POLICY ANSWERS

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.

Partners

ZSI · DLR Projektträger · eiz the institute of economics, zagreb · formicablu · FFG Promoting Innovation. · INOVA · GSI

institute MIHAILO PUPIN · MIRO FOUNDATION · akkshi · PKT invest · SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY PARK Montenegro · УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ У БАЊОЈ ЛУЦИ UNIVERSITY OF BANJA LUKA

Get in touch at
www.westernbalkans-infohub.eu

and follow us on LinkedIn and YouTube
(in) WBInfoHub
westernbalkansinfohub1309

WESTERN BALKANS Info Hub
POWERED BY POLICY ANSWERS

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

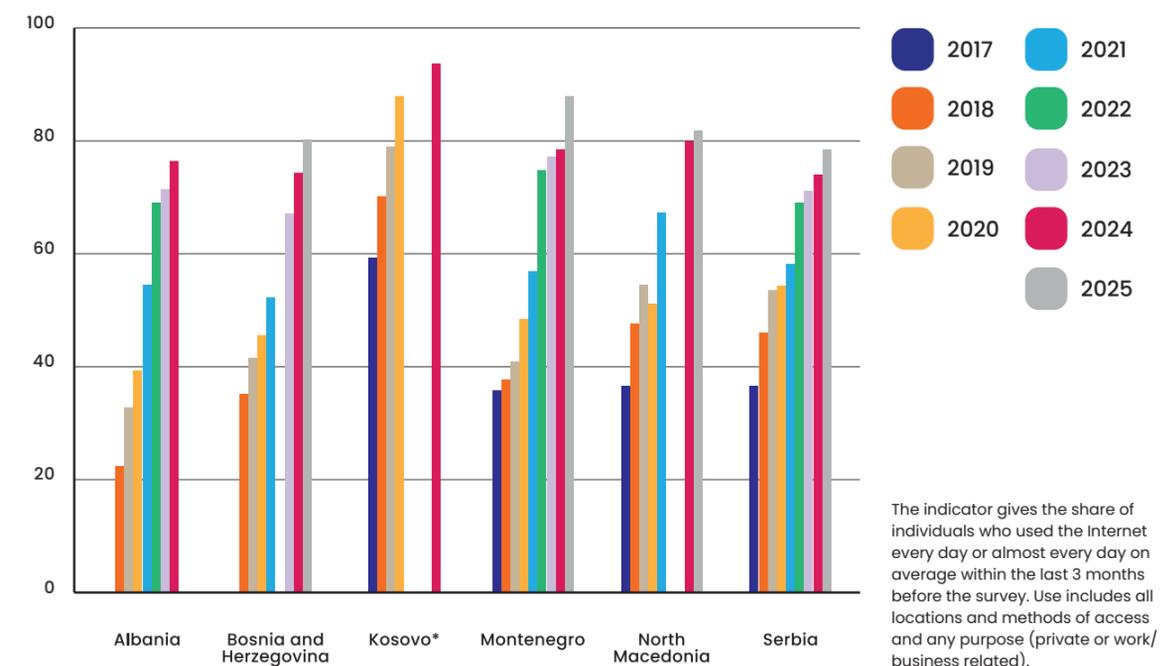# Digital Competitiveness

March 2026

The Western Balkans Agenda on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport is a long-term strategy developed by 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 Digital Competitiveness, the monitoring focuses on the context indicator "Individuals using frequently the internet" and various achievements outlined in the WB Agenda (see next page).

Achievements in a wider context of the Western Balkans Agenda

Individuals using frequently the internet (in percent)

Legend: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025

The indicator gives the share of individuals who used the Internet every day or almost every day on average within the last 3 months before the survey. Use includes all locations and methods of access and any purpose (private or work/business related).

Note
Data not available for Albania (2017, 2025), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2017, 2022), Kosovo* (2021, 2022, 2023, 2025), North Macedonia (2022, 2023).

Source
https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tin00092/default/table?lang=en (accessed 23 February 2026).

* 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.

Regional Indicators

Western Balkans participation in the European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIH) Network	⬆

Western Balkans Economy Indicators

Indicator and overall assessment of the region	Rapid transformative technological development for a competitive Western Balkans region — A Europe fit for the digital age					
	Development and linking of Digital Innovation Hubs (DIH) ⬆	Digital education communities of practice/Digital Edu Hub ↗	Digital skills development and virtual learning ↗	Strategic development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) ↗	WB economies joining the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking (JU) ⬆	Participation in Digital Europe Programme ⬆
Albania	Increased number of DIHs and partnerships ⬆	Involvement in the Digital Edu Hub/ activities not specified ↗	No information on publicly funded initiatives available ➡	Strategic commitment undertaken ⬆	Joined ⬆	Joined , 5 contracts signed ⬆
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Increased number of DIHs and partnerships ⬆	Involvement in the Digital Edu Hub/ activities not specified ↗	Increased number of publicly funded initiatives ⬆	Strategic commitment undertaken ⬆	No participation in the EuroHPC JU HPC established ↗	Joined, 4 contracts signed ⬆
Kosovo	Increased number of DIHs and partnerships ⬆	No new partners involved. No information on implemented activities provided ➡	No new publicly funded initiative. Considerable and increased number of beneficiaries ↗	No strategic commitment undertaken ➡	No participation in the EuroHPC JU Establishment of HPC in preparation phase ↗	Joined, 2 contracts signed ⬆
Montenegro	No new DIHs created. No information on partnerships provided ↗	No involvement and/or activities ➡	No new publicly funded initiative and beneficiaries ➡	Strategic commitment under development ↗	Joined ⬆	Joined, 4 contracts signed ⬆
North Macedonia	No new DIHs created. Increased number of partnerships ↗	Involvement in a few groups reported. Several activities implemented ⬆	No new publicly funded initiative and beneficiaries ➡	Strategic commitment undertaken ⬆	Joined ⬆	Joined, 6 contracts signed ⬆
Serbia	Increased number of DIHs and partnerships ⬆	Involvement in a few groups reported. Several activities implemented ⬆	No new publicly funded initiatives reported ↗	Strategic commitment undertaken and in early phase of implementation ⬆	Joined ⬆	Joined, 9 contracts signed ⬆

Legend:
- ⬆ On track or maintaining achievement
- ↗ Moderately improving Challenges remain
- ➡ Stagnating Significant challenges
- ⬇ Decreasing Major challenges
- ⬤ Information not available

Highlights

Successful participation of the DIHs from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia in the new AI-focused EDIH network call

7th Western Balkans Digital Summit: the Western Balkans Six endorsed two landmark joint statements on regional digital connectivity and interoperable Digital ID Wallets

AI Factories Antennas launched in North Macedonia and in Serbia giving the region's companies access to Europe's artificial intelligence infrastructure

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) only 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 westernbalkans-infohub.eu

2

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) only 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 westernbalkans-infohub.eu

3