

Common Regional Market

March 2026

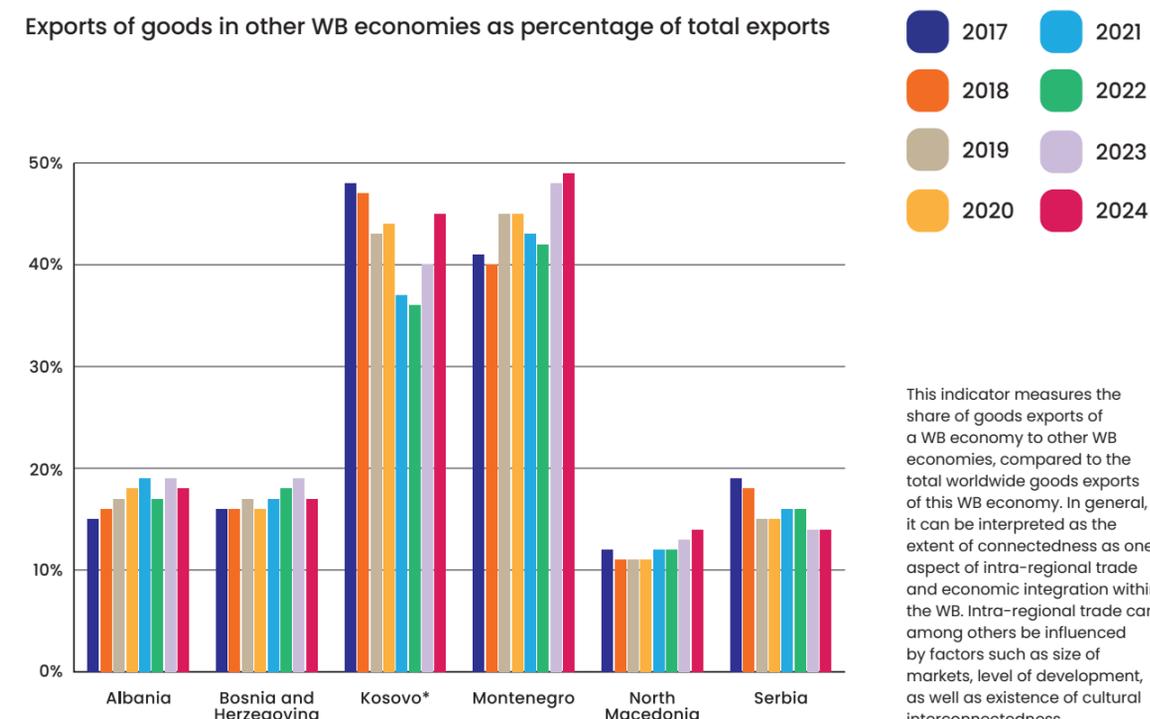
The Western Balkans Agenda on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport is a long-term strategy from the EU and the Western Balkans (WB) for cooperation with the region. It will contribute to the region's economic and societal development, building on three main pillars: Political, Thematic, and Regional.

The project POLICY ANSWERS monitors the implementation of the Western Balkans Agenda, and the broader context, progress and achievements are summarised in regular reports. In this Monitoring Card, you find the results of the fourth round of data collection in 2025 and at the beginning of 2026, in comparison to the data collected in the previous third monitoring round.

In terms of Common Regional Market, the monitoring focuses on the context indicator "Exports of goods in other WB economies as percentage of total exports" and various achievements outlined in the WB Agenda (see next page).

Achievements in a wider context of the Western Balkans Agenda

Exports of goods in other WB economies as percentage of total exports



This indicator measures the share of goods exports of a WB economy to other WB economies, compared to the total worldwide goods exports of this WB economy. In general, it can be interpreted as the extent of connectedness as one aspect of intra-regional trade and economic integration within the WB. Intra-regional trade can among others be influenced by factors such as size of markets, level of development, as well as existence of cultural interconnectedness.

Source
Authors' calculations based on <https://data.wiiw.ac.at/annual-database.html> (accessed 10 November 2025).

* 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.



Strengthening Research and Innovation in the Western Balkans: The POLICY ANSWERS project

POLICY ANSWERS is a strategic initiative funded by the European Commission through the Horizon Europe project "R&I POLICY making, implementation AND Support in the WESteRn BalkanS". The project focuses on enhancing research and innovation (R&I) policymaking and governance systems in the Western Balkans, while also addressing aspects of education, culture, youth, and sports. By providing essential support to the region's development, POLICY ANSWERS plays a crucial role in strengthening the Western Balkans' potential for successful participation in regional and multilateral research and innovation activities.

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Western Balkans Economy Indicators

Indicator and overall assessment of the region	Preparation of S3 and support of their implementation			Increased investment in SMEs		Linking Western Balkans education and innovation activities				
	S3 milestones	Local S3 support	S3 dialogue	Access to Finance (A2F) perception by Balkan Barometer	Participation in European Innovation Council (EIC) programmes	Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) and Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs (EYE)	Western Balkans in COST & EUREKA	Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) support	Infrastructure support	Reform Agenda milestones related to the Western Balkans Agenda with deadlines end of 2024/ mid-2025
Albania	S3 officially approved	No new event or publication reported	No new event reported	Moderate level constraint	No project funded	No EIC events organised by EEN, beneficiaries of EEN and EYE not specified	Increased participation in COST, no EUREKA projects	Increased number of events, no information on publications provided	Increased number of R&I facilities, infrastructure support scheme in place	Partially achieved: 12 out of 20 monitored steps completed
Bosnia and Herzegovina	S3 not adopted yet	Increased number of events, no new publication reported	No information provided	Moderate level constraint	No project funded	EIC event organised by EEN, increased number of EEN and EYE beneficiaries	Increased participation in COST, no information on EUREKA provided	Increased number of publications, no new events reported	Increased number of R&I facilities, infrastructure support scheme not in place	Not applicable for Bosnia and Herzegovina yet
Kosovo	S3 not adopted yet	No information provided	No information provided	Moderate level constraint	No project funded	EIC event organised by EEN, increased number of EEN and EYE beneficiaries	Increased participation in COST, no participation in EUREKA	Increased number of events and publications	Increased number of R&I facilities, infrastructure support scheme not in place	Partially achieved: out of 10 monitored steps 2 completed, 1 partially completed
Montenegro	Second S3 under preparation	Increased number of events and publications	Increased number of events and participants	Moderate level constraint	No project funded	EIC event organised by EEN, increased number of EEN and EYE beneficiaries	No new data on COST projects available, no EUREKA projects	No information provided	No new R&I facilities, infrastructure support scheme not yet in place	Partially achieved: 1 out of 7 monitored steps completed
North Macedonia	First S3 under implementation	Increased number of events and publications	In process of adoption of governance structure	Moderate level constraint	No project funded	EIC events organised by EEN, increased number of EEN and EYE beneficiaries	Increased participation in COST, no EUREKA projects	Increased number of events and publications	No new R&I facilities, infrastructure support scheme not yet in place	Partially achieved: 3 out of 5 monitored steps completed
Serbia	First S3 under implementation	No new event reported, increased number of publications	No new event reported	Moderate level constraint	Increasing number of funded projects	EIC events organised by EEN, increased number of EEN and EYE beneficiaries	Increased participation in COST, no new EUREKA projects	Increased number of events and publications	Increased number of R&I beneficiaries, infrastructure support scheme in place	No information available

Legend: On track or maintaining achievement | Moderately improving Challenges remain | Stagnating Significant challenges | Decreasing Major challenges | Information not available

Highlights

Reinforced role of FINNO, a unique platform by the Enterprise Europe Network for the Western Balkan economies strengthening cross-border cooperation across the region
 Second release of funds for Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia approved by the European Commission under the Western Balkans Growth Plan
 Publication of "The Western Balkans Start-up Ecosystem at a Crossroads" as first comprehensive, evidence-based overview of the start-up landscape in the Western Balkans

