 pledging organisations to the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative	

Legend:



On track or maintaining achievement



Moderately improving
Challenges remain



Stagnating
Significant challenges



Decreasing
Major challenges



Information
not available

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

R&I Youth Awards

- Pitching event and ceremony
29/20 May in Skopje
- Upcoming social media
Youth Campaign



<https://westernbalkans-infohub.eu/news/meet-the-12-selected-initiatives-of-western-balkans-ri-youth-awards-2024/>

Forthcoming activities

Capacity building activities
under implementation in all six WB

Upcoming e.g. **BiH** supporting digitalisation of libraries, **Montenegro** training and mentoring for Horizon proposals, **Serbia** training on evaluation of policies and programmes

Pilot programmes

Evaluation of the WB Mobility Scheme, WB Innovation Vouchers, WB Youth R&I Award forthcoming

Promotion of the Award winners

Policy Briefs
on Health policy to be published soon
on statistics under development
on FP10 to be updated in autumn

Regional Innovation Academy launched and
to be further promoted

<https://westernbalkans-fohub.eu/western-balkans-regional-innovation-academy/>

Upcoming webinar:
**Partnership for Research and
Innovation in the Mediterranean Area,**
17 July, 15:00, [Registration](#)

Sustainability Strategy
Dedicated discussions / reports, e.g. on WBMS
Horizon Europe WP 2025



Additional messages

- **EU Enlargement / policy influence:** Chapter 25 negotiations, Reform Agenda, Growth Plan, Academic Freedom
- Improve positions in the **European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS)**, improve statistics
- Increase number of registered evaluators for Horizon Europe. Event on 19 June
- Preparation for Horizon Europe WP2025 calls, but also WP2026-27
- Eureka LinkUp call is open! (bottom-up call, funding from ministries and funding agencies in Albania, **Austria**, **Montenegro**, **Serbia**, **Slovenia** and Türkiye; deadline: 10 September 2025 and info webinar on 16 June 2025 (14.00 CET)
- **COST**: highest number of successful main proposers from the WB region, COST Actions open to join from 12 June
- Western Balkans-Visegrad Fellowships for short-term fellowships at V4 research institutions; deadline 15 June

Check out our results





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**THANK
YOU!**