



Western Balkans Agenda on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

The European Union has recently announced the preparation of a **comprehensive, long-term strategy for cooperation with the Western Balkan region** entitled "Western Balkans Agenda on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport". **Through increased investments in Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, the Western Balkans Agenda and its proposed actions will contribute to the region's economic and societal development and cooperation.**



The main goal of this strategy at hand is to foster the stability and prosperity in the region, taking into account the effects of COVID-19 as well as forward-looking transition towards digital and green economy that works for people. The Agenda on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport and its Action Plan will build on three main pillars:

- **Political Agenda**, which entails accession negotiations, association processes (Horizon Europe, Erasmus and European Solidarity Corps, Creative Europe) and integration processes (European Research Area), finalisation of Smart Specialisation Strategies, stronger participation in the European Higher Education Area as well as systemic changes and reforms towards building knowledge-based societies and evidence-based policy making
- **Thematic Agenda**, which focuses on fostering national research and innovation systems with dedication to tackling climate change and digital transformation
- **Regional Agenda**, which will direct new investments towards game-changing innovations, as well as actions that create sustainable and human capital development and a digital future with following main priorities:
 - Increase investment in SMEs and their capacity to innovate, scale-up and grow
 - Foster research, innovation, education and vocational training capacity building
 - Deepen Economic Union by linking the Western Balkan economies and bringing them closer to the European ones
 - Foster the Western Balkans transition to sustainability
 - Regional cooperation and people-to-people exchanges

The Joint Declaration “A Western Balkans Agenda on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport” has been accompanied by a document which presents the specific objectives, priorities and a tentative roadmap of key actions of this Agenda. A longer-term, robust **Economic and Investment Plan** for the region has been also recently announced building on a total envelope for the Pre-Accession Instrument III (IPA III) of EUR 9 billion for the 2021-2027 period, plus a further EUR 20 billion potentially raised through the new Western Balkans Guarantee facility. Find below all the related information published at our portal.

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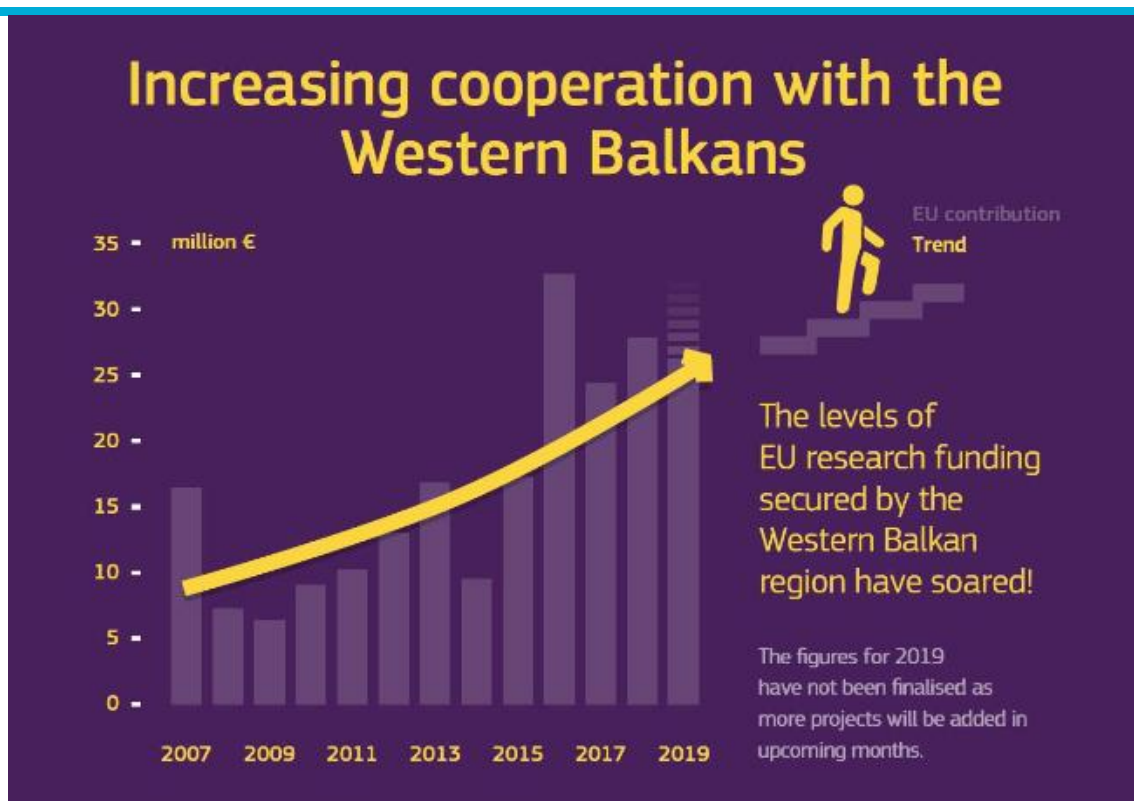
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 - The project's i-MareCulture scope is to raise public awareness of European identity by focusing in maritime cultural heritage, which by default bridges different civilizations. In particular, i-MareCulture...
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 - Having recognized the need for more tight cooperation between the academia and the industry, the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Information Technologies (FEEIT), as a part of the Ss. Cyril and ...
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 - The EIT Raw Materials aims at turning the EU raw material sector into major strength focusing on the metallic and mineral raw materials along the entire value chain. EIT Raw Materials is well established...
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 - [THE SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGIES](#)
 - The South East European International Institute for Sustainable Technologies (SEEIIST) proposed in late 2016 by Prof. Herwig Schopper, a former Director General of CERN and initiator of the international...
- **EU4Tech**
 - [TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE WESTERN BALKANS \(EU4TECH\)](#)
 - This initiative supports and strengthens the technology transfer and innovation ecosystem in the countries of the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, the Former Yugoslav Republic...

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SPECIAL INTERVIEW:

Discussing about the 'Western Balkans Agenda on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport' with **Ms SIGNE RATSO, Deputy Director-General for Research and Innovation at European Commission**

Cooperation between Western Balkan countries in the current Horizon 2020 programme has been positive. Latest figures confirm indeed that WB participation in H2020 projects increased by more than 50 % since 2016 while the EU research funding secured by the Western Balkans has constantly increased until €30 million in 2018. In such a context, Ms Signe Ratso helps us understand how the WB Agenda is further expected to set out a new narrative for the region and to provide a forward-looking vision for its citizens. In the interview, Ms Ratso tells us more about the priorities, the concrete actions and the interaction with stakeholders...



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The WBC-RTI.info platform acts as a source of high quality targeted information on research, technology and innovation in/with/for the Western Balkan countries (WBCs). The Platform supports the Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkan Countries and is funded by the European Commission (contract №30-CE-0838742/00-87).



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