POLICY ANSWERS

Overview of bilateral R&I cooperation between WB economies and EU Member States

Main author: Inese Gavarane
Responsible organisation: ZSI
Date: 25 August 2025

https://www.facebook.com/WBInfoHub
https://x.com/wbinfohub
https://www.linkedin.com/company/wbinfohub/

www.westernbalkans-infohub.eu

POLICY ANSWERS is funded by the European Commission through the Horizon Europe project "R&I POLICY making, implementation ANd Support in the WEsteRn BalkanS", Grant Agreement N° 101058873.

Funded by the European Union

Contributing authors	Fiorda Llukmani, Elke Dall (ZSI)
Work Package	WP6 Capacity Building
Submission date	25 August 2025
Dissemination level	Public
doi	n.a.

Disclaimer

POLICY ANSWERS is funded by the European Commission through the Horizon Europe project "R&I policy making, implementation and support in the Western Balkans", Grant Agreement N°101058873. Views and opinions expressed are, however, those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union (EU) or the European Commission (EC). Neither the EU nor the EC can be held responsible for them. For further information regarding POLICY ANSWERS, visit www.westernbalkans-infohub.eu

List of Abbreviations

AUT-BOKU 2030	A bilateral cooperation project between University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU) Vienna, Austria and Agricultural University of Tirana (AUT), Albania
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Service
ERA	European Research Area
EU	European Union
FFG	Austrian Research Promotion Agency
MS	Member State/-s
OeAD	Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation
PHC	Hubert Curien Partnerships
POLICY ANSWERS	Horizon Europe project "R&I policy making, implementation and support in the Western Balkans"
R&I	Research and Innovation
WB	Western Balkans

Table of contents

1 Introduction

International Research and Innovation (R&I) cooperation plays a crucial role in the development of research and innovation ecosystems in the Western Balkans (WB)[1], the European Union (EU) Member States (MS) and beyond. This cooperation can take various forms, including for instance:

- Unilateral initiatives initiated by one country (e.g., German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Higher Education Dialogue in Western Balkans[2], or provision of funds for the international partners, for example Cooperative research and development projects of the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG)[3]).
- Bilateral national initiatives between two countries (e.g., bilateral research funding programme Montenegro-Slovenia[4])
- Multilateral initiatives involving more than two countries (e.g., European Union's Research and Innovation Framework Programme Horizon Europe[5])
- Global international initiatives (e.g., International Partnership for advancing transdisciplinary research for sustainability Belmont Forum[6]).

The multilateral programmes and initiatives such as the European Union's (EU) research and innovation frameworks[7], such as the Horizon Europe Programme, Erasmus+[8] or EUREKA[9] are essential for establishing and developing international R&I cooperation. These are a part of the EU's strategy to enhance regional cooperation and support the EU accession process[10]. The EU's Framework Programmes have been proven as the most instrumental vehicle for increased international R&I cooperation in the WB[11]. Furthermore, there are designated Interreg Cross-Border-Cooperation Programmes which also include WB[12]. Noteworthy is the fact that these Interreg programmes establish joint committees, composed of representatives from the economies involved in each specific programme. These committees facilitate and maintain proactive cooperation among the participating WB economies and the EU MS. There are more

[1] The Western Balkans comprise Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.
[2] German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Higher Education Dialogue with Western Balkans 2026 https://www2.daad.de/downloads/foerderprogramm/file.php?id=9183. Accessed 13 August 2025.
[3] Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG). (2024). Guidelines for cooperative R&D projects. Chapter 2.5. https://fdoc.ffg.at/s/vdb/public/node/content/kTHJm9_1RbGgRYfas3jRJg/5.0?a=true. Accessed 8 August 2025.
[4] Call for co-financing scientific and technological cooperation projects between Montenegro and Slovenia for 2025–2026. https://www.gov.me/clanak/konkurs-za-sufinansiranje-naucne-i-tehnoloske-saradnje-crna-gora-slovenija-2025-26godine. Accessed 13 August 2025.
[5] European Commission. Horizon Europe: The EU's research and innovation framework programme (2021–2027). https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/horizon-europe_en. Accessed 13 August 2025.
[6] International partnership Belmont Forum. https://belmontforum.org. Accessed 13 August 2025.
[7] EU framework programmes for research and innovation. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_IDA(2017)608697. Accessed 21 August 2025.
[8] Erasmus+ programme. https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/.
[9] EUREKA Network. https://eurekanetwork.org/. Accessed 7 August 2025.
[10] European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation. (2021). A Western Balkans agenda on innovation, research, education, culture, youth & sport. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/831554. Accessed 13 August 2025.
[11] Marčić, Sanja, & Pepić, Aleksandra. (2023). Research management and administration in the Western Balkans. *The Emerald handbook of research management and administration around the world (Ed.)*. 641-646. Emerald Publishing Limited. DOI: 10.1108/978-1-80382-701-820231031
[12] Interreg Cross-Border Cooperation programmes. https://wbc-rti.info/glossary/169.html. Accessed 13 August 2025.

than a dozen of the Interreg programmes, for example, Programme Interreg VI-A IPA Bulgaria – North Macedonia for 2021-2027, Programme Interreg VI-A IPA Bulgaria – Serbia for 2021-2027, Programme Interreg VI-A IPA Croatia – Serbia for 2021-2027, Programme Interreg VI-A IPA Greece – Albania for 2021-2027, Programme Interreg VI-A IPA Greece – North Macedonia for 2021-2027, Programme Interreg VI-A IPA Hungary – Serbia for 2021-2027, Programme Interreg VI-A IPA Romania – Serbia for 2021-2027, Cross-border cooperation programme Albania – Kosovo* for 2021-2027, Cross-border cooperation programme Montenegro – Albania for 2021-2027[13]. The Central European Exchange Program for University Studies (CEEPUS)[14] is another notable example of the multilateral university exchange programme based on an international agreement.

Note: This analysis of bilateral cooperation does not address the type of bilateral cooperation that takes place within broader unilateral or multilateral research and innovation initiatives.

The bilateral research cooperation is crucial as it fosters direct partnership, enabling two sides to pool resources, expertise, and infrastructure to tackle challenges more effectively and can have a better focus on each economy's interests. Such R&I cooperation also can lead to the strengthening ties between nations, promoting mutual understanding and cooperation. There are several instruments for implementation of the bilateral research cooperation, for example:

- Formalised agreements expressed in R&I strategies, policies, agreements, memorandum of understandings (e.g., Agreement on scientific and technological cooperation between Montenegro and the Czech Republic[15]).
- Diplomatic visits and meetings (e.g., meeting on development of innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in Kosovo with Ambassador of Finland[16]).
- Joint research funding programmes (e.g., scientific and technology projects Montenegro-Slovenia[17]).
- Bilateral researcher mobility programmes (e.g., research mobility programme Albania-Italy[18]).
- Bilateral institutional or organisational level cooperations (e.g., AUT-BOKU 2030[19]).
- Research grants and scholarships (e.g., scholarships for students, including PhD from North Macedonia to study at Bulgarian universities[20]).

* 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.

[13] Interreg cross-border programmes. https://keep.eu/programmes/. Accessed 18 August 2025.

[14] Central European Exchange Program for University Studies (CEEPUS). https://www.ceepus.info/content/about. Accessed 14 August 2025.

[15] Agreement on scientific and technological cooperation between Montenegro and the Czech Republic. (2019). https://www.gov.me/en/article/202488--agreement-signed-on-scientific-and-technological-cooperation-between-montenegro-and-the-czech-republic. Accessed 10 August 2025.

[16] Kosovo and Finland Will Cooperate in the Field of Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Telegrafi (2018). https://telegrafi.com/en/Kosovo-and-Finland-to-work-together-in-the-field-of-innovation-and-entrepreneurship/. Accessed 10 August 2025.

[17] Competition for the scientific and technological cooperation projects Montenegro – Slovenia (2025-26). https://www.gov.me/clanak/konkurs-za-sufinansiranje-naucne-i-tehnoloske-saradnje-crna-gora-slovenija-2025-26godine. Accessed 10 August 2025.

[18] Bilateral projects of the National Agency of Scientific Research and Innovation (NASRI). https://nasri.gov.al/projekte-bilaterale/. Accessed 10 August 2025.

[19] AUT-BOKU 2030 Project. https://aut-boku.org/. Accessed 8 August 2025.

[20] Scholarships for students from North Macedonia to study at Bulgarian universities. https://mon.gov.mk/content/?id=10175. Accessed 8 August 2025.

- Bilateral R&I conferences and workshops (e.g., Scientific forum Italy-Serbia[21], Serbian-French Innovation Forum[22]).
- Joint R&I infrastructures (e.g., bilateral French-German Research Institute of Saint-Louis[23]).

There are various approaches to maintaining and supporting R&I bilateral cooperation at the national level. These approaches can operate either through joint committees between ministries or by delegating these functions to the agencies. In particular, developed economies tend to establish dedicated structures to support international R&I cooperation. For instance, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) offers a wide range of programmes, including bilateral partnerships. Similarly, the French Hubert Curien Partnerships (PHC) provide another example of research mobility, including bilateral partnerships. These initiatives are specifically designed to foster mutual scientific cooperation by facilitating researchers' mobility.

This document aims to summarise data on bilateral research cooperation, gathered through surveys and desk research in summer 2025 and analysed by the POLICY ANSWERS project. The document gives an overview on bilateral initiatives, mainly at economy level, between a WB economy and an EU MS. Additionally, we added some available information about bilateral R&I cooperation between WB and other enlargement countries, such as Georgia, Moldova, Türkiye and Ukraine. The analysis provides insights about bilateral science and technology agreements, Memorandum of Understandings, joint funding programmes, events, bilateral institutional or organisational cooperation etc.

Bilateral R&I cooperation between the WB and the EU MS is dynamic and varies considerably when it comes to each single economy, however, it is region specific. Some of the signed documents do not have a period of the duration, whereas some of the agreements signed for the specific period duration have not been renewed yet. While each economy demonstrates a commitment to bilateral partnerships, the thematic and strategic focus of these cooperations varies.

This document is starting with insights in global trends and motivations in international cooperation and it highlights the main findings in the concluding remarks. The document then provides an overview of data on bilateral cooperation between the WB economies and the EU MS, as well as other enlargement countries.

2 Global trends and motivation

This section briefly describes the landscape of international R&I cooperation, emphasising its crucial role in modern R&I ecosystems. It explores the motivations behind bilateral research partnerships, the examples of policies implemented to promote these cooperations, and the impact of such initiatives on addressing global challenges and on enhancing economic growth.

International R&I cooperation has become a foundation of modern R&I ecosystems, driven by the globalisation of the research labour market, infrastructure and the necessity to address global challenges together (e.g., climate change, scarce resources, pandemics)[24]. Countries worldwide are increasingly adopting policies to promote research cooperation and mobility, aiming to

[21] Scientific Forum Italy - Serbia. (2023). https://www.nitra.gov.rs/en/medunarodna-saradnja/decenija-nauka-za-odrzivi-razvoj/naucni-forum-italija-srbija. Accessed 8 August 2025.
[22] Serbian-French Innovation Forum. https://nitra.gov.rs/en/medunarodna-saradnja/decenija-nauka-za-odrzivi-razvoj/inovacioni-forum-srbija-francuska. Accessed 8 August 2025.
[23] French-German Research Institute of Saint-Louis. https://www.isl.eu/about/. Accessed 8 August 2025.
[24] Adams, Jonathan, Gurney, Karen, Hook, Daniel, and Leydesdorff, Loet. (2014). International collaboration clusters in Africa. *Scientometrics*, *98*(1), 547-556. DOI: 10.1007/s11192-013-1060-2

strengthen and internationalise their own R&I ecosystems[25]. These trends highlight the importance of such cooperation in fostering high-quality knowledge production, solving complex scientific problems, addressing societal and global challenges and boosting economic growth[26].

As stated above, bilateral cooperation in R&I usually refers to formalised agreements, programmes or joint activities between two countries, national agencies or national organisations) to link resources, expertise or infrastructure, exchange knowledge, support joint projects, facilitate researchers' mobility or expand innovation activities. Bilateral R&I cooperation is distinct in its two-party exclusivity contrasting with unilateral (one-sided action) or multilateral (involving several countries) approaches. Bilateral cooperation is operationalised through joint research centres, shared access to the laboratories, reciprocal fellowships, coordinated funding calls between two governments/agencies, etc. Bilateral R&I cooperation initially developed as unilateral efforts proved insufficient in terms of scale, scope or expertise. Early bilateral science and technology agreements were focused on exchange programmes and data sharing. Later, the programmes expanded embracing also innovation and more targeted policy outcomes as well as strategic reputation-building.

Similar as in multilateral cooperation, international cooperation in R&I is needed to enhance scientific outputs and address global challenges[27]. Studies have shown that international cooperation leads to enhanced productivity and increased citations, underscoring the mutual benefits of strategic partnerships in research[28]. Overall, the push toward international research cooperation reflects a broader recognition of its critical role in advancing R&I.

During the French presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2022, the Marseilles Declaration[29] was adopted, which proclaimed nine key principles and values for global research cooperation which also apply for bilateral cooperation, such as:

- Freedom of scientific research
- Ethics and integrity
- Research excellence
- Gender equality
- Open Science
- Intellectual property, personal data
- Value creation and societal and economic impact
- Societal and environmental responsibility and solidarity
- Risk management/security

These principles and values are crucial for R&I cooperation as they provide a common ethical framework that fosters trust, ensures the protection of intellectual property rights, and promotes equitable and impactful research achievements across borders.

In addition, science diplomacy is becoming rapidly a key element in aligning research with foreign and security policies to facilitate international research cooperation, as it is fundamentally driven by national interests. Science diplomacy is often deployed to build positive

[25] Jacob, Merle, and Meek, Lynn. (2013). Scientific mobility and international research networks: trends and policy tools for promoting research excellence and capacity building. *Studies in Higher Education*, *38*(3), 331-334. DOI: 10.1080/03075079.2013.773789
[26] Royal Society. (2011). *Knowledge, Networks and Nations: Global Scientific Collaboration in the 21st Century*. London: Elsevier.
[27] European Commission. (2021). Global Approach to Research and Innovation. Europe's strategy for international cooperation in a changing world. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=COM:2021:252:FIN. Accessed 6 August 2025.
[28] Gazni, Ali, Sugimoto, Cassidy R., and Didegah, Farshad. (2012). Mapping world scientific collaboration: authors, institutions, and countries. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, *63*(2), 323-335. DOI: 10.1002/asi.21688
[29] Marseille Declaration on international cooperation in research and innovation (R&I). (2022). https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/2022-03/marseille-declaration-english--17075.pdf. Accessed 6 August 2025.

international relationships[30]. The recently published European framework for science diplomacy highlights the emergence of science diplomacy, suggests science diplomacy practices and provides recommendations for making science diplomacy a key instrument of the European Union's diplomatic toolbox[31].

Historically, there is also a criticism on bilateral agreements, that in absence of a common framework at European level, they can lead to a lack of alignment and coordination, duplication and hence waste of resources[32]. It is important to understand the motivations behind bilateral cooperation and to analyse the trends so that multilateral and bilateral cooperation complement each other. When developing bilateral cooperation agreements, it is essential to align them with the interests of the R&I community, ensuring they provide a direction for ecosystem development. Keeping stakeholders informed about the agreements and their potential benefits it is equally important. Moreover, policy dialogues should be maintained and even intensified after the agreements are signed to maximise multi-stakeholder cooperation and long-term impact[33].

According to a bibliometric data study on global trends in international R&I cooperation, the bilateral cooperation remains the most prevalent form of international cooperation, with its share of globally published articles rising from 4.4% in 1980 to 18% in 2021. This trend underlines the growing importance of cross-border partnerships in advancing R&I[34]. Developed economies generate more than half of their research publications with international co-authorships. In contrast, emerging economies rely more on their own research basis, resulting in a higher number of papers without international co-authors[35].

To sum-up above mentioned, international cooperation is fundamental to the modern R&I ecosystems, crucial for tackling societal and global challenges, enhancing research capacity, and driving economic growth and social welfare.

3 Bilateral R&I cooperation: WB economies and EU MS

This section presents an overview of bilateral cooperation in R&I between the WB economies and the EU MS, including cooperation with other enlargement countries. While the primary focus of the analysis is on science, technological development, R&I, it also considers related areas such as youth, economic development, higher education, and culture, as they intersect with or support R&I initiatives.

The main goal of this section is to present key information and examples of bilateral cooperation initiatives. The authors and contributors from the POLICY ANSWERS project partner organisations have gathered and summarised available data.

Note: While some information may be incomplete, this overview provides a comprehensive

[30] Ruffini, Pierre-Bruno. (2020). Conceptualizing science diplomacy in the practitioner-driven literature: a critical review. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 7, 124. DOI: 10.1057/s41599-020-00609-5
[31] European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation. (2025). *A European framework for science diplomacy – Recommendations of the EU Science Diplomacy Working Groups*. Publications Office of the European Union. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/9235330. Accessed 6 August 2025.
[32] Ibid.
[33] European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, Technopolis Group, Technische Universität Wien. Fikkers, Derek Jan Horvat, Manfred, (Eds.). (2014). Basic principles for effective international science, technology and innovation agreements – Executive summary. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/12121. Accessed 13 August 2025.
[34] Aksnes, Dag W., and Sivertsen, Gunnar. (2023). Global trends in international research collaboration, 1980-2021. *Journal of Data and Information Science*, *8*(2), 26–42. DOI: 10.2478/jdis-2023-0015
[35] Adams, Jonathan. (2013). The fourth age of research. *Nature*, 497, 557–560. DOI: 10.1038/497557a

analysis and understanding of the current bilateral cooperation patterns.

Information on bilateral R&I cooperation was gathered through surveys and desk research. The POLICY ANSWERS project team carried out a survey among project partners in the WB economies and the report authors from Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI, Austria, project coordinator) supplemented this with desk research. Additionally, the European Commission provided some results from a discussion in the European Research Area (ERA) Forum's sub-group discussing international cooperation.

The survey focused on collecting available data on bilateral cooperation agreements and formalised documents, joint funding programmes, institutional partnerships, and examples of bilateral projects. Researchers' mobility initiative French Hubert Curien Partnership (e.g., Danube Programme)[36] is mentioned describing Serbia's bilateral cooperation as there is a bilateral cooperation agreement to implement research mobility programme Pavle Savic. Meanwhile, partners from Montenegro can join the Danube Programme in consortia which includes two to four economies from the Danube region (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovakia) and France. The mobility programme Higher Education Dialogue in WB[37] offered by DAAD is a unilateral initiative, thus it is not mentioned in the descriptive part for each economy.

While diplomatic visits and meetings are essential in fostering bilateral cooperation and facilitating partnerships both on economy and institutional level, this section cannot provide a comprehensive summary of such activities. Instead, selected examples are included to demonstrate their significance, particularly where they have led to tangible outcomes, such as the initiation or the signing of cooperation agreements between institutions.

The data on bilateral cooperation between institutions are presented as examples, many more bilateral agreements exist between institutions. Regarding cooperation of higher education institutions with various organisations, the focus was on demonstrating the dynamics of internationalisation. Due to limited data availability, the nature of these agreements, whether signed under multilateral initiatives or bilateral frameworks, could not be differentiated.

In the Annex to this document, summarised information about bilateral research cooperation between economies is provided.

Albania

Bilateral agreements

Albania had signed bilateral agreements on cooperation in the field of science with nine EU MS: Austria (2012), Bulgaria (2007), Croatia (1995), the Czech Republic for the years 2012-2015 (2012), Italy (1998), Malta (1992), Poland (1993), Romania (2006) and Slovenia (2005).

In 1992, Albania signed a Programme for cultural, scientific, and technical exchanges with France, covering the period 1992–1993. Similarly, Albania also signed a Programme for cultural, educational, and scientific cooperation with Sweden for the period 1992–1994. Furthermore, in 2006, Albania signed a Protocol on a future cooperation programme in the fields of culture, science, and education with Germany. Moreover, in 2019, the cultural agreement between Albania and Germany was signed.

Bilateral education cooperation with Hungary is based on a bilateral agreement. This agreement provides access to the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship programme, which includes funding

[36] Hubert Curien Partnerships. https://www.campusfrance.org/en/node/303052. Accessed 8 August 2025.
[37] German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Higher Education Dialogue with Western Balkans 2026 https://www2.daad.de/downloads/foerderprogramm/file.php?id=9183. Accessed 13 August 2025.

for higher education, and supports the research activities required for these studies.

In respect to the EU enlargement context, Albania has signed cooperation agreements with four WB economies: Bosnia and Herzegovina (2003), Kosovo (2010), Montenegro (2008), and North Macedonia (2001). Furthermore, in 2007, Albania concluded a cooperation agreement with Türkiye. However, no further information is currently available regarding cooperation agreements with other EU enlargement countries.

Joint committees and events

Regular meetings of the Austrian-Albanian Joint Commission for scientific and technological cooperation have been held frequently since the signing of the scientific and technological cooperation agreement in 2012. In October 2025, Finland is going to organise a Business Forum in Tirana.

Funding programmes/scholarships

Since 2015, the Albanian National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation (NASRI) has been implementing two bilateral research cooperation funding programmes with Austria and Italy.

Additionally, in 2020, NASRI launched a joint call with Kosovo, followed by another joint call with Türkiye in 2022.

Institutional and organisational cooperation

To further support bilateral calls, NASRI closely cooperates at the institutional level with Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation (OeAD), the Italian National Research Council (CNR), the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TÜBİTAK), and Kosovo's central administration of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation.

Albanian higher education institutions and research-performing organisations are gradually advancing towards internationalisation and institutional bilateral cooperation. In this regard, one of the important examples in bilateral cooperation is the AUT-BOKU 2030 project. This project, led by the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), Austria, seeks to strengthen the Agricultural University of Tirana (AUT), Albania.

For example, University of Tirana has bilateral cooperation agreements with institutions from 18 EU MS: Italy (15), France (7), Germany (3), Greece (4), Poland (3), Spain (1), Croatia (2), Czech Republic (2), Romania (2), Hungary (1), Portugal (1), Denmark (1), Belgium (1), Latvia (1), Lithuania (1), Finland (1), Austria (1), Bulgaria (1). From WB economies University of Tirana has one agreement with one institution from Kosovo and one from Bosnia and Herzegovina. With institutions in the other EU enlargement countries there are agreements with Türkiye (5), Ukraine (2) and Georgia (1). The origin of all these agreements could not be determined, particularly if signed as part of multilateral cooperation programmes or bilateral initiatives.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bilateral agreements

Bilateral agreements on scientific cooperation are signed with ten EU MS: Austria (2016), Bulgaria (2005), Croatia (2002, entry into force 2011), the Czech Republic, France (2002, ratified in 2003), Germany (2004, ratified in 2005), Greece (2003), Hungary (2006), Italy for the period 2003-2005 (2003), Poland, and Slovenia (2008). Additionally, a Memorandum of Cooperation in

the field of youth is signed with Slovakia in 2018.

Bilateral education cooperation with Hungary is based on a bilateral agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina. This agreement provides access to the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship programme 2023-2025, which includes funding for higher education, and supports the research activities required for these studies.

There are bilateral agreements covering the field of science with Albania (2003), Montenegro (2008), North Macedonia (2012) and with Türkiye in the process of development. Furthermore, bilateral agreements in the field of education are signed with Serbia (2010) and Türkiye (2017). However, no further information is currently available regarding cooperation agreements with other EU enlargement countries.

Joint committees and events

There is available information about the Joint Committee on scientific and technological cooperation with Slovenia. Furthermore, since 2018, Joint Commission meetings for scientific and technological cooperation are taking place between Austria and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In 2019, the French Institute organised a France - Bosnia and Herzegovina scientific committee meeting in Sarajevo.

Funding programmes/scholarships

According to the available information there is a funding programme for Scientific & Technological Cooperation (WTZ) between Austria and Bosnia and Herzegovina to support mobility of researchers to carry out bilateral research projects. The funding programme is implemented by the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation (OeAD).

Institutional and organisational cooperation

Institutional cooperation among R&I stakeholders is most frequently facilitated through multilateral EU initiatives. For instance, the University of Poitiers, France, signed a cooperation agreement with five Bosnian universities under the Erasmus+ programme[38].

For example, the University of Sarajevo has bilateral cooperation agreements with institutions from 16 EU MS: Croatia (14), Italy (13), Germany (12), Slovenia (8), France (6), Poland (5), Austria (4), Norway (3), Spain (3), Romania (3), Finland (2), Greece (2), Bulgaria (1), Denmark (1), Hungary (1) and Sweden (1). With WB economies, most of the agreements are with institutions from Serbia (10) and North Macedonia (9) followed by Kosovo (5), Albania (4) and Montenegro (3). With institutions from other EU enlargement countries, there are agreements with Türkiye (19). The origin of all these agreements could not be determined, particularly if those are signed as part of multilateral cooperation programmes or bilateral initiatives.

[38] Partner universities and mobilities with Bosnia and Herzegovina. https://www.univ-poitiers.fr/mic/partner-universities-and-mobilities-with-bosnia-and-herzegovina/. Accessed 13 August 2025.

Kosovo

Bilateral agreements

In recent years, Kosovo has signed various thematic bilateral cooperation agreements with the EU MS, many of which partly include R&I cooperation, with a particular emphasis on supporting the development of the innovation ecosystem. In particular, four cooperation agreements in the fields of research and education, were concluded with Croatia (2013), the Czech Republic (1989, validity confirmed in 2011), Poland and Romania (2010). Furthermore, in 2009, Kosovo signed a general Agreement on Development Cooperation with Austria, within which support for the development of the higher education and R&I ecosystem is also provided. Additionally, a Memorandum of Understanding focused on education cooperation, including potential research cooperation, was signed with Malta (2024). Furthermore, a Memorandum of Understanding on bilateral consultations in science, technology, and culture was signed with Lithuania (2024).

Most recently, in 2025, Kosovo signed a Letter of Intent for cooperation in the defence industry, which includes industrial innovation, with Belgium. Moreover, the Memorandum of Understanding on Agriculture and Rural Development, signed with Bulgaria in 2024, includes cooperation in R&I.

In addition, the Letter of Intent on establishing cooperation in renewable energy, signed with Denmark in 2019, incorporates technology transfer elements. In 2024, a Partnership Declaration on Climate and Energy was signed with Germany, which also includes research and policy cooperation with R&I components. Notably, the field of information, communication and technology (ICT) innovation is addressed in various thematic cooperation agreements with three EU MS: the Czech Republic (2019), Estonia (2008), and Hungary (2024).

Bilateral education cooperation with Hungary is based on a bilateral agreement with Kosovo. This agreement provides access to the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship programme 2024-2026, which includes funding for higher education, and supports the research activities required for these studies.

Kosovo has signed cooperation agreements that cover joint R&I activities with two WB economies: Albania (2010) and North Macedonia (2024). Additionally, a Higher Education Cooperation Protocol has been signed with Türkiye (2016). However, no further information is currently available regarding cooperation agreements with other EU enlargement countries.

Joint committees and events

Sessions of the Hungarian-Kosovar Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation (JCEC) are held regularly. Recently, in 2025 a business cooperation webinar took place with Finland, including innovation matching. In addition, the Polish-Kosovar Economic Forum took place in 2022. However, there is no specific information available about dedicated bilateral meetings focused on R&I, although topics related, especially in the field of innovation, are often addressed within the framework of the economic cooperation.

Funding programmes/scholarships

Since 2020, a bilateral research cooperation call is launched with Albania. Under the bilateral agreement with Hungary, the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarships are available to students from Kosovo to study in Hungary. While not being an explicit funding programme, the bilateral project SHER between Austria and Kosovo supports cooperation for joint projects to be submitted in Horizon Europe.

Institutional and organisational cooperation

Memorandum of Understanding on quality assurance in higher education was signed between the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) and the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (MAB). Additionally, in 2022, Kosovo Investment and Entrepreneurship Support Agency (KIESA) and the Polish Investment and Trade Agency (PAIH) signed a cooperation agreement, which also includes innovation. The SHER project also supports organisational cooperation with Austrian organisations through study visits and expert support. In 2024, the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia, Forensic Science Centre "Ivan Vučetić" and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kosovo, Kosovo Forensic Agency in the Area of Forensics was signed.

Higher education institutions in Kosovo are committed to internationalisation and are actively signing bilateral cooperation agreements with institutions worldwide. For example, in 2025, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the University of Prishtina and Gazi University in Türkiye. In total, the University of Prishtina has the most cooperation agreements with institutions in Türkiye (14), followed by Albania (11), North Macedonia (6), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2), Montenegro (1), and Ukraine (1). Among EU MS, the university has signed the most agreements with institutions in Slovenia (7), Croatia (6), Germany (6), and Italy (6), followed by Austria (3), Belgium (3), Hungary (3), the Czech Republic (2), Finland (2), the Netherlands (2), Poland (2), England (1), France (1), Ireland (1) and Sweden (1). The origin of all these agreements could not be determined, particularly if those are signed as part of multilateral cooperation programmes or bilateral initiatives.

Montenegro

Bilateral agreements

Montenegro has signed inter-governmental scientific and technological cooperation agreements or Memoranda of Understanding covering science field with twelve EU MS: Austria (2009), Bulgaria (2011), Croatia (2009), the Czech Republic (2019), Germany (2024), Greece (2015), Hungary (2012), Italy (2013), Malta (2016), Poland (2012), Slovakia (2017) and Slovenia (2008). In addition, a cooperation agreement focusing on education was signed with Romania in 2014, while an administrative agreement was recently concluded with France in 2025 to promote, and support the teaching of the French language in Montenegro.

Bilateral education cooperation with Hungary is based on a bilateral agreement with Montenegro. This agreement provides access to the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship programme, which includes funding for higher education, and supports the research activities required for these studies.

Furthermore, Montenegro has established bilateral cooperation agreements with WB economies: Albania (2008), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2008), North Macedonia (2010) and Serbia (2011). Among other enlargement countries, an agreement was also signed with Türkiye in 2013. Also, Montenegro signed an agreement on cooperation in the field of education and higher education with Ukraine in 2011. There is no information available about cooperation agreements with another enlargement countries.

Joint committees and events

Regular Joint Committees on implementation signed agreements are taking place mainly with Austria, Italy and Slovakia.

Funding programmes/scholarships

In order to maintain international cooperation, bilateral funding programmes are implemented to support joint scientific cooperation projects. Specifically, these programmes are actively launched with Austria, Italy, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

Institutional and organisational cooperation

The Ministry of Education, Science, and Innovation of Montenegro has established several institutional agreements, for example, with the Italian National Research Council (CNR) and the Austrian Federal Ministry for Women, Science and Research (BMFWF). These agreements aim to launch joint bilateral scientific cooperation projects.

Montenegro actively fosters cooperation between its universities and international institutions, as internationalisation is recognised as a priority for all higher education institutions[39]. For instance, University of Montenegro has signed bilateral cooperation agreements with universities from 18 EU MS, including Croatia (with 6 higher education institutions), Italy (6), Slovenia (4), France (3), Austria (2), Spain (2), Hungary (2), Poland (2), Romania (2), Belgium (1), Bulgaria (1), Cyprus (1), Czech Republic (1), Latvia (1), Netherlands (1), Germany (1), Slovakia (1), Sweden (1). Moreover, the university places significant emphasis on regional cooperation within WB economies, having established agreements with higher institution organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (7), Serbia (5), Albania (2), Kosovo (2), North Macedonia (2). In addition, among other EU enlargement countries this university has the most agreements with the higher education institutions from Türkiye (6), followed by Georgia (2) and Ukraine (2). The origin of all these agreements could not be determined, particularly in those cases where signed as part of multilateral cooperation programmes or bilateral initiatives.

North Macedonia

Bilateral agreements

Bilateral agreements or Memorandums of Understandings on cooperation that covers also R&I or science and technology fields are in force with eight EU MS: Austria (2007), Bulgaria (2022), Croatia (1997), the Czech Republic (2011), Poland, Romania (2011), Slovakia (2011), Slovenia (1993), Spain. The cooperation programme in the field of education, culture and science with Italy for the period 2016-2019 was not renewed yet.

Recently, in 2025, a thematic Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of medical innovation, focusing on e-health and telemedicine was signed with Slovakia. Another thematic Memorandum of Understanding in the fields of agriculture, agrarian science, rural development and forestry was signed with Bulgaria in 2022.

Cultural, scientific and technical cooperation agreement with France is mainly based on cultural and linguistic action.

Bilateral education cooperation with Hungary is based on a bilateral agreement with North Macedonia. This agreement provides access to the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship programme 2026-2028, which includes funding for higher education, and supports the research activities required for these studies.

In 2018, the Prespa Agreement was signed with Greece, and under Article 15, both countries committed to developing scientific and technological cooperation. Furthermore, in 2021, an

[39] Strategy for the Development of Higher Education in Montenegro 2024–2027. https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/5ac50349-1c8e-4331-a11c-ff20de1f8a55. Accessed 13 August 2025.

agreement with France was signed, which also included components related to R&I.

North Macedonia has signed cooperation agreements with five economies of WB: Albania (2023), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2012), Kosovo (2024), Montenegro (2010) and Serbia. The cooperation agreement is signed with Türkiye, however, there is no information available about cooperation agreements with other enlargement countries.

Joint committees and events

Austrian-Macedonian Joint Commission meetings for scientific and technological cooperation are held regularly. While high-level bilateral events are primarily dedicated to supporting economic development, they also partly address R&I. For example, to foster business and innovation development, joint committees for economic cooperation have been established with Austria and the Czech Republic. In this context, a joint business forum with Italy took place in 2025, and an economic forum with Poland was held in 2021.

Funding programmes/scholarships

There is a funding programme designed to support joint scientific research projects between North Macedonia and Austria. Additionally, several bilateral agreements exist to support students, including PhD, in studying abroad, such as in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Slovakia.

Institutional and organisational cooperation

There are various institutional and organisational bilateral cooperation agreements, particularly between universities and research-performing organisations. However, the cooperation is mainly initiated within larger multilateral initiatives.

In 2025, the Agency for European Educational Programmes of North Macedonia signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with European Union Programmes Agency of Malta. In addition, this agency signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Italian Youth Agency to promote bilateral cooperation in education, science, youth, sports, and culture.

Furthermore, in 2022, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Bulgarian Executive Agency for the Promotion of Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises and the Agency for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship of North Macedonia. Moreover, the Greek and National Competence Centres of North Macedonia established a twinning partnership within the framework of High-Performance Computing in 2022.

Beyond this, institutional cooperation agreements also exist with other EU enlargement countries. For instance, the University American College Skopje signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia to provide educational services to students. Similarly, Necmettin Erbakan University in Türkiye signed a cooperation agreement with the University of Tetova.

Serbia

Bilateral agreements

Serbia had signed cooperation agreements or Memorandums of Understanding, including the fields of science and technology, with eight EU MS: Austria (2010), Croatia (2005), the Czech Republic (signed in 2016, entered in force in 2017) Hungary (2024), Italy (signed in 2009, entered in force in 2013), Portugal (2010), Slovakia (2001) and Slovenia (2002).

Bilateral education cooperation with Hungary is based on a bilateral agreement with Serbia. This

agreement provides access to the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship programme, which includes funding for higher education, and supports the research activities required for these studies.

According to available information, two cooperation agreements have been signed in the fields of science or education with WB economies: one with Montenegro (2015) and one with North Macedonia. A protocol on cooperation is signed with Türkiye, however, there is no information available about cooperation agreements with other enlargement countries.

Joint committees and events

Meetings of the Serbian-Austrian and Serbian-Italian joint commissions for scientific and technological cooperations between both countries are taking place regularly.

France is supporting various events in innovation, for example, recently, in 2025, the Serbian-French Innovation Forum took place, during which the Conference "Nikola Tesla: France as inspiration" was organised, moreover, the final pitch session Mission France was held.

Furthermore, several events supporting R&I have been organised in cooperation with Italy. For example, joint annual scientific forums have been held since 2023, with the host country rotating each year. Additionally, a business forum took place in 2025.

Funding programmes/scholarships

Serbia is implementing several bilateral grant calls for scientific cooperation and research mobility. For instance, the next call with Austria (2026-2028) will be open in October 2026.

The call for study visits is implemented with Croatia and the current implementation period is 2024 – 2026.

Since 2003 the bilateral Serbian-French research mobility programme "Pavle Savic", within the Hubert Curien Partnership (PHC), has been continuously announcing calls.

The Serbian-German research mobility is implemented within the bilateral agreement with the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) for the period of 2025-2026.

The joint Serbian-Hungarian research funding programme was launched for the first time in 2024 for the period 2024-2026.

Italy – Serbia science and technology cooperation call for joint proposals for 2024-2026 was implemented in 2024. In addition, the first executive programme for cooperation in R&I between Italy and Serbia for 2025-2027 was launched this year.

The last results of the bilateral scientific and technological cooperation grant with Portugal are available for the period 2020-2021, with the last call held in 2022.

The call for bilateral scientific and technological cooperation with Slovakia for the period 2026-2027 was announced in 2025.

The last joint call for scientific and technological cooperation with Slovenia (2023-2025) was successfully implemented.

In 2023, a call for scientific and technological cooperation with Türkiye for the period 2024-2026 was launched.

Institutional and organisational cooperation

The internationalisation of education and higher education institutions is of high importance in

Serbia[40]. According to the information published on websites of universities (e.g., University of Belgrade, University of Novi Sad, University of Kragujevac and University of Niš) there is quite extensive international cooperation. It is important to note that this overview does not aim to revise or analyse the origin and nature of the cooperation agreements between institutions. Likely, many agreements were signed within various multilateral initiatives.

For example, as of 2024, the University of Belgrade has signed cooperation agreements with institutions from seventeen EU MS: Italy (12), Germany (10), France (6), Spain (5), Poland (5), Austria (5), Croatia (3), the Czech Republic (3), Slovakia (3), Slovenia (3), Hungary (2), Romania (2), Belgium (1), Denmark (1), Finland (1), Greece (1), Netherlands (1).

Most of the cooperation agreements with institutions from WB economies are signed with Bosnia and Herzegovina (5) and North Macedonia (5), followed by Albania (4) and Montenegro (1). With other EU enlargement countries, the University of Belgrade has cooperation agreements with Türkiye (4) and Ukraine (3). The origin of all these agreements could not be determined, particularly those signed as part of multilateral cooperation programmes or bilateral initiatives.

4 Concluding remarks

Bilateral R&I cooperation between the WB economies and the EU MS is relatively dynamic, however, it has an asymmetric pattern of engagement. While some economies have established frameworks for cooperation through formalised agreements, joint funding programmes and institutional partnerships, others rely more on multilateral EU initiatives, such as Interreg, Horizon Europe or Erasmus+, to facilitate cooperation. This mixed approach highlights both the potential for deeper bilateral ties and the challenges in sustaining long-term, structured cooperation. In general, the strong cooperation pattern between WB economies was not observed, especially in terms of organising joint bilateral events and facilitating institutional cooperation. In addition, Türkiye remains the main cooperation partner for WB economies amongst EU enlargement context.

Bilateral agreements

Bilateral agreements are essential instruments for structuring R&I cooperation between the EU MS and the WB economies, but their scope and effectiveness vary considerably.

According to available data, eight EU MS: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary (primarily via the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship programme), Italy, Poland and Slovenia, have bilateral agreements or other formal documents that cover science and technology with at least five WB economies. Furthermore, some EU MS have very few cooperation agreements. However, there may be opportunities to revive earlier cooperation, for example, the 2003 agreement between Lithuania and Serbia and Montenegro on education, science, culture and sports[41] is indicating the interest in the region.

Meanwhile, WB economies prioritise macro-regional partnerships, often engaging more actively with the WB neighbours, and among the other EU enlargement countries, particularly with Türkiye, than with some geographically more distant EU MS.

[40] Mobility and internationalisation in Serbia. Eurydice. https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/eurypedia/serbia/mobility-and-internationalisation. Accessed 18 August 2025

[41] Cooperation agreement between Lithuania and Serbia and Montenegro. (2003). https://smsm.lrv.lt/uploads/smsm/documents/files/en_versijai/susitarimai/Serbia%20and%20Montenegro.pdf. Accessed 14 August 2025.

Joint committees and events

Joint committees and events are important platforms for structured dialogue and implementation, yet their focus and frequency differ. Austria, Italy and Slovakia hold regular high-level meetings with their cooperation partners (e.g., Austrian-Albanian or Serbian-Italian joint commissions), ensuring continuity in scientific and technological cooperation.

Dedicated R&I events are often embedded within broader economic or political forums (e.g., Polish-Kosovar Economic Forum, Serbian-Italian Business Forum), so innovation may be addressed indirectly rather than as a priority. However, the annual Serbian-Italian scientific forums indicate growing interest in R&I cooperation.

Funding programmes/scholarships

Bilateral funding programmes and scholarships are the most tangible drivers of bilateral R&I cooperation. They enable researcher mobility, joint research and knowledge transfer. For example, EU MS such as Austria, Italy, Slovakia, and Slovenia have already established regular, multi-annual science and technology funding instruments with several WB economies, which are co-funded by both sides. Such instruments are essential for maintaining long-term cooperation and supporting the development of R&I ecosystems in the WB economies.

WB economies are also strengthening research mobility, particularly with Germany through the DAAD, and some economies facilitating bilateral research mobility with France under the HCP programme. Additionally, Hungary has established bilateral cooperation with each WB economy by providing Stipendium Hungaricum scholarships. Furthermore, Bulgaria has scholarships for students from North Macedonia.

Among the other EU enlargement countries only Türkiye has launched joint calls with Albania and Serbia. While among WB economies only one joint call between Albania and Kosovo is implemented since 2020.

Institutional and organisational cooperation

Institutional cooperation, especially between public authorities, higher education institutions and research performing organisations is the most dynamic and decentralised form of bilateral cooperation. Such cooperation is frequently facilitated by multilateral EU initiatives and complemented by high-level meetings and events. For example, the University of Poitiers, France, signed a cooperation agreement with five Bosnian universities under the Erasmus+ programme, following the France-Bosnia and Herzegovina scientific committee meeting in 2019[42].

Similarly, Latvia does not currently have bilateral agreements with WB economies, nevertheless, in 2018, Latvia ranked among the top five partner countries for the University of Montenegro under Erasmus+ partnership agreements[43].

For example, universities in WB economies have a high degree of internationalisation, with hundreds of agreements across EU MS and a strong regional cooperation with other WB economies, as well as with the other EU enlargement countries, particularly Türkiye and a few agreements with Georgia and Ukraine. However, international cooperation often remains

[42] France-Bosnia and Herzegovina scientific committee. (2019). https://unbi.ba/en/vijest/meeting-of-the-scientific-committee-of-france-and-bosnia-and-herzegovina-in-sarajevo/13. Accessed 14 August 2025.
[43] Higher Education System in Montenegro. Possibilities of cooperation with Montenegro. (2018). http://sepie.es/doc/comunicacion/jornadas/2018/4_diciembre/ES/Posibilidades-de-cooperacion-con-Montenegro.pdf. Accessed 14 August 2025.

project-based or embedded within multilateral initiatives, rather than being part of structured, long-term internationalisation strategies. Assessing the status and mutual benefits of these bilateral agreements can be challenging due to limited publicly available data on their implementation and impact.

The institutional cooperation between the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU) in Austria and the Agricultural University of Tirana (AUT) in Albania serves as an example of the long-term and sustainable bilateral institutional cooperation. This partnership aims to enhance capacity-building and institutional development of AUT, demonstrating how a well-structured cooperation between EU and WB universities can contribute to strengthening higher education and research ecosystems.

Note: The examples provided in the concluding remarks are described in Section 3 of this document and include links to the relevant sources.

Annex: Overview of the bilateral R&I cooperation between WB economies and the EU MS (as well as EU enlargement context)

Do you have any relevant information to add? Reach out at info@westernbalkans-infohub.eu and contribute to updating information about bilateral cooperation between Western Balkans economies and the EU Member States, including EU enlargement context.

Table 1: Bilateral R&I cooperation between WB economies and the EU MS (as well as in the enlargement context)

List of acronyms

BA: R&I or in relevant fields bilateral agreements. The duration period is indicated in brackets, if applicable or known.

BAG: general bilateral cooperation agreements, for example, to ensure implementation of the projects and initiatives in the fields of research and/or innovation.

BAT: thematic bilateral cooperation agreements, including fields of research and/or innovation.

JCE: joint committees and events.

FPS: funding programmes or scholarships.

IOC: institutional and organisational cooperation. Only bilateral cooperation examples with focus on long-term active cooperation and/or between public authorities. Bilateral initiatives within multilateral activities are not included in this table.

n.a.: no information available or was not provided.

	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kosovo*	Montenegro	North Macedonia	Serbia
EU Member States						
Austria	BA JCE FPS IOC	BA JCE FPS	BAG FPS IOC	BA JCE FPS IOC	BA JCE FPS	BA JCE FPS
Belgium	n.a.	n.a.	BAT	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Bulgaria	BA	BA	BAT	BA	BA	n.a.
Croatia	BA	BA	BA IOC	BA	BA	BA JCE (2008-2016) FPS
Cyprus	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
The Czech Republic	BA (2012-2015)	BA	BA BAT	BA	BA JCE	BA
Denmark	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Estonia	n.a.	n.a.	BAT	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Finland	JCE	n.a.	JCE	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
France	BA (1992-1993)	JCE	n.a.	BAT	BAT	JCE
Germany	BA	BA	BAT	BA	n.a.	FPS
Greece	n.a.	BA	n.a.	BA	BAG	n.a.

* 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

	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kosovo*	Montenegro	North Macedonia	Serbia
Hungary	BAT FPS	BA BAT FPS	BAT BAT JCE FPS IOC	BA BAT FPS	BAT FPS	BA BAT FPS FPS
Ireland	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Italy	BA FPS	BA (2003-2005)	n.a.	BA JCE FPS	JCE	BA JCE JCE JCE FPS
Latvia	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Lithuania	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Luxembourg	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Malta	BA	n.a.	BAT	BA	n.a.	n.a.
Netherlands	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Poland	BA	BA	JCE IOC	BA	BA JCE	n.a.
Portugal	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	BA FPS (2022)
Romania	BA	n.a.	BA	BAT	BA	n.a.
Slovakia	n.a.	BA	n.a.	BA JCE FPS	BA	BA FPS
Slovenia	BA	BA JCE	n.a.	BA FPS	BA	BA FPS
Spain	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	BA	n.a.
Sweden	BA (1992-1994)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kosovo*	Montenegro	North Macedonia	Serbia
Western Balkans economies						
Albania		BA	BA	BA	BA	n.a.
Bosnia and Herzegovina	BA		n.a.	BA	BA	n.a.
Kosovo	BA FPS	n.a.		n.a.	BA	n.a.
Montenegro	BA	BA	n.a.		BA	BA
North Macedonia	BA	BA	BA	BA		BA
Serbia	n.a.	BA	n.a.	BA	BA	
Other EU enlargement countries						
Georgia	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Moldova	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Türkiye	BA FPS	n.a.	BA	BA	BA	BA FPS
Ukraine	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	BAT	n.a.	n.a.

POLICY ANSWERS

ABOUT POLICY ANSWERS

POLICY ANSWERS (R&I POLICY making, implementation ANd Support in the WEsteRn BalkanS) supports policy coordination in the Western Balkans and with the EC and the EU. 14 partner organisations, representing network nodes in the region and EU expert organisations, support policy dialogue through formal meetings (such as ministerial and steering platform and ad-hoc policy meetings), monitoring and agenda setting, capacity building and implementation of the EU's Western Balkan Agenda, as well as the alignment of thematic priorities. The project implements regional pilot activities and offers an information hub based on the westernbalkans-infohub.eu online information platform. The partners provide analytical evidence via monitoring and mapping activities of the stakeholder ecosystem, of the implementation of the Western Balkans Agenda and of the Western Balkans' integration into the European Research Area as well as via strategic foresight. POLICY ANSWERS also allows for tailored and targeted capacity building activities in the Western Balkans as well as regional alignment of priorities in relation to the digital transformation, the green agenda and towards healthy societies. Pilot activities provide learning opportunities on policy and programme level and reach out to final beneficiaries related to improved academia-industry cooperation, researcher mobility, inclusion of youth in policy processes, promotion of research infrastructures and increased innovation skills in all areas.

POLICY ANSWERS is funded by the European Commission through the Horizon Europe project "R&I POLICY making, implementation ANd Support in the WEsteRn BalkanS", Grant Agreement N°101058873.

Funded by the European Union