



THE EU AND SERBIA

Membership status: candidate country

#WesternBalkans

#EUEnlargement



November 2023

The EU acknowledged the European perspective for all Western Balkan partners at the Thessaloniki European Council in June 2003. The Republic of Serbia (hereinafter 'Serbia') applied for EU membership in December 2009. In March 2012, it was granted candidate status by the European Council. The accession negotiations started in June 2013. To date, 22 out of 35 chapters have been opened, two of which are provisionally closed.



EU FUNDING

The EU is the largest provider of financial assistance to Serbia. The EU is supporting the socioeconomic development and fundamental reforms in Serbia with financial and technical assistance through the **Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA)**.

For **2021-2023**, the IPA III funding for national programmes amounts to **€571 million for Serbia**. This includes the dedicated **€165 million** from the 2023 **Energy Support Package** immediate measures, 90% of which have already been disbursed to support vulnerable families and SMEs facing the rising energy prices. The actions are also aimed at supporting policy measures to accelerate the energy transition.

Since 1999, the EU has provided **€6.3 billion** in loans for Serbia through the European Investment Bank.

The EU is Serbia's biggest trading partner



in 2022

Source: Eurostat



TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Total EU Foreign Direct Investment in Serbia amounted to €20.9 billion in 2022.

Total volume of trade in goods with the EU was €36.5 billion in 2022.

KEY MILESTONES

DECEMBER 2009
Application for EU membership

MARCH 2011
EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina starts

MARCH 2012
European Council grants candidate status

JUNE 2013
European Council decides to open accession negotiations

SEPTEMBER 2013
Stabilisation and Association Agreement enters into force

JUNE 2021
Political Intergovernmental Conference under the revised enlargement methodology

DECEMBER 2021
22 out of 35 Chapters opened, two of which provisionally closed



HUMAN CAPITAL

The EU pays special attention to youth, education, and innovation. It helps the Western Balkans in implementing Youth Guarantee schemes to support youth employment.

28,400+ participants took part in exchanges between the EU and Serbia in the areas of education, training, youth, and sport under ERASMUS+ (2014-2020).

The EU has provided €33 million in support to civil society (2014-2023).



ECONOMIC AND INVESTMENT PLAN

Launched in 2020, the Economic and Investment Plan (EIP) for the Western Balkans aims to mobilise up to €30 billion in cooperation with international financial institutions until 2027. Under the EIP for Serbia, the EU has already mobilised **€5.7 billion** in investments, out of which €1.1 billion in grants.

The EIP flagship projects in public sector for Serbia, endorsed between 2020 and 2023, support **sustainable transport, clean energy, environment and climate, digital infrastructure** and **human capital**.

For instance, the investments help:

- reconstruct the rail Corridor X sections on Belgrade-Niš railway line
- construct Kostolac wind farm
- construct a new building for University Children's Hospital in Belgrade (Tiršova 2) equipped with modern technology
- extend the broadband coverage in rural areas
- construct the sewage system in Palilula municipality in Belgrade

Expected results up to 2030



77 km of motorways built



586 km of railway lines rehabilitated



353 MW renewable energy generation capacity installed



Improved water and sanitation services for 2.1 million people

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