



THE EU AND NORTH MACEDONIA

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 North Macedonia (hereinafter 'North Macedonia') applied for EU membership in March 2004. In December 2005, it was granted candidate status by the European Council. The first Political Intergovernmental Conference on accession negotiations was held in July 2022. The Commission immediately after launched the analytical examination of North Macedonia's alignment to EU acquis (screening), which is progressing smoothly.



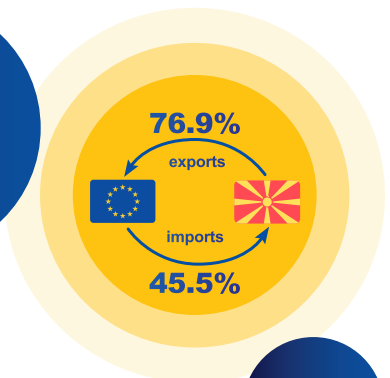
EU FUNDING

The EU is the largest provider of financial assistance to North Macedonia. The EU is supporting the socioeconomic development and fundamental reforms in North Macedonia 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 **€265 million for North Macedonia**. This includes the dedicated **€80 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 **€1.2 billion** in loans to North Macedonia through the European Investment Bank.

The EU is the biggest trading partner of North Macedonia



in 2022

Source: Eurostat



TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Total EU Foreign Direct Investment in North Macedonia amounted to €4.5 billion in 2022.

Total volume of trade in goods with the EU was €13.8 billion in 2022.

KEY MILESTONES

MARCH 2004
Application for EU membership

APRIL 2004
Stabilisation and Association Agreement enters into force

DECEMBER 2005
European Council grants candidate status

OCTOBER 2009
Commission recommends opening of accession negotiations

JUNE 2018
The Council sets out the path towards opening accession negotiations

MARCH 2020
European Council decides to open accession negotiations

JULY 2022
Intergovernmental Conference on accession negotiations
Start of the screening process



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.

34,500+ participants took part in exchanges between the EU and North Macedonia in the areas of education, training, youth, and sport under ERASMUS+ (2014-2020).

The EU has provided around €42 million in support to civil society (2014-2023).

The city of **Skopje** was awarded the title of the European Capital of Culture 2028.



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 North Macedonia, the EU has already mobilised **€1.6 billion** in investments, out of which €566 million in grants.

The EIP flagship projects in public sector for North Macedonia, endorsed between 2020 and 2023, support **sustainable transport, clean energy, and environment and climate**.

For instance, the investments help:

- construct Kriva Palanka – Stracin express road of Corridor VIII: North Macedonia-Bulgaria rail interconnection
- increase the capacity of Bogdanci wind park
- build a central wastewater treatment plant for Skopje

Expected results up to 2030

-  **957 MW** renewable energy generation capacity installed
-  **107 km** of future-proof gas pipelines built
-  **205 km** of railway lines rehabilitated
-  Efficient solid waste services for **1.4 million people**

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