

A spotlight on the Western Balkans in H2020

EU Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Mariya Gabriel, noted at the Agency for the Promotion of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (BSMEPA) [meeting](#) earlier this year, that the cooperation between Western Balkan countries in the current Horizon 2020 programme has been positive. She drew attention to the fact that participation in H2020 projects increased by more than 50 % since 2016 and under the framework, EU research funding increased from € 10 million in 2014 to € 30 million in 2018. At this meeting, the Commissioner emphasised that it was really after 2017 a noticeable increase in levels of participation could be seen. The figures for 2019 have not been finalised as more projects will be added in upcoming months.

According to [figures](#) released by the European Commission in February 2020, **funding of Western Balkan research projects has in fact tripled since 2014 with a recorded 734 participations in 421 grants bringing € 125.67 million of EU contribution . There have also been 332 researchers from Western Balkan countries involved in Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions.**

Breaking these figures down further, in **Serbia**, there have been 445 participants involved in 309 projects. These projects have received € 100.89 million in EU contribution. In **North Macedonia**, 88 participations in 65 projects have been noted, attracting € 9.26 million in EU contribution. Meanwhile, in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, there have been 94 participations in 53 projects, with € 6.86 million in EU contribution.

In **Albania**, the Commission reports there have been 41 participations in 37 projects that have received € 3.55 million in funding. While in **Montenegro**, 47 participations have been recorded in 29 projects. EU contribution for these projects stands at € 2.93 million. Finally, in **Kosovo***, 19 participations in 17 projects with € 2.14 million in EU contribution has been recorded. Therefore, as already mentioned above, the Western Balkans have secured a total of € 125.67 million for EU research.

Some of the projects in the region include the EU-funded [ANTARES](#) that aims at building a Centre of Excellence for advanced technologies in sustainable agriculture and food security in Serbia. The project [TRAINEE](#) could be also mentioned as is to increase the number of skilled building professionals according to recommendations from national qualification roadmap concerning the implementation of energy efficiency measures in operation and maintenance. In the [GeoERA](#) project, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia are all taking part to integrate knowledge on subsurface energy, water and raw materials from around Europe. Whereas the [BEYOND](#) project, helped to strengthen capacity in multi-modal applications, with a focus on aviation. Two partners from Kosovo* joined with 12 other countries in the project. Other projects to name are TagItSmar, EVO-NANO, ELICSIR, STRENTX, SILCO FMC, ScanZcan. You can search for additional projects with WB participation in our [database](#), while more details and data are always available on the [CORIDS](#) website under each country.

Towards the future

Succeeding Horizon 2020 is [Horizon Europe](#) for the period 2021-2027. The Commission's proposal for the research and innovation programme in € 100 billion.

Commissioner Gabriel has said: "Research and innovation are key to how we live, how we work and how we protect the climate. That is why we are developing our research and innovation policies in close cooperation with other European Commission directorates, and not only. We have started strategic planning for the new Horizon Europe research and innovation programme."

The Commissioner also emphasised: "We must use the full potential of education, research and culture to promote international cooperation, especially with our neighbours in the Western Balkans." She added: "The future of Europe is actually everyone's future."

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