

A New Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans

EU Transparency Register: 082698126468-52 Copyright © 2023 European DIGITALSME Alliance



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the Digital Assembly 2018 in Bulgaria, the EU launched the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans. The European Commission promised €30 million in EU grants on digital infrastructure, cybersecurity and eGovernment.

Since 2018, the increasing influence of actors such as China and the United States in the Western Balkans has been significant, causing concerns in the EU about their impact on strategic dependencies. In response, the EU hopes to demonstrate that it can be a reliable partner in the era of the digital revolution.

Amidst a volatile geopolitical environment and the Russian war in Ukraine it is important that the EU reinforces its engagement in digital technologies with its Western Balkan partners. This new shift requires the development of synergies and projects in consultation and close cooperation with the Western Balkan partners. A new Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans could promote the EU's approach to digital technologies by responding to its partners' needs.

DIGITAL SME offers five policy recommendations for a New Digital Agenda. These recommendations were co-developed in partnership with our members: 3B ICT Network (Balkans, Black Sea and Baltics), Vojvodina ICT Cluster (Serbia) and the Montenegrin IT Cluster.

1. Establish the role of Digital Attaché in Western Balkan's EU Delegations
2. Implement the one-stop shop support of European Digital Innovation Hubs in the Western Balkans
3. Establish a Cybersecurity Skills Academy that will deliver specialised trainings for young graduates and employees of public administrations
4. Train a selected pool of experts on ICT standards to facilitate the uptake of digital technologies and drive global leadership in emerging technologies
5. Launch an investment package to support digitalisation under the EU Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EU-Western Balkans: The Political Priorities	4
The Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans	5
Policy Actions	6
Policy Action #1: Establish the role of Digital Attaché in Western Balkan's EU Delegations	6
Policy Action #2: Implement the one-stop shop support of European Digital Innovation Hubs in the Western Balkans	7
Policy Action #3: Establish a Cybersecurity Skills Academy in the Western Balkans region	8
Policy Action #4: Train a selected pool of experts on ICT standards to facilitate the uptake of digital technologies and drive global leadership in emerging technologies	9
Policy Action #5: Launch an investment package to support digitalisation under the EU Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans	10
Conclusion	11
Annex I	14
An Economic Comparison between the Western Balkans and the EU	14

EU-Western Balkans: The Political Priorities

The European Union and the Western Balkans have embarked on a journey towards a common future. On one hand, the EU is fully committed to the integration of the six economies of the Western Balkans. On the other hand, the Western Balkan partners are fully committed to the strategic objective of joining the European Union.¹

The first concrete steps towards this common future were made in the 2003 Thessaloniki Summit, where EU Member States gave its full unequivocal support towards EU enlargement in the region. The European perspective of the Western Balkans fuelled economic recovery and accelerated significant institutional reforms.² Croatia started negotiations in 2005 and completed them in 2011. Montenegro opened negotiations with the EU in 2012, and Serbia in 2014. In March 2020, the Council of the EU opened accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo³ are potential candidates for EU membership.⁴

The EU is the leading trade partner for all six Western Balkan economies, accounting for almost 70% of the total trade in the region. In the last decade, EU-Western Balkans trade has grown by 130%, while exports from the Western Balkans region to the EU have increased by 207%.⁵ Besides economic benefits, the EU provides its partners in the region with political and technical support to implement important institutional reforms and bring them closer to EU rules and regulations.

The importance of the region of Western Balkans became even more prominent, after Russian's invasion of Ukraine, in 2022. The invasion marked the emergence of a volatile geopolitical order. Amidst these new dynamics, state actors have attempted to exert influence in the region and gain strategic advantages. Russia's instrumentalization of Slavic Orthodox nationalism and China's financial investments in the region are examples of such practices.⁶

“We need to continue to work closely together to keep the Western Balkans peaceful, stable and firmly on the EU path” stated Josep Borell, the EU's top diplomat, shortly after the war in Ukraine begun.⁷ This geopolitical shift has prompted the EU to further strengthen its ties with the region. This was also the central theme in the 2022 EU-Western Balkans Summit, hosted in Tirana.

¹European Parliament (2022). The Western Balkans, Fact Sheets on the European Union.

²Marko Kmezić (2020). Recalibrating the EU's Approach to the Western Balkans, European View, pp. 54–61

³Throughout this text, all reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

⁴European Parliament (2022). The Enlargement of the Union, Fact Sheets on the European Union.

⁵European External Action Service (2022). The EU and the Western Balkans: towards a common future.

⁶Suzanne Lynch (2022). EU courts Western Balkans as Russia and China loom, POLITICO Europe.

⁷Josep Borrell (2022). Time to move forward on EU integration in the Western Balkans, HR/VP Blog.

The Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans

One of the areas where the EU has scaled up its efforts in the region is digital transformation. In the Political Priorities of Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission it was underlined that digital technology is having a transformative effect in people's lives. That's why, the European Commission has set an ambition to make this Europe's 'Digital Decade'. This ambition was realised through a series of legislative initiatives and a series of strategic investments across Member States.

The push towards a 'Europe fit for the digital age' has spilled over the EU's relations with the Western Balkans. It has become apparent that the strategic importance of the digital economy cannot be overstated. Common strategic actions in this field can generate mutual benefits and address some of the gaps in the region. The Western Balkan economies face challenges in the digital literacy of the population and their public administration staff. Moreover, digital government services vary in their level of sophistication and require further improvements. Finally, the economies of the Western Balkans struggle to effectively address cybercrime and implement a strong framework of cybersecurity.⁸

To address some of these challenges, the EU launched the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans in 2018. With the Digital Agenda, the European Commission and the six Ministers from the Western Balkans committed to a series of joint actions on connectivity, cybersecurity and innovation. Specifically, under the Western Balkan Investment Framework (WBIF), €30 million in EU grants would be made available to deploy broadband infrastructure in the region.⁹ Moreover, the Western Balkans would be included in EU initiatives and events such as the Digital Opportunity Traineeship program and EU Code Week, in order to strengthen coding skills and digital literacy in the region. Finally, the partners would engage in capacity building activities in the areas of cybersecurity, eGovernment and eHealth to accelerate the transformation of the region to the digital economy.¹⁰

The Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans was an important first step. Nevertheless, the initiative was not followed up by any other actions since 2018. This inaction has generated an important gap in the partnership between the EU and the Western Balkans. Meanwhile, other agents have significantly stepped up their efforts in boosting the Western Balkans digital economy. For example, the Western Balkans have become an important part of China's Digital Silk Road. The

⁸ Metamorphosis Foundation (2022). Digital Agenda's report on digital advancement in the Western Balkans

⁹ European Commission (2018). Launching of Digital Agenda for Western Balkans.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

initiative aims to boost connectivity in participating economies and increase bilateral involvement of participating countries with China.¹¹

China's Digital Silk Road is part of the larger Belt and Road Initiative that promotes all kinds of investments in the region. The Balkan Investigating Reporting Network that China has been involved in 136 major projects in the region, amounting to EUR 32 billion, in the last decade.¹²

The EU remains the principal economic partner of the Western Balkans. Nevertheless, there is an increasing push from other players to increase their engagement in the region. Firstly, this could generate a value lock-in through the widespread use of digital technologies that are incompatible with European standards. For example, the widespread adoption of technologies that don't uphold the higher standards of privacy would complicate data transfers between the EU and the Western Balkans and could disrupt specific aspects of the integration process. Secondly, the increased assertiveness of other agents in the region may generate vulnerabilities across IT systems and critical infrastructure.

As a result, it has become increasingly clear that the EU ought to step up its efforts in the region, especially the area of digital transformation. The strategic nature of the area, being one part of the twin transitions, can allow the EU and the Western Balkan partners to generate mutual benefits if they engage in enhanced cooperation. To achieve this, it is important that the EU adopts targeted specific measures that can accelerate the uptake and adoption of new technologies in the region. At the same time, we must ensure that the development of new innovative solutions aligns with European values of fundamental rights.

Policy Actions

Policy Action #1: Establish the role of Digital Attaché in Western Balkan's EU Delegations

On July 18th, 2022, the Council of the EU agreed to integrate digital diplomacy as a core component of the EU's external action.¹³ Digital technologies have become an indispensable part of foreign policy agendas. To exploit their full potential, EU Delegations could adopt a more coherent and targeted approach to implementing their digital agendas in the Western Balkans. The establishment of Digital Attachés in EU Delegations across the Western Balkans could contribute towards this aim.

Firstly, specialized staff in digital technologies can provide the EU's external action with technical expertise. The implementation of policies on emerging

¹¹ Stefan Vladisavljev (2021). Surveying China's Digital Silk Road in the Western Balkans, War on the Rocks.

¹² Lynch, op. cit.

¹³ General Secretariat of the Council (2022). Council Conclusions on EU Digital Diplomacy.

such as artificial intelligence and quantum computing require technical knowledge that might not be present in traditionally trained diplomats. Secondly, specialized staff on the ground would be able to form deeper ties with the local ICT ecosystem and gain a better understanding of their needs. In turn, this understanding would feed back on the decision-making level and inform a more flexible and agile Digital Agenda. The speed of technological innovation can outpace the traditional EU policy toolbox. Tools of agile digital governance such as regulatory sandboxes, public-private partnerships and governance innovation.¹⁴

Finally, the EU's Digital Attachés in the Western Balkans can help bridge the gap between the Digital and Innovation Agendas. In 2021, the Western Balkan economies signed association agreements to the Horizon Europe programme.¹⁵ This new partnership opened the door for researchers and innovators in the region to fully participate in the EU's €95.5 billion programme.¹⁶ Access to the Horizon Europe programme has the potential to enable digital innovators across the Western Balkans region.

Nevertheless, access to EU funding has been constrained by barriers such as limited awareness, limited capacity, and technical complexity. To bridge this gap, EU Digital Attachés in the region could provide technical assistance to interested parties and launch awareness campaigns to improve EU funding utilization. At the same time, Digital Attachés placed in the six Western Balkan partners could work in a coordinated effort to set up an EU Helpdesk Service for digital innovators in the region. One policy option that could significantly support the above-mentioned efforts would be to recruit the Attachés from the pool of local cluster managers. All in all, specialized EU staff on the ground could enhance ties between the EU and its Western Balkan partners, improve and refine the Digital Agenda in an agile manner and drive a bottom-up digital partnership in the region.

Policy Action #2: Implement the one-stop shop support of European Digital Innovation Hubs in the Western Balkans

In 2022, the European Commission published a call for European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs) based on the Digital Europe Programme. EDIHs operate as one-stop shops which support companies in their ecosystem in their digital transformation journeys.¹⁷

European Digital Innovation Hubs can help small and medium-sized enterprises overcome some of the main barriers of digitalisation. Lack of skills, red tape and access to capital remain some of the primary barriers to digitalisation that are

¹⁴ World Economic Forum (2018). Agile Governance: Reimagining Policy-making in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

¹⁵ European Commission (2021). Five Western Balkan partners join Horizon Europe research and innovation programme.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ European Commission (2021). European Digital Innovation Hubs for 2021 – 2023.

cited by DIGITAL SME's members. EDIHs can help alleviate some of these issues, by providing financing and technical advice, training, skills development, and guidance through red tape.

In addition, EDIHs can provide SMEs with experimentation facilities such as regulatory sandboxes. Sandboxes go one step further than guidance and assistance by allowing companies to test new products, services, and business models in a safe and controlled environment. Recent trends in EU policymaking have showed an increased interest in regulatory sandboxes as an essential tool that can boost innovation. Regulatory sandboxes can also contribute to regulatory learning, as supervising authorities can also test certain regulatory approaches and update the relevant legislative frameworks.¹⁸

Technical assistance as well as access to experimentation facilities would provide significant added value to the digitalisation of the Western Balkans' ecosystems. These services could accelerate the development of innovative products and services in the region. Moreover, EDIHs could also contribute by actively connecting supply and demand in the Western Balkans' marketplace. European Digital Innovation Hubs are empowered to set up matchmaking platforms and organize matchmaking initiatives. These activities could help to link traditional SMEs in strategic sectors such as health, retail and hospitality with SMEs that provide digital solutions. In terms of geography, ICT SMEs could originate in the Western Balkans region and in EU Member States. This means that EDIH matchmaking activities could help create business opportunities and foster stronger ties between EU SMEs and SMEs from the Western Balkans.

All in all, the extension of European Digital Innovation Hubs in the Western Balkan economies would accelerate the digitalisation of ecosystems, boost innovation and create fertile ground for economic opportunities.

Policy Action #3: Establish a Cybersecurity Skills Academy in the Western Balkans region

During the COVID-19 pandemic, large parts of the Western Balkans societies and economies became more digital than ever.¹⁹ At the same time, Western Balkan governments sought to harness the power of digital technologies in order to prevent the spread of the virus.²⁰ Whereas the pandemic crisis accelerated digital transformation in the region, the invasion of Ukraine by Russia has exposed the vulnerabilities of our interconnected and digitalised reality. The emergence of a disruptive geopolitical landscape poses new challenges to the adoption of digital

¹⁸ World Economic Forum, op. cit.

¹⁹ Svitlana Pyrkalo (2023). Sarajevo summit discusses digital development in the Western Balkans, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

²⁰ Chris Kremidas-Courney (2020). Countering hybrid threats: the vital need for digital resilience, Friends of Europe.

technologies in the Western Balkans region.²¹

The vulnerabilities of digital transformation have generated disruption across the Western Balkans region. The Prime Minister of Albania, Edi Rama stated that his country is under daily cyber attacks since an attack from Iran in 2022 brought critical digital infrastructure offline.²² This was followed by two major cyber-attacks that forced a significant part of Montenegro's digital infrastructure offline.²³ In early July of 2022, Kosovo* also reported an unsuccessful cyber-attack on the network of its state institutions. Brett Callow, a Canadian expert, stated at the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network that the economies of the Western Balkans can expect increase of cyber attacks in the future and should prioritise online and data security.²⁴

Cybersecurity is a field where the EU can provide significant added value to its partners. At the end of 2020, an EU Cybersecurity Strategy was put forward. The Strategy puts together a comprehensive approach that includes policy, regulatory and investment instruments to enhance Europe's resilience and technological sovereignty.²⁵ In the 2022 State of the Union address, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen announced another initiative, the Cybersecurity Skills Academy.²⁶

Many studies have showcased that there is a lack of appropriate skills within the workforce to perform cybersecurity tasks. The cybersecurity skill shortage describes the lack of cybersecurity professionals capable to fill cybersecurity roles.²⁷ The issue seems to disproportionately impact specific sectors, notably public administration. This is because competition for security professionals is high and skilled personnel tends to be attracted by more lucrative employment offers. While existing literature, does not provide quantitative data on the cybersecurity skills gap in Western Balkan's public administrations, it is likely that a similar pattern occurs. Therefore, to fortify digital resilience across the continent and build capacity, the EU should consider extending the Cybersecurity Skills Academy to citizens of the Western Balkan economies.

Policy Action #4: Train a selected pool of experts on ICT standards to facilitate the uptake of digital technologies and drive global leadership in emerging technologies

ICT standards are necessary for enterprises in the digital industry to facilitate innovation and ensure competitive digital markets. Firstly, standards act as a

²¹ James Andrew Lewis (2022). Cyber War and Ukraine, Center for Strategic & International Studies.

²² Alice Taylor (2023). Albanian PM: Country under daily cyberattacks, Euractiv.

²³ Samir Kajosevic (2022). Montenegro Still Assessing Damage From Mystery Cyber Attacks, BalkanInsight.

²⁴ Samir Kajosevic (2022). Western Balkans Urged to Prepare for Uptick in Cyber-Attacks, BalkanInsight.

²⁵ European Commission (2020). New EU Cybersecurity Strategy and new rules to make physical and digital critical entities more resilient.

²⁶ Luca Bertuzzi (2022). A sneak peek at the EU's digital agenda for 2023.

²⁷ European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (2021). Addressing Skills Shortage and Gap Through Higher Education.

neutral layer, on top of which companies can build their innovative product.²⁸ Not only can standards accelerate the uptake of emerging technologies but also provide safety, reliability, and environmental care. These factors enhance the trust of consumers and provide new market opportunities.

ICT standards have increasingly become a field of strategic policy competition. Standards not only lower the costs for trade but can also steer the future of the internet and the core of our digital world.²⁹ Therefore, technical standards can be utilized to promote social values and economic interests across the world. For example, China had adopted a policy of state-led standard-setting in international bodies. The approach that China promotes is often contrasted to the open models of internet governance that are espoused by the United States and the European Union.³⁰

In 2022, the European Commission presented a new Standardisation Strategy. The new strategy aims to strengthen the global competitiveness of the EU in technological innovation.³¹ One of the aims of the Standardisation Strategy is to enhance European leadership in global standards. The European Commission has set up a High-Level Forum to coordinate, exchange information and strengthen Europe's approach to international standard-setting bodies.³² By setting global standards, the EU can promote its democratic and open values while also enhancing the competitiveness of European companies, and especially SMEs.

To strengthen cooperation with the Western Balkans in the field of digital technologies and promote EU leadership, it is necessary to place standards at the centre of a new Digital Agenda. Funding standardisation projects in the Western Balkans region can help foster an ever-closer partnership in the field of standard-setting. These projects may involve trainings and capacity-building exercises, with an aim to support the active participation of local stakeholders in international standardisation bodies.

Policy Action #5: Launch an investment package to support digitalisation under the EU Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans

In 2020, the European Commission unveiled the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans. The Plan aims to accelerate the green and digital transition in the Western Balkans as well as foster regulatory convergence with the EU acquis. The Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans mobilizes up to EUR 9 billion in grants and an additional EUR 20 billion of

²⁸ Sujai Shivakuma (2022). Securing Global Standards for Innovation and Growth, Centre for Strategic & International Studies.

²⁹ Sophie Faaborg-Andersen, Lindsay Temes (2022). The Geopolitics of Digital Standards. Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ European Commission (2022). An EU Strategy on Standardisation - Setting global standards in support of a resilient, green and digital EU single market.

³² *Ibid.*

investments.³³

In February 2022, the European Commission announced the first investment package under the Plan. The first package mobilizes EUR 3.2 billion to support 21 projects in the areas of transport, digital, climate and energy. Specifically in digital, the projects concern the development of rural broadband infrastructure to ensure universal connectivity access in the Western Balkans region.³⁴

While connectivity is an essential component of digitalisation, the EU could provide added value to a wider range of stakeholders by investing in a diversified portfolio of digitalisation projects. Besides connectivity, the afro-mentioned areas of digitalisation such as cybersecurity, digital skills, and standardisation are also important elements that can contribute to the resilience of the Western Balkans region amidst a volatile geopolitical context.

To this aim, the EU could also consider other forms of financing infrastructure besides the Economic and Investment Plan, to boost digitalisation in the Western Balkans. For example, the Global Gateway, the EU's answer to China's Belt and Road Initiative, aims to invest up to EUR 300 billion in critical infrastructure, sustainable technologies, and climate change mitigation.³⁵

In addition, the European Sovereignty Fund which was announced at the 2022 State of the Union address of President von der Leyen, could also be directed to support public-private partnerships, industrial alliances and investments in the start-up ecosystem in EU Member States and in the Western Balkan economies.³⁶

Overall, strategic investments in digital technologies that go beyond the expansion of connectivity in the Western Balkans could contribute to the overall resilience of our partners and our continent. This is a necessary step that will ensure that the future of the digital industry is made in Europe and stays in Europe.

Conclusion

Digital technologies have become a significant area of advances in the areas of external action and political integration. The EU will need to prove to the world that a human-centred approach to digital technologies can combine innovation uptake with the protection of fundamental rights. Yet, it is also important that the EU takes into consideration the needs of its partners, instead of pushing for a vision that is alternative to the two technological superpowers. If done right, the

³³ European Commission (2022). European Commission launches €3.2 billion investment package to advance sustainable connectivity in the Western Balkans.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ European Commission (2021). Global Gateway: up to €300 billion for the European Union's strategy to boost sustainable links around the world.

³⁶ Georg Riekes and Philipp Lausberg (2022). The EU's trillion-euro question, European Policy Centre.

EU can lay down the ground for the political and economic integration of the Western Balkans. Amidst geopolitical turbulence, this is a goal of critical importance. The recommendations put forth in this paper are low-hanging fruit that can fuel a new dynamic in the EU-Western Balkans relations.

- Alice Taylor (2023). Albanian PM: Country under daily cyberattacks, Euractiv.
- Chris Kremidas-Courney (2020). Countering hybrid threats: the vital need for digital resilience, Friends of Europe.
- European Commission (2018). Launching of Digital Agenda for Western Balkans.
- European Commission (2020). New EU Cybersecurity Strategy and new rules to make physical and digital critical entities more resilient.
- European Commission (2021). European Digital Innovation Hubs for 2021 – 2023.
- European Commission (2021). Five Western Balkan partners join Horizon Europe research and innovation programme.
- European Commission (2021). Global Gateway: up to €300 billion for the European Union's strategy to boost sustainable links around the world.
- European Commission (2022). European Commission launches €3.2 billion investment package to advance sustainable connectivity in the Western Balkans.
- European Commission (2022). An EU Strategy on Standardisation – Setting global standards in support of a resilient, green and digital EU single market.
- European External Action Service (2022). The EU and the Western Balkans: towards a common future.
- European Parliament (2022). The Enlargement of the Union, Fact Sheets on the European Union.
- European Parliament (2022). The Western Balkans, Fact Sheets on the European Union.
- European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (2021). Addressing Skills Shortage and Gap Through Higher Education.
- General Secretariat of the Council (2022). Council Conclusions on EU Digital Diplomacy.
- Georg Riekeles and Philipp Lausberg (2022). The EU's trillion-euro question, European Policy Centre.
- James Andrew Lewis (2022). Cyber War and Ukraine, Center for Strategic & International Studies.

- John Aglionby, African Union accuses China of hacking headquarters, Financial Times.
- Josep Borrell (2022). Time to move forward on EU integration in the Western Balkans, HR/VP Blog.
- Luca Bertuzzi (2022). A sneak peek at the EU's digital agenda for 2023.
- Marko Kmezić (2020). Recalibrating the EU's Approach to the Western Balkans, European View, pp. 54–61.
- Metamorphosis Foundation (2022). Digital Agenda's report on digital advancement in the Western Balkans.
- Samir Kajosevic (2022). Montenegro Still Assessing Damage From Mystery Cyber Attacks, BalkanInsight.
- Samir Kajosevic (2022). Western Balkans Urged to Prepare for Uptick in Cyber- Attacks. BalkanInsight.
- Sophie Faaborg-Andersen, Lindsay Temes (2022). The Geopolitics of Digital Standards. Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.
- Stefan Vladislavljev (2021). Surveying China's Digital Silk Road in the Western Balkans, War on the Rocks.
- Sujai Shivakuma (2022). Securing Global Standards for Innovation and Growth, Centre for Strategic & International Studies.
- Suzanne Lynch (2022). EU courts Western Balkans as Russia and China loom, POLITICO Europe.
- Svitlana Pyrkalo (2023). Sarajevo summit discusses digital development in the Western Balkans, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.
- World Economic Forum (2018). Agile Governance: Reimagining Policy-making in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.
- Sophie Faaborg-Andersen, Lindsay Temes (2022). The Geopolitics of Digital Standards. Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.
- Stefan Vladislavljev (2021). Surveying China's Digital Silk Road in the Western Balkans, War on the Rocks.
- Sujai Shivakuma (2022). Securing Global Standards for Innovation and Growth, Centre for Strategic & International Studies.
- Suzanne Lynch (2022). EU courts Western Balkans as Russia and China loom, POLITICO Europe.
- Svitlana Pyrkalo (2023). Sarajevo summit discusses digital development in the Western Balkans, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.
- World Economic Forum (2018). Agile Governance: Reimagining Policy-making in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Annex I

An Economic Comparison between the Western Balkans and the EU

The GDP share of the ICT sector in the 27 EU Member States averaged at 4,6% in 2019. The share of ICT in Serbia's GDP is 5%, in Bosnia and Herzegovina is also 5%, in Montenegro 4,2%. In Kosovo* 1,9%, in Albania's 2,9% GDP, and in North Macedonia 3% as a share of the GDP.



