



A CREDIBLE ENLARGEMENT PERSPECTIVE FOR AND ENHANCED EU ENGAGEMENT WITH THE WESTERN BALKANS



SIX NEW FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WESTERN BALKANS

Through six flagship initiatives, the Western Balkans Strategy sets out the EU's unprecedented support to the transformation process in the Western Balkans, targeting specific areas of interest for both the EU and the Western Balkans countries:



INITIATIVE TO STRENGTHEN THE RULE OF LAW

Existing tools, such as detailed action plans, will be expanded to all Western Balkans countries. Assessment of reform implementation will be enhanced, including through new advisory missions. Greater use will be made of leverage provided in the negotiating frameworks with Montenegro and Serbia.



INITIATIVE TO REINFORCE ENGAGEMENT ON SECURITY AND MIGRATION

Reinforced cooperation on fighting organised crime, countering terrorism and violent extremism and on border security and migration management. Europol liaison officers will be posted in the region; Joint Investigation Teams further promoted and status agreements with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency concluded.



INITIATIVE TO ENHANCE SUPPORT FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This will include expanding the Western Balkans Investment Framework, a significant boost in the provision of guarantees to crowd in private investment, support to start-ups and SMEs and greater trade facilitation. A new reinforced social dimension will see more focus on employment and social policies, with increased financial assistance to support the social sector, in particular education and health. Funding under Erasmus+ will be doubled.



INITIATIVE TO INCREASE TRANSPORT AND ENERGY CONNECTIVITY

Within the region and with the EU, including new investment support. More effective use will be made of the Connecting Europe Facility in the Western Balkan countries. The EU's Energy Union should be expanded to the Western Balkans.



INITIATIVE FOR A DIGITAL AGENDA FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS

This will include a roadmap to facilitate lowering roaming costs, support to the deployment of broadband and development of eGovernment, eProcurement, eHealth and digital skills.



INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT RECONCILIATION AND GOOD NEIGHBOURLY RELATIONS

This will include support to transitional justice, missing persons and increased cooperation in education, culture, youth and sport, and expanding the scope of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office. The Western Balkans will be fully associated to the European Year of Cultural Heritage; The EU - Western Balkans Heritage Route will be launched.