

Digital Competitiveness

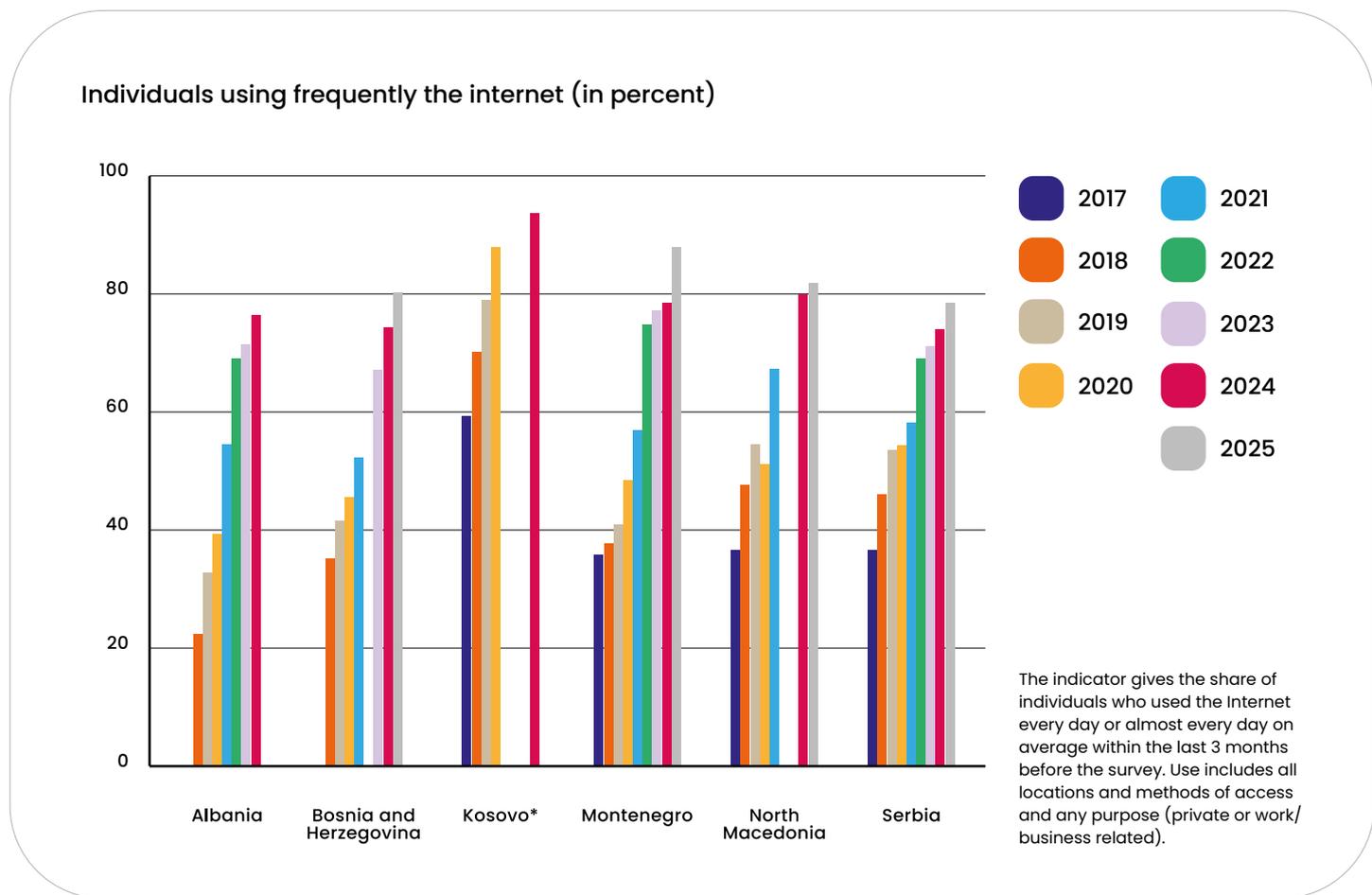
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The Western Balkans Agenda on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport is a long-term strategy developed by the EU and the Western Balkans (WB) for cooperation with the region. It will contribute to the region’s economic and societal 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



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

Rapid transformative technological development for a competitive Western Balkans region A Europe fit for the digital age									
Indicator and overall assessment of the region	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 new publicly funded initiative and beneficiaries	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 initiative Increased number of beneficiaries	Strategic commitment undertaken and in early phase of implementation	Joined	Joined, 9 contracts signed			

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

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



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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