**Key milestones**

- **March 2004**
  Application for EU membership

- **April 2004**
  Entry into force of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement

- **December 2005**
  EU candidate country status granted

- **October 2009**
  The Commission recommends opening of accession negotiations

- **April 2018**
  The Commission repeats its unconditional recommendation to open accession negotiations

- **June 2018**
  The Council sets out the path towards opening accession negotiations

- **March 2020**
  The members of the European Council endorse the Council’s decision to open accession negotiations

- **July 2020**
  Presentation of the draft negotiating framework to the Member States

- **July 2022**
  Intergovernmental Conference on accession negotiations (IGC)
  Start of the screening process

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**EU funding**

- The EU is the largest provider of financial assistance to North Macedonia.
- The EU is supporting the socioeconomic development and reforms in the enlargement region, including in North Macedonia, with financial and technical assistance through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA).
- For 2021-2027, IPA III funding for the whole enlargement region is €14.162 billion*. It is based on EU thematic priorities rather than pre-defined country envelopes. This will allow the instrument to reward performance, progress towards key priorities and have increased flexibility to respond to evolving needs.
- The Annual Action Plan 2021 for North Macedonia of €90.45 million focuses on supporting actions in rule of law & anti-corruption, fight against organised crime, trade, environment & clean air, green economy and the green agenda.
- The Annual Action Plan 2022 for North Macedonia amounts to €72.5 million and focuses on enhancing the EU accession process and supporting the country’s reforms in the areas of border and migration management, public administration, environment, health, social protection and gender equality.
- In the Framework of the Energy Support Package of €1 billion adopted for the Western Balkans (500 million in grants and 500 million in soft loans & guarantees), the Annual Action Plan for 2023 for North Macedonia is €80 million.
- For 2014 - 2020, IPA II funding allocated for North Macedonia amounted to €633 million.
- Over €1 billion provided in European Investment Bank loans since 1999.

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**Trade & investment**

- The EU is North Macedonia’s biggest trading partner.
- The EU’s Foreign Direct Investment in North Macedonia reached €288.8 million in 2021.
- Volume of trade in goods with the EU was €10.8 billion in 2021.
- In exports: 79% of imports
- In imports: 46% of exports

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**Economic & Investment Plan**

Over the next seven years, the EU will mobilise up to €30 billion in cooperation with international financial institutions through the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans launched in 2020. The following EIP projects for North Macedonia were endorsed in 2022:

- **Sustainable transport**: North Macedonia – Bulgaria Corridor VIII Rail Interconnection
- **Clean energy**: Oslomej 1 Solar Photovoltaic Power Plant, Oslomej 2 and Bitola Photovoltaic Power Plants
- **Environment and climate**: Skopje Wastewater Treatment Plant

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**Human capital & innovation**

- The EU pays special attention to youth, education and innovation and is helping the Western Balkans implementing Youth Guarantee schemes to support youth employment.
- 11,600+ participants from North Macedonia in higher education, vocational education and training, school education, adult learning and youth under ERASMUS+ (2014-2020).