

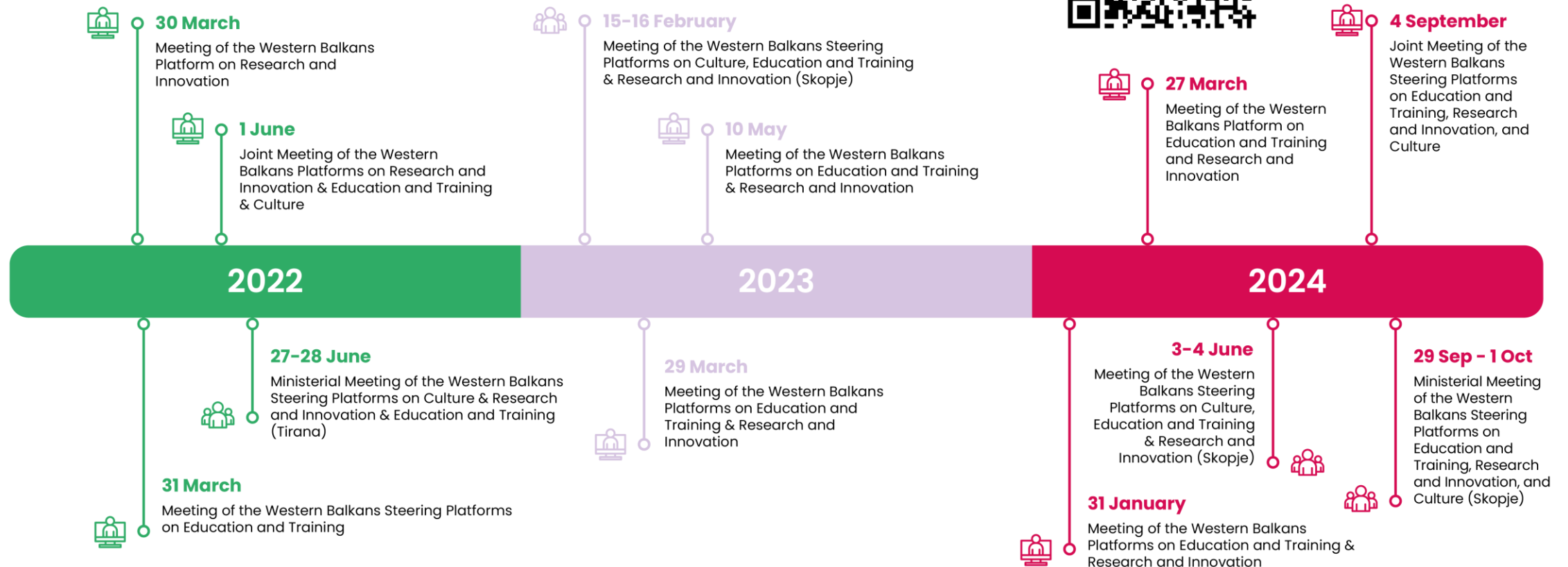


Update and highlights from the POLICY ANSWERS project and the Western Balkans Info Hub

Meeting of the Western Balkans Steering Platform on
Research and Innovation
12 February 2025

Supporting Steering Platforms and Ministerial meetings

- [Secretariat provides an overview on all meetings + documents:](#)



Western Balkans Mobility Scheme in operation



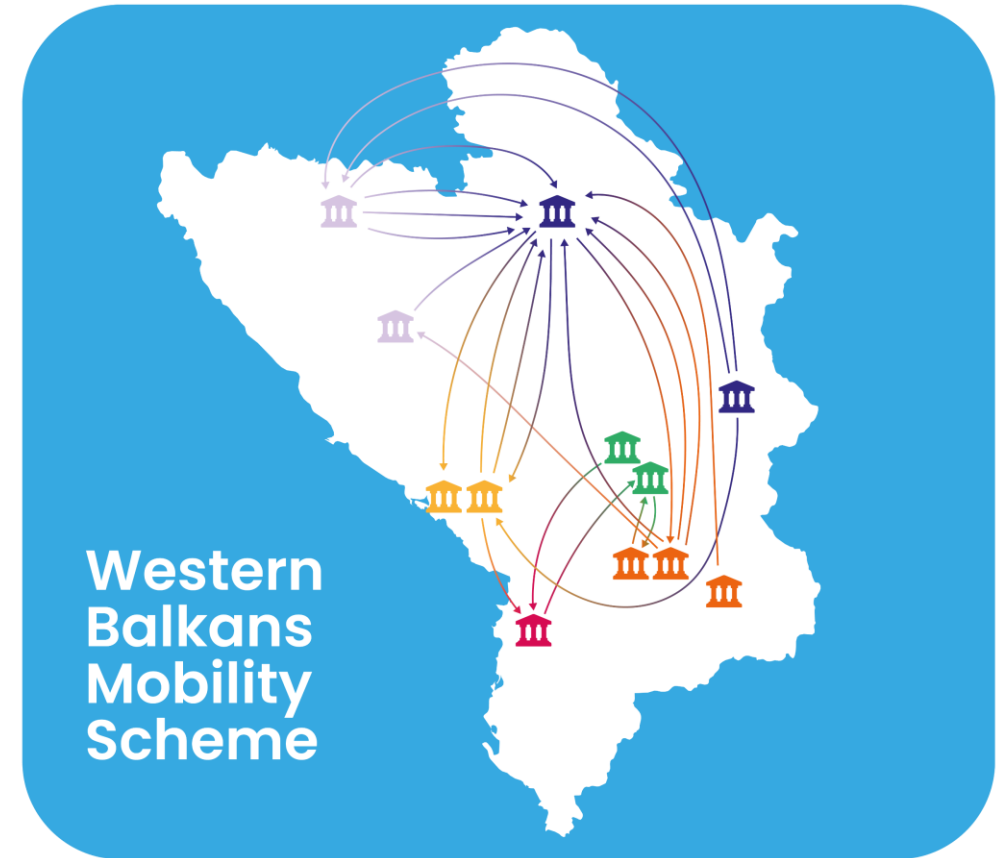
Research in Motion Empowering Innovation in the Western Balkans through the POLICY ANSWERS Western Balkans Mobility Scheme for Early-Career Researchers

 POLICY ANSWERS "R&I POLICY making, implementation ANd Support in the WEsteRn Balkans", Grant Agreement N° 101058873.



Western Balkans Mobility Scheme in operation

- 23 early-career researchers are working at their hosting institutions to advance their research in this period



Western Balkans Innovation Vouchers currently evaluated



POLICY ANSWERS

THIS IS NOT BUSINESS AS USUAL

Improve your business!
The POLICY ANSWERS Western Balkans Innovation Vouchers promote collaborations between academia and SMEs

 POLICY ANSWERS "R&I POLICY making, implementation AND Support in the WesteRn BalkanS", Grant Agreement N° 101058873.



Sneak preview: youth to innovation awards



- Call to be launched in the upcoming weeks
- Several awards with a total amount of EUR 18,000

Monitoring the implementation of the Western Balkans Agenda

Two monitoring rounds already implemented (2023, 2024)

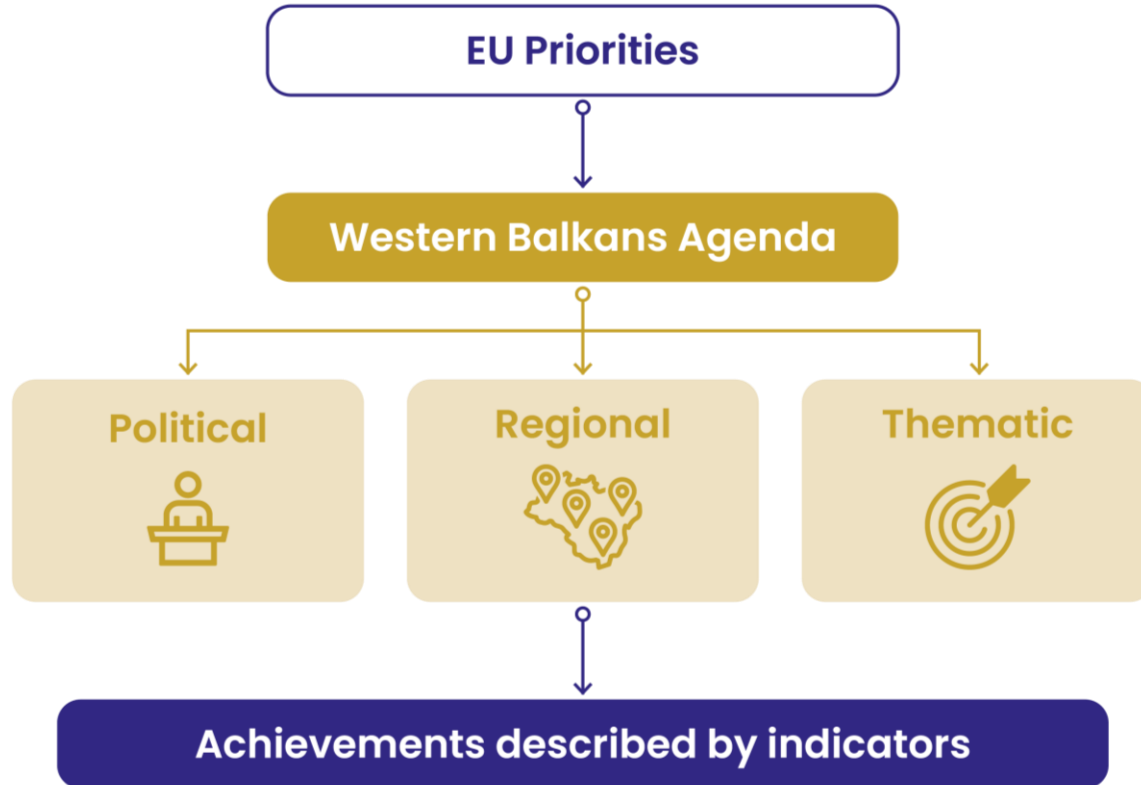
The monitoring is organised around six dimensions, measuring the progress in implementing the WB Agenda:

1. Research and innovation
2. Digital competitiveness
3. Environment
4. Education and skills
5. Youth, culture, sports
6. Common regional market



Monitoring process

Methodology



Example:

Target -> Political:

Reforms in the region in the field of science and research are supported

Achievement:

Western Balkans Steering Platform meetings on R&I

Indicator: Number of SP meetings organised; Number of participants (political and technical level)

Collection for the Research & Innovation dimension Example

Targets	Achievements	Indicator level Regional (R) WB economy (E)	Indicators to be measured at the level of the economy or at meta-level; gender disaggregated data to be collected whenever possible
Political 1 The reforms in the region in the fields of Science and Research in relation to the implementation of the EU acquis, are supported.	Western Balkans Steering Platform meetings on Research and Innovation	R	Number and dates of Steering Platform meetings organised; Number of participants - at political and technical level;
	Regional Policy Dialogue on research, science & innovation	R	Berlin Process Joint Science conference held YES/NO
	Assist the reforms addressed by Chapter 25 by supporting the implementation of the Acquis	E	Number of twinning projects in this chapter
			Number of TAIEX missions
			Number of bilateral R&D projects by Member States
	Encourage governments to increase GDP allocations for RDI by at least 50% over the next 5 years and invest in infrastructures, capacities and skills for research	E	% of national budgets (GDP) allocated for R&I
Number of government funding schemes/initiatives and their absorption level			
Availability of a current research information system (CRIS)	E	Number of funded researchers/innovative companies	
			CRIS established and functional YES/NO

WP2 MONITORING FOR AGENDA SETTING

Implementing the Western Balkans Agenda



Research and Innovation

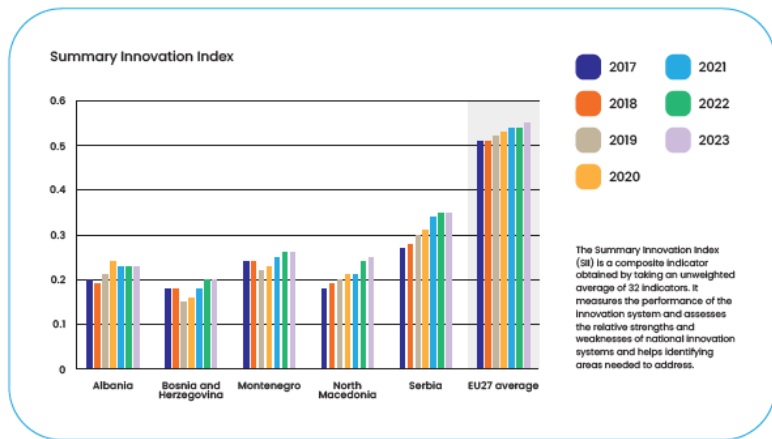
July 2024

The Western Balkans Agenda on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport is a long-term strategy from the EU and the Western Balkans (WB) for cooperation with the region. It will contribute to the region's economic and societal development and builds on three main pillars: Political, Thematic, and Regional.

The implementation of the Western Balkans Agenda is monitored by the project POLICY ANSWERS, and the wider context, progress and achievements are summarised in regular reports. In this brief report card, you find the results of the second round of data collection during 2023 and the first months of 2024 and a comparison with the baseline data collected in the previous round.

In terms of Research and Innovation, the monitoring focuses on the context indicator "Summary Innovation Index" and on a variety of achievements outlined in the WB Agenda (see next page).

Achievements in a wider context of the Western Balkans Agenda



Note
Data for Kosovo* not available

Source
European Innovation Scoreboard 2022, EU countries and neighbouring countries database
https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/statistics/performance-indicators/european-innovation-scoreboard_en#is-interactive-tool
(accessed 21 February 2024).

* 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.

Agenda Priority

Boosting the WB Innovation Capacity by bringing Research and Innovation (R&I) eco-systems closer to the EU



Regional Indicators

WB Steering Platform meetings	Evidence based policy courses	POLICY ANSWERS project
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Western Balkans Economy Indicators

Supporting Western Balkans reforms for science & research alignment with EU acquis
Participation in European programmes, initiatives and schemes

	Technical assistance (TA) to Chapter 25 (Science and Research) reforms	Governments to increase GDP allocations to R&I	Investment in R&I and education infrastructure	Integration in the new ERA	Participation in the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (ET) higher education institutions (HEI) Initiative
Albania	Low level of bilateral TA projects and Twinning projects Low uptake of TA/EX missions	No new funding schemes reported % of GDP dedicated to R&I remains low	No new governmental funding schemes reported	No new joint projects and/or mobilities with EU MS reported	Participation with 2 full partners
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bilateral TA projects increased Twinning projects and TA/EX missions remain a challenge	Increased number of funding schemes % of GDP dedicated to R&I remains low	New funding schemes introduced	Increased number of joint projects and mobilities with EU MS	Participation with 5 full and 2 associated partners
Kosovo*	Low level of bilateral TA projects and Twinning projects Low uptake of TA/EX missions	Increased number of funding schemes % of GDP dedicated to R&I remains low	No new governmental funding schemes reported	Increased number of joint projects and mobilities with EU MS	Participation with 1 associated partner
Montenegro	Low level of bilateral TA projects and Twinning projects Low uptake of TA/EX missions	No new funding schemes reported % of GDP dedicated to R&I has increased	New funding schemes introduced	Increased number of joint projects and mobilities with EU MS	Participation with 1 full partner
North Macedonia	Low level of Twinning projects and bilateral TA projects No new TA/EX missions taken up	No new funding schemes reported % of GDP dedicated to R&I remains low	No new governmental funding schemes reported	Increased number of joint projects and mobilities with EU MS	Participation with 2 full partners
Serbia	No new Twinning or bilateral TA projects reported Low level of TA/EX missions uptake remains a challenge	No new funding schemes reported % of GDP dedicated to R&I remains low	New funding scheme introduced	Increased number of joint projects and mobilities with EU MS	Participation with 5 full and 2 associated partners

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

* 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.

Highlights

Western Balkans partners successful in the 2023 ET HEI Initiative
Further ERA integration by increased number of joint projects and mobilities with EU Member States

What is new this year?

New indicator introduced:

“WB economies reaching Reform Agenda milestones in the POLICY ANSWERS monitoring areas”

-> measuring progress made by Albania, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia in the areas of green energy, private sector development, human capital and digitalisation

Monitoring process also closely follows developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina that has not yet submitted its Reform Agenda to the EC

Ongoing capacity building activities

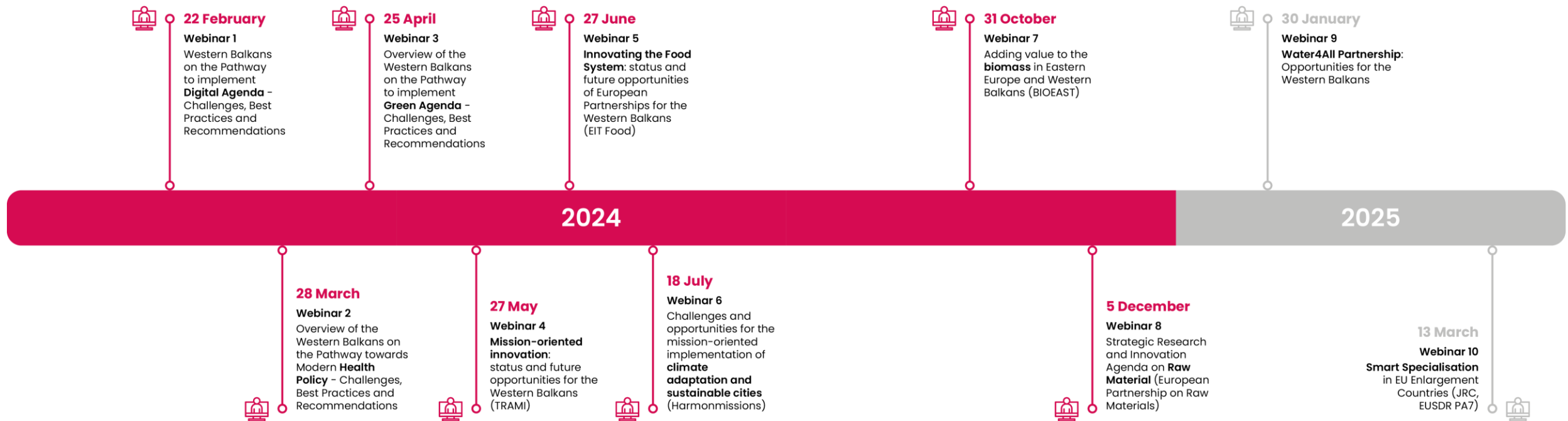
Upcoming activities include:

- **Info days** (e.g. hybrid MSCA Info Day in Albania)
- **Trainings** (e.g. on how to prepare and manage projects related to EU Economic Growth Plan in Kosovo)
- **Workshops** (e.g. Monitoring and Evaluation workshops in Serbian university centers)
- **Study visits** (e.g. peer learning study visit on support programmes and policies for research, innovation, start-ups and sustainability by stakeholders from North Macedonia)
- **Consultations** (e.g. fact finding and needs assessment on libraries as enablers of scientific research in the era of open science in BiH)
- **Videos and infographics** (e.g. Green talks in Kosovo)

Webinars

Regularly organised to promote missions and partnerships and align priorities.

Recordings are available on the [WB Info Hub Youtube channel](#) and the [Policy Stakeholder Platform](#).



Upcoming webinar: Smart Specialisation in EU enlargement countries



Scan the QR code to register



WEBINAR

13 March 2025
15:00 (CET)



Smart Specialisation in EU Enlargement Countries

Speakers



Emanuele Fabbri
Economic and Policy Analyst, European Commission - Joint Research Centre



Viktor Nedović
Director of The Serbia Accelerating Innovation and Growth Entrepreneurship Project (SAIGE)



Lazar Živković
Head of the Innovation Economics Department, Research Associate, Institute of Economic Sciences, Belgrade



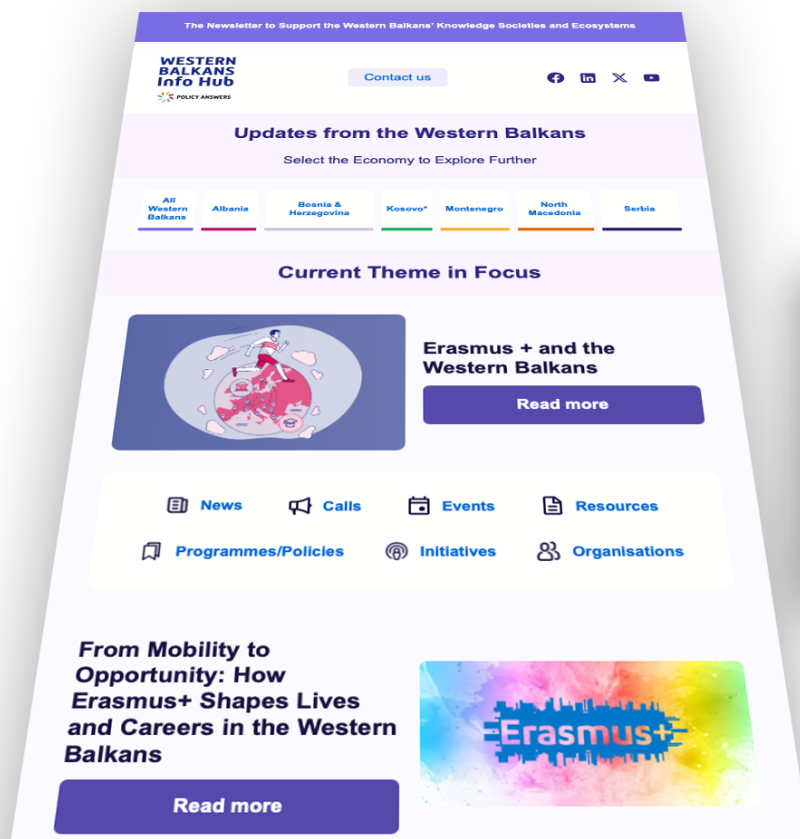
Dijana Štrbac
Research Associate, Institute of Economic Sciences, Belgrade; EUSDR Priority Area 7 (Knowledge Society) Support Team Member

Register for the webinar via the link provided in the description

WESTERN BALKANS Info Hub

Monthly newsletters

Most recent theme: **Erasmus+**
Next one: **Smart Specialisation**



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**THANK
YOU!**