



Western Balkans Steering Platform Meeting on Research and Innovation

Hotel Novotel Budapest Danube, Room Buda-Danube, Budapest, Ntak: Sz19000074, Bem rkp. 33-34, 1027 Hungary

22 April 2026

19:30 – 20:00

Registration and information

20:00 – 22:00

Welcome Dinner

Restaurant of the Hotel Novotel Budapest Danube

23 April 2026

08:15– 09:00

Registration and welcome coffee

09:00 – 09:15

Welcome Remarks

- Ferenc Nagy-Rebek, Ministry of Culture and Innovation of Hungary
- Mina Stareva, Deputy Head of Unit 'International cooperation - Europe and Americas', European Commission, DG R&I, chair

09:15 – 09:35

Western Balkans Agenda: Priorities and objectives in Research and Innovation with the Western Balkans

- Mina Stareva, Deputy Head of Unit 'International cooperation - Europe and Americas', European Commission, DG R&I, chair
- Kalina Esmein, Policy Officer, European Commission, DG JRC

Discussion and Q&A

09:35 – 09:45

Presentation of the R&I Policy Support for Enlargement Countries project (POLICY ENLARGE)

- Bela Kardon, POLICY ENLARGE Coordinator

Discussion and Q&A

09:45 – 10:45

Western Balkans Agenda: R&I Developments in the Western Balkans (part 1)

- Western Balkans' progress reports (AL, BA, XK*; 15 min each)
Participants are invited to report on R&I policy updates:
 - Please report about recent R&I policy developments since the last in-person Steering Platform Meeting (May 2025) such as new strategic documents, legislation or R&I support instruments
 - Which steps have you taken to implement the Conclusions of the 2025 Ministerial Meeting, especially activities and measures on AI in Science and Research Infrastructures?
 - What are your R&I priorities and activities foreseen until the Ministerial Meeting of the Steering Platform on R&I in October 2026?

General discussion and exchange

10:45 – 11:15

Coffee break

11:15 – 12:30

Western Balkans Agenda: R&I Developments in the Western Balkans (part 2)

- Western Balkans' progress reports (ME, MK, RS; 15 min each)
Participants are invited to report on R&I policy updates:
 - Please report about recent R&I policy developments since the last in-person Steering Platform Meeting (May 2025) such as new strategic documents, legislation or R&I support instruments.
 - Which steps have you taken to implement the Conclusions of the 2025 Ministerial Meeting, especially activities and measures on AI in Science and Research Infrastructures?
 - What are your R&I priorities and activities foreseen until the Ministerial Meeting of the Steering Platform on R&I in October 2026?

General discussion and exchange

12:30 – 13:30

Family Photo followed by Networking lunch

13:30 – 15:00

Preparing the Western Balkans Steering Platform Ministerial Meeting October 2026

Participants are invited to discuss and exchange on:

- Which topics would you like to discuss in depth during the Ministerial Meeting of the Western Balkans Steering Platform on R&I in October 2026 (during official policy roundtables, thematic workshops, side events, etc.)?
- How do you perceive the engagement with EU Member States in the scope of the Western Balkans Steering Platform and the Ministerial Meeting?
- First exchange on celebrating 20 years of the Western Balkans Steering Platform on Research and Innovation – What are for you the success stories of the Western Balkans Steering Platform on R&I?

15:00 – 15:10

Closing Remarks

- Mina Stareva, Deputy Head of Unit 'International cooperation - Europe and Americas', European Commission, DG R&I, chair

15:10– 16:30

Open Discussion & Networking Reception

* 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.