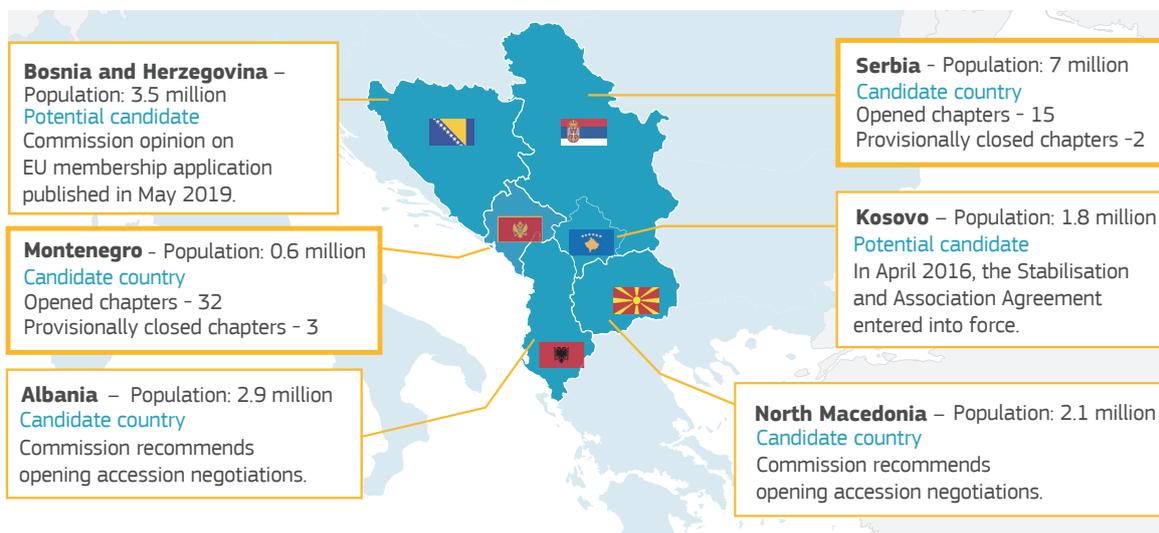


THE EU ACCESSION PROCESS OF THE WESTERN BALKANS

July 2019

A credible enlargement policy is a geostrategic investment in **peace, stability, security and economic growth** in the whole of Europe. It is based on fair and rigorous conditionality and the principle of own merits. It requires complex reforms, with genuine and sustainable results on key issues such as the rule of law, justice reform, fight against corruption and organised crime, security, fundamental rights, functioning of democratic institutions and public administration reform, as well as economic development. Reconciliation, good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation is also key.

OVERVIEW OF THE EU RELATIONS WITH THE WESTERN BALKANS



THE ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF THE EU'S RELATIONS WITH THE WESTERN BALKANS

€ The EU companies are the **biggest investors** in the Western Balkans: over €10 billion of Foreign Direct Investments in the past five years.

👥 Western Balkans is a market of some **18 million consumers**.

📊 **Future potential:** fast growing economies with high domestic demand.

The EU is the Western Balkans' **largest trading partner**:

**€54
BILLION**

of total trade between the EU and the Western Balkans in 2018.

WESTERN BALKANS - KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE LAST YEAR

-  EU-Western Balkans summit (Sofia, May 2018): strong commitment from all the leaders of the region to reforms and good neighbourly relations
-  Historic agreement between Greece and North Macedonia solving the name issue
-  Ambitious reform agenda in North Macedonia under way
-  Major transformation of Albania's justice system through the vetting of the judiciary
-  Regional roaming agreement, signed by all Western Balkans governments, entered into force on 1 July 2019
-  Increased cooperation with the EU on border control

MAIN STEPS TO ACCESSION

01.



The country submits an application to the Council, declaring its wish to become a member of the EU.

02.



The European Commission, which closely monitors the enlargement countries, submits an opinion on the application.

03.



On this basis, the EU Member States' governments need to decide unanimously if they accept and grant the applicant country candidate status.

04.



After certain conditions are met, the accession negotiations are opened, which again is done only with the agreement of all Member States.

05.



The country must now work to implement the EU's laws and standards during negotiations. All EU Member States must agree that the country met all of the necessary requirements.

06.



Once the negotiations on all areas have been finalised, the Commission must give its opinion on whether or not the country is ready to become a Member State.

07.



Based on this opinion, the EU Member States decide unanimously whether to close the process and sign an Accession Treaty with the candidate country. The European Parliament must give its consent as well.

08.



Only after the Accession Treaty has been ratified by all EU Member States can the country become an EU Member State.