



European Commission



EU support to Western Balkans

in tackling COVID-19

December 2021

#WeCare #Coronavirus #TeamEurope

Overview of EU support

The EU, together with the EIB, mobilised

over €3.3 billion

to support the Western Balkans



in tackling coronavirus health crisis



and post-pandemic socio-economic recovery



Coronavirus health crisis



The EU supplied **almost €42 million for immediate support** to the Western Balkans health sector to procure medical equipment such as masks, ventilators, visors and testing kits.



The EU supplied **free control material** developed by the EU's Joint Research Centre to Western Balkan partners to enable them check the accuracy of coronavirus tests.



The EU opened the **Joint Procurement Agreement** to the Western Balkan partners, under which they can join EU Member States to purchase medicines and medical supplies.



Through the **EU Civil Protection Mechanism** EU Member States helped the Western Balkans partners by providing equipment and repatriation assistance for stranded citizens.



The EU included the Western Balkans in **information sharing** over coronavirus early warning and response, facilitated by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.



The EU quickly provided vulnerable individuals, such as Roma, with **essential food and hygiene packages**, and has put in place specific support for helping the **elderly, children, victims of domestic violence, and minorities** to ride out the crisis. The EU's **Instrument contributing to Peace and Stability** provided €8 million for vulnerable migrants.



The EU supports health, research and water needs with a total of **€88 million**. Of this amount, the EU has allocated **€70 million** in grants to the Western Balkans to ensure availability and access to reliable, effective and EU authorized **COVID-19 vaccines**. The vaccines will be used especially for the **vaccination of priority groups** (primarily healthcare workers, the elderly, vulnerable and high- risk people). These grants will include the possibility to cover the costs of some of the equipment necessary for the vaccination campaigns, up to a certain percentage.

In collaboration with WHO, a further **€7 million** will help to prepare the region for the effective reception and administration of COVID-19 vaccines, including those received from COVAX and through the EU vaccine sharing mechanism with EU Member States. It will also help improve the region's resilience against health emergencies, and universal health care. In addition, funding is supporting cooperation with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).



By October 2021, **EU Member States** have shared **around 4 million doses of vaccines** with Western Balkan Partners. **Around 1.8 million doses more** have been delivered through the **COVAX** facility, where **TEAM EUROPE** is a leading donor.



Socio-economic recovery



The EU is providing **almost €762 million to support recovery** from the social and economic impact of the crisis, with special attention to the most vulnerable and to providing a lifeline for Western Balkans businesses.



The EU is also providing **€750 million in Macro-Financial Assistance**, in tandem with the International Monetary Fund, to support Western Balkan governments that requested help with balancing the payment crisis.



The EU extended the **EU Solidarity Fund** to the Western Balkan partners that have started accession negotiations.



A lifeline for Western Balkans businesses

Within the **almost €762 million** package supporting socio-economic recovery, the EU is providing **€385 million** to ensure survival in the short-term, and recovery in the medium-term of businesses in the private sector. This funding will be channelled through up to 70 local banks in the region to help **Small and Medium Enterprises** in getting more flexible terms for repayments, or easier access to new loans, and to enable entrepreneurs to cope with the immediate effects of the crisis and thrive afterwards. Through the European Investment Bank (EIB), the EU is also providing **€1.7 billion** for additional loans for **public sector investments**, and further credit to enterprises, to help safeguard jobs for the many people working in SMEs in the region.

 **€385 million**

 **European Investment Bank**

€1.7 billion of preferential loans

Support for businesses



Public sector investment



Focusing on SMEs, start-ups and innovative companies, this EU assistance will in particular be available for innovative businesses, farmers and agri-businesses, rural and tourism enterprises, as well as women- and youth-led businesses. It will provide a lifeline for many people all over the Western Balkans, especially those working in vulnerable and small-scale enterprises.