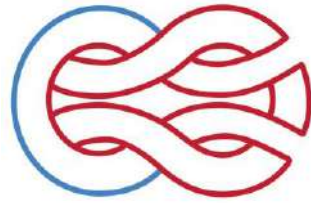


Drug Policy Network South East Europe

# DRUGS

European Union  
2020 Enlargement  
Country Reports

## Drug Policy Network South East Europe



## European Union 2021 Enlargement Country Reports

*Segments on drugs from the European Union annual assessment reports  
and opinion on the Western Balkans and Turkey  
published on 19 October 2021*

The current European Union *enlargement agenda* covers the partners of the Western Balkans and Turkey.

Accession negotiations have been opened with [Montenegro](#) (2012), [Serbia](#) (2014), and [Turkey](#) (2005).

In March 2020, Member States agreed to open accession negotiations with [North Macedonia](#) and [Albania](#).

[Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) (application to join the EU submitted in February 2016) and [Kosovo](#) (Stabilisation and Association Agreement entered into force in April 2016) are potential candidates.

**Drug Policy Network South East Europe**

Pregrevica 35, Belgrade, Serbia

[www.dpnsee.org](http://www.dpnsee.org)

# EU accession process

## step by step

October 2021  
#EUenlargement

A credible enlargement policy is a geostrategic investment in **peace, stability, security** and **prosperity** in Europe. It is based on fair and rigorous conditionality and the principle of own merits. It requires candidate countries to implement complex reforms in many areas such as the rule of law, the economy, the fight against corruption and organised crime. Reconciliation, good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation are of utmost importance.

### Main steps to EU accession



**1** Country submits an application to the Council (EU Member States).



**2** Commission submits an Opinion on the application.



**3** EU Member States decide unanimously to grant the country candidate status.



**4** After conditions are met, the accession negotiations are opened with the agreement of all Member States.



**5** Commission proposes a draft negotiating framework as a basis for the talks, which then needs to be agreed by the Member States.



**6** During negotiations, which are structured according to clusters and chapters, the country prepares to implement EU laws and standards. All EU Member States must agree that all requirements are met in each case.



**7** Once negotiations on all areas are finalised, Commission gives its Opinion on the readiness of the country to become a Member State.



**8** Based on this Opinion, EU Member States decide unanimously to close the negotiation process. The European Parliament must also give its consent.



**9** All EU Member States and the candidate country sign and ratify an Accession Treaty which enables the country to become an EU Member State.

# Clusters of negotiating chapters

Following the introduction of the **revised methodology for the accession negotiations** in February 2020, negotiating chapters are now divided in **six thematic clusters**:

- 1** Fundamentals
- 2** Internal market
- 3** Competitiveness & inclusive growth
- 4** Green agenda & sustainable connectivity
- 5** Resources, agriculture & cohesion
- 6** External relations



Negotiations on each cluster **open as a whole** – after the country fulfils the opening benchmarks. Each chapter will be dealt with individually with respect to its provisional closure. Negotiations on the **fundamentals open first and close last**; progress under the fundamentals' cluster will determine the overall pace of negotiations. If there is sufficient progress on reform priorities, this should lead to closer integration with the European Union, through accelerated integration and increased investments and funding.

# EU - Western Balkans relations

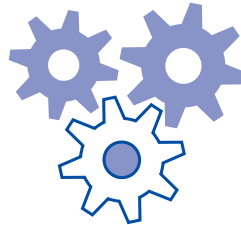
October 2021  
#WesternBalkans

## A new momentum in EU-Western Balkans relations

**February 2020:** Revised methodology, presented by the Commission, to drive forward the enlargement process with a **stronger political steer** and in a more **credible, predictable, dynamic way**

**April 2020:** EU financial support package of **over €3.3 billion** to tackle coronavirus-related health needs & post-pandemic socio-economic recovery

**October 2020:** Commission proposes **Economic & Investment Plan of up to €30 billion** to support economic development and convergence with the EU



**June 2021:** Political agreement on the new **Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance** (finally adopted in September 2021)

**July 2021:** **Western Balkans Summit of the Berlin process**

**September 2021:** **Visit of President von der Leyen** to the region

**October 2021:** **EU27- Western Balkans Summit** under the Slovenian Presidency of the EU Council

## Overview: EU relations with the Western Balkans

**Bosnia and Herzegovina** – Population: 3.5 million  
**Potential candidate**  
Commission Opinion on EU membership application in May 2019, EU Council conclusions endorsing the 14 key priorities in Dec 2019.

**Montenegro** – Population: 0.6 million  
**Candidate country**  
Opened chapters - 33 Provisionally closed chapters - 3

**Albania** – Population: 2.9 million  
**Candidate country**  
March 2020: EU decides to open accession negotiations  
July 2020: draft negotiating framework presented to the Member States.



**Serbia** – Population: 7 million  
**Candidate country**  
Opened chapters - 18 Provisionally closed chapters - 2

**Kosovo\*** – Population: 1.8 million  
**Potential candidate**  
In April 2016, the Stabilisation and Association Agreement entered into force.

**North Macedonia** – Population: 2.1 million  
**Candidate country**  
March 2020: EU decides to open accession negotiations  
July 2020: draft negotiating framework presented to the Member States.

## Economic relations between the EU and the Western Balkans



EU companies are by far the **leading investors**, accounting for **over 61% of FDI stock** in the region in 2019



Western Balkans is a market of **18 million consumers**



EU accounts for **almost 70%** of the region's **total trade** in 2020



## Situation in the region

**Organised crime** continues to be a threat to the region, affecting people, businesses, state institutions and the economy as a whole. Powerful criminal organisations with a global reach easily operate across borders, including in the EU. Criminal organisations active in the Western Balkans have proven very adept at exploiting the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic. Governments' responses have included stepping up operational police cooperation with the EU, in particular through the EMPACT platform<sup>10</sup> and with EU Agencies in areas such as drug smuggling (especially cannabis and synthetic drugs), smuggling of migrants, trafficking in human beings, organised property crime, smuggling of excise goods (mainly cigarettes), and firearms. The new EU Strategy to tackle Organised Crime 2021-2025<sup>11</sup> confirmed the EU's commitment to continue prioritising capacity building projects in third countries, including in enlargement countries. The aim is to support operational cooperation and help equip partners with the tools allowing them to root out complex criminal structures.

There has also been continued investment in the structures to fight organised crime, leading to the strengthening of specialised judiciary and police bodies. Nevertheless, track records on final convictions for organised crime demonstrate that the capacity of law enforcement authorities and the judiciary to successfully investigate, prosecute and try important organised crime cases, and therefore to dissuade potential perpetrators, remains inadequate.

In the Western Balkans and Turkey, the authorities need to find an effective response to prevent organised crime from infiltrating the economies. Further efforts are also needed to speed up the tracing of assets derived from crime through financial investigations, and to ensure a more effective confiscation and recovery of criminal profits.

Positive examples in the region have been noted in **Albania**, where good progress was made on international police cooperation leading to high-profile arrests, and on countering the production and trafficking of drugs. **North Macedonia** has made some progress in the fight against organised crime, including at operational level. **Montenegro** also recorded some progress in improving the access of law-enforcement agencies to key databases and increasing the number of investigators and experts in key areas. Moreover, well-established international police cooperation continued to yield results, with unprecedented drug seizures. However, **Kosovo**, **Serbia** and **Turkey** only made limited progress in the fight against organised crime, with no progress in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, where the contact point for cooperation with Europol is not yet operational.

**Albania** has continued to show its commitment to counter the production and trafficking of drugs, as air monitoring by EU member state law enforcement services has continued. **Bosnia and Herzegovina** needs to continue its efforts in the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking and increase its capacity to do so.



## Albania

### Chapter 24: Justice, freedom and security

#### Fight against organised crime

The country has some level of preparation in implementing the EU acquis in this area. Good progress was made in meeting last year's recommendations. Tangible results were achieved in the fight against organised crime, including through an increased cooperation with EU Member States, Europol and Eurojust. Exchange of qualitative information and joint police operations involving international partners have further intensified. Albania has continued to show commitment to counter the production and trafficking of drugs. Albania has allowed air monitoring by EU member state law enforcement services to detect the production of narcotics. Efforts need to continue to ensure increased prosecutions and final convictions, especially at high-level. More efforts are needed to tackle cybercrime, trafficking in human beings and money laundering cases. The phenomenon of child sexual abuse online remains a concern.

In the coming year, Albania should in particular:

- keep strengthening the fight against organised crime, including through cooperation with EU Member States, as well as EU Agencies, including Europol and Eurojust; the number of Albanian law enforcement agencies that have access to SIENA should be further expanded; <sup>2</sup>
- establish without delay or designate an asset recovery office/agency in line with the EU acquis that is in charge of the identification and tracing of criminal assets, as foreseen by national legislation;
- strengthen effective law-enforcement response on cybercrime to increase detection, investigation and prosecution.

#### *Implementation and enforcement capacity*

Albania pursued its efforts towards building a track record on fighting organised crime. In 2020 there were 22 new cases referred to prosecution (compared to 79 in 2019); 15 indictments for a structured criminal group in 2020 (compared to 13 in 2019) and five successful cases were closed with 13 persons convicted at appeal level (compared to one case in 2019).

Notable progress was made in the fight against organised crime, including through cooperation with EU Member States, and through the implementation of the action plan to address the FATF recommendations. The implementation of the package of temporary preventive measures to enhance Albania's capacity to counter criminal organisations (Operation Force of Law continued throughout the year. In 2020, this resulted in 181 police operations involving 802 suspects (of whom 630 were arrested/detained, 82 wanted and 85 investigated at large). 35 criminal groups were dismantled (an increase of 46% compared to 2019), 125 members of criminal groups were arrested and almost 15 million EUR worth of assets and bank accounts were seized. The Special Prosecution Office (SPO) initiated 200 criminal proceedings – 42 for organised crime and 158 for

corruption – in 2020. During the same period, 39 criminal procedures for corruption and 16 procedures for organised crime were sent to trial.

As regards the track record for serious crimes, there was an increase in 2020 with 2 785 new cases referred to prosecution, compared to 2 323 in 2019; 66 cases on trafficking in human beings, 417 cases on money laundering and 2 086 cases on drugs production (compared to 1 805 in 2019). Of the total referrals for serious crimes, 577 cases resulted in indictments in 2020, compared to 507 in 2019. As for case with final convictions, there were 188 in 2020 (in addition to 185 convictions at first instance), compared to 308 in 2019. Narcotics related cases accounted for 81% of the total in 2020 compared to 68% in 2019, followed by money laundering, trafficking in vehicles, money counterfeiting and forgery, and trafficking in human beings.

Albania has taken further steps to strengthen international police cooperation. The Europol liaison officer deployed in Tirana since June 2019, the only one to operate in the Western Balkan region, has helped to strengthen cooperation between Albania and EU Member States' police forces in the fight against organised crime, including drug trafficking, and to enhance the police's capacity to assess the main organised crime threats. During 2020, 119 police operations have been carried out in cooperation with international partners, which represents a 27% increase compared to 2019. 95 operations were related to narcotics. 25 of these operations involved Europol, compared to 5 in 2019. Since the deployment of the Europol Liaison Officer, Albania joined five additional Europol analysis projects (APs), bringing its participation to a total of 16 APs. Albania has a liaison officer posted at Europol's headquarters in The Hague.

Albania's participation in joint investigation teams (JITs) has increased. In 2020, Albania participated in 7 JITs supported by Eurojust related to drug trafficking (7) and organised crime (5).

Albania has a large informal sector and its economy is primarily cash-based. Crimes that generate large amounts of money include drug trafficking, tax evasion, smuggling and trafficking in human beings.

### Cooperation in the fight against drugs

#### *Institutional set-up and legal alignment*

The Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection/Institute of Public Health are the main lead bodies in the fight against drug trafficking and drug abuse respectively. Part of the 2021-2025 Strategy against Organised Crime adopted in December 2020 covers activities against drug trafficking and drug abuse. The strategy foresees to improve the legislation on psychoactive substances and precursors and to update the list of prohibited psychoactive substances by 2022. Despite a Council of Ministers' Decision from 2011, which requires the establishment of a National Centre of Information on Drugs (National Drug Observatory), such an institution is yet to be established. Equally, Albania has not yet established an Early Warning System on the information exchange about new psychoactive substances (NEWS). Albania works together with the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) on increasing its reporting capacity on drug-related issues and to bring it in line with EMCDDA guidelines/protocols. It will have to make the necessary efforts to secure sufficient national funding to maintain on-going data collection for all drug-related indicators. A new national drug control plan (2019-2023) and action plan still need to be adopted.

## Implementation and enforcement capacity

Albania continued to build track record on fighting drugs in 2020, as the police referred 2 086 cases of drug production, cultivation and trafficking to prosecutors, involving 3 205 alleged offenders with a slight increase in the number of referrals (5%) but quite a significant increase in the number of alleged offenders (+18,5%). Of the 2 086 cases, 1 802 (86%) were registered by the prosecutors. There were 499 indictments and 218 offenders received final convictions at appeal level (290 in 2019). As in previous years, none of the cases referred to prosecutors concerned the production and manufacture of narcotic and psychotropic substances.

The Albanian authorities continued their fight against cannabis cultivation and trafficking in 2020. Increased cooperation with EU Member States' law enforcement authorities brought tangible results. 233 police operations against narcotics were conducted in 2020 of which 95 in cooperation with international partners. 143 police operations against illegal trafficking were also led, including 21 with international partners.

Albania is the only country in the region that allows monitoring by another country: since 2013, Italy's Ministry of Economy and Finance Enforcement Agency (Guardia di Finanza) has carried out aerial surveys to detect and monitor cannabis plantations in Albania. In addition, ASP started monitoring by drones. The quantity of cannabis seized in Albania fell from about 6.3 tons in 2019 to 4.3 tons in 2020. There was almost no hashish seized in 2020. Since 2021, with EU support, some municipalities started providing financial support to offer alternatives to cannabis related activities to local communities.

The lack of secure storage for drugs and drug precursors prior to destruction remains an issue of concern. The practice of keeping only a small sample as material evidence for court proceedings (instead of the entire quantity seized) is not yet established. Albania needs to establish the legal base for an appropriate process for the destruction of precursors.

Albania carried out some law enforcement operations in relation to the trafficking of cocaine and heroin, some in cooperation with police authorities from neighbouring countries. Overall, cocaine seizures fell from almost 145 kg in 2019 to 6 kg in 2020, while the heroin seized increased from 38.1 kg to 51.6 kg. Large seizures of narcotics occurred in 2021. In April 2021, 200 kg of cocaine were seized in the port of Durres in banana containers coming from Ecuador. In May, 400 kg of cannabis were seized on a speedboat on its way from Vlora to Italy. These operations took place in the framework of the joint operation with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) "Albania Sea 2021", launched in March 2021. In June, 300 kg of cocaine were seized in a truck in Durres port.

Cooperation continued with the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, in the framework of the working arrangement the Centre and Albania, which gives the Albanian authorities access to crucial expertise and supports further approximation of Albanian law and policies on drug-related issues with those of the EU.

## **Other issues related to drugs**

Albanian legislation is not aligned on drug precursors, though the list of controlled substances tallies with the relevant lists in the EU acquis.

(Chapter 1: Free movement of goods)

The e-Register, the electronic database available on the e-Albania portal, is used for the identification of the insured persons and the generation of Health Cards. It enables the registration of patients to primary healthcare health centres and determines their benefit category based on its interaction with other institutional databases. It was upgraded during 2020, with more functions related to the prescriptions for drugs, the organisation of the anti-COVID-19 vaccination campaign, and the issue of vaccination cards.

On drug abuse prevention and harm reduction, prevention activities are only sporadic, they should be conducted in a more systematic way. The National Drug Observatory established in 2011 should be reactivated with adequate resources.

(Chapter 28: Consumer and health protection)

The customs control system for drug precursors, dangerous chemical products and 'controlled substances' is harmonised with the 1988 UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

(Chapter 29: Customs union)

In March 2021 a new working arrangement was signed with FRONTEX. A second FRONTEX liaison officer to the Western Balkans with a mandate covering Albania, Kosovo, and North Macedonia was deployed in Tirana in January 2021. Albania continues to cooperate with EMCDDA under the working arrangement signed in March 2019 on drug related issues.

(Annex I - Relations between the EU and Albania)



# ALBANIA

on its European path

#EUenlargement



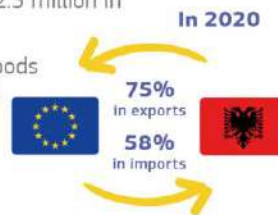
## Key milestones

- APRIL 2009**  
Application for EU membership  
Entry into force of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement
- JUNE 2014**  
EU candidate country status granted
- APRIL 2018**  
Commission recommends opening of accession negotiations
- JUNE 2018**  
The Council sets out the path towards opening accession negotiations
- MARCH 2020**  
EU decides to open accession negotiations
- JULY 2020**  
Presentation of the draft negotiating framework to the Member States
- OCTOBER 2020**  
Commission proposes Economic & Investment Plan to support and bring the Western Balkans closer to the EU
- MAY 2021**  
Commission reports to Council that Albania met in December 2020 the remaining condition to be fulfilled prior to the holding of the first Inter-Governmental Conference of accession negotiations



## Trade & investment

- The EU is Albania's biggest trading partner
- The EU's Foreign Direct Investment in Albania reached €492.5 million in 2020
- Volume of trade in goods with the EU was €4.5 billion in 2020



## EU funding

- The EU is the largest provider of financial assistance to Albania
- €1.35 billion in EU pre-accession funds 2007-2020, including €115 million EU grants for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Albania after the 2019 earthquake.
- €464 million provided in European Investment Bank loans since 1999
- €143.8 million provided since 2009 in Western Balkans Investment Framework grants, to leverage investments of estimated €2.3 billion

- Democracy and governance
- Rule of law and fundamental rights
- Environment, climate action and energy
- Transport
- Competitiveness, innovation, agriculture and rural development
- Education, employment and social policies



## Mobility & empowerment

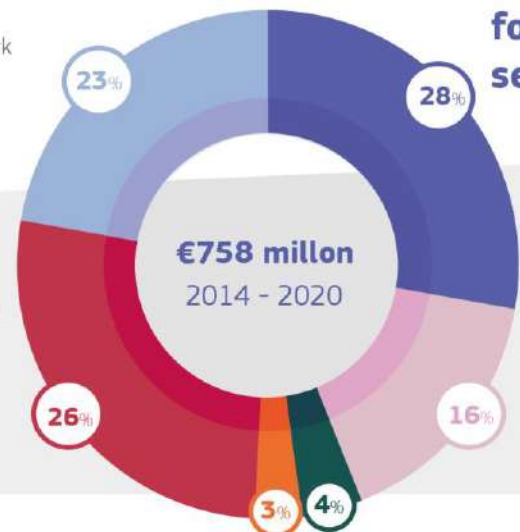
- Visa-free travel to the EU since December 2010
- Over 9,835 participants from Albania in student, academic and youth exchanges under ERASMUS+ (2014-2020)
- €25 million in support to civil society (2014-2020)



## Supporting transformation

- Strengthening democracy: rule of law, justice and fundamental rights
- Reforming public administration
- Fostering competitiveness and supporting business development
- Working towards a cleaner environment and safer food supply

## Support for key sectors



## COVID-19 response

In December 2020, the Commission adopted a **€70 million** package of grants to help fund the access of Western Balkans partners to COVID-19 vaccines. A part of these grants covered the delivery of 650,000 doses of BioNTech/ Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines to all the Western Balkans - funded by the EU and facilitated by Austria - between May and August 2021. In February 2021, the Commission launched a project of over €7 million jointly with WHO, to support readiness for vaccination efforts and resilient health systems in the Western Balkans.

Last updated: 10/2021



## Bosnia Herzegovina

### Summary of the report

Bosnia and Herzegovina is at an early stage/has some level of preparation in the prevention and fight against corruption and organised crime.

The country needs to continue its efforts in the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking and increase its capacity to do so.

### Chapter 24: Justice, freedom and security

Bosnia and Herzegovina has some level of preparation to implement the EU acquis in this area. Very limited progress was made in this chapter, in particular as regards the Opinion key priority 8 on the management of migration and asylum. Last year's recommendations remain outstanding. The country has several strategies in place, and legislation in some areas is broadly aligned with the EU acquis. However, legislation is not harmonised across the country, and institutional cooperation and coordination are weak. As a result, implementation is often uneven and unsatisfactory.

In the coming year, Bosnia and Herzegovina should in particular:

- Adopt a strategy for preventing and combating terrorism and improve capacities by enhancing the exchange of criminal intelligence and establishing programmes to prevent radicalisation and facilitate disengagement from violent extremism;
- Significantly improve the management of migration and asylum system, and ensure effective coordination; ensure sufficient and suitable accommodation facilities, fairly distributed among all entities and cantons; ensure access to asylum procedures; increase border surveillance, including human resources and equipment; improve the legal framework and capacities for voluntary and forced returns;
- Adopt the action plan on drugs.

#### *Institutional set-up and legal alignment*

There are multiple law enforcement agencies in the country, out of which 15 have investigative powers. There are 481 police officers per 100,000 inhabitants, compared with the EU average of 326 in 2017, according to Eurostat.

There was no progress in harmonising police legislation at all levels, which hampers effective police cooperation, in line with European standards.

The legal framework on the fight against organised crime is only partially aligned with the EU acquis.

### *Implementation and enforcement capacity*

In 2020, there were 52 investigations into organised crime with 359 suspects, 22 indictments with 103 accused, 7 convictions with 54 convicted, and 23 acquittals (compared to 55 investigations against 417 suspects, 25 indictments with 134 accused and 26 sentences with 91 convicted in 2019). The capacity to effectively dismantle criminal organisations is seriously hampered by the lack of harmonisation of criminal legislation in the country, which is exacerbated by weak institutional coordination. As a result, there is a systemic lack of operational cooperation and a very limited exchange of intelligence, creating many opportunities for criminal organisations.

The tools for freezing, managing and confiscating criminal assets are not sufficiently effective. The confiscation of criminal assets needs to become a strategic priority in the fight against organised crime, terrorism and high-level corruption. The freezing of assets needs to be used more systematically and the management of frozen assets needs to be improved. The value of asset confiscations in 2020 amounted to over EUR 11.5 million for 87 cases in first instance and 14 final convictions, compared to EUR 11.8 million in 2019.

### Cooperation in the field of drugs

#### *Institutional set-up and legal alignment*

The legal framework is only partly in line with the EU acquis, notably on minimum rules on drug-related criminal offences and sanctions. The legislation provides for the entire quantity of drug seized to be preserved as material evidence for court proceedings, rather than just a sample. The country should designate by law a correspondent for cooperation with the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA). An operational national drug observatory (NDO) remains to be established to provide factual, objective, reliable and comparable information concerning drugs and drug addiction and their consequences. Preparatory steps were taken to establish an early warning system to liaise with the EMCDDA on new psychoactive substances and new trends, but this is not fully operational yet. Coordination among competent agencies needs to be improved. Bosnia and Herzegovina should establish a focal point for drug issues for the entire country and introduce an early warning system and a rulebook on the use of cannabis for medical purposes.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a 2018-2023 strategy on supervision over narcotic drugs, prevention and suppression of the abuse of narcotic drugs, but there is no action plan to implement it. The Republika Srpska entity has its own strategy and action plan on drugs. In September 2020, the Council of Ministers re-activated a Commission for suppression of the abuse of narcotic drugs, composed of members of all entities at political level.

### *Implementation and enforcement capacity*

In 2020 there were 2613 reported crimes related to drug abuse, 2166 orders to conduct an investigation, 5 judgments rejecting charges, 1245 filed indictments, 19 indictments with plea agreement, 730 indictments with sentencing warrant, 30 acquittals, 103 fine convictions, 15 convictions with reprimand, 1,208 convictions with suspended sentence and 453 convictions with prison sentence.

Bosnia and Herzegovina remains a country of transit and a final destination for drugs. The Council of Ministers has not updated the list of criminalised psychoactive substances, in line with the recommendations of the Commission for the suppression of abuse of narcotic drugs since 2011, with the consequence that a number of psychoactive substances may circulate freely. A more flexible mechanism is needed to regularly update this list. Professional capacity and cooperation with civil society needs to be improved. More funds are needed for harm reduction programmes and the social reintegration of addicted persons. Bosnia and Herzegovina cooperates with the EMCDDA. Overall, the data collection, analysis and reporting on drugs remains slow and the quality uneven. The necessary funding to maintain the ongoing data collection for all drug related indicators needs to be secured. The fact that most monitoring systems are not coordinated nationally but remain separate for each entity remains an obstacle to data collection. A Commission for drugs destruction is in place but the destruction of drugs takes place very rarely. The lack of secure storage prior to destruction is a matter of concern.

### **Other issues related to drugs**

Drug abuse prevention and harm reduction, preventative measures are implemented through education and NGO activities, although these efforts are not systematic. Rehabilitation and social reintegration programmes have been introduced unequally in different parts of the country, a more systematic approach needs to be introduced.

On health inequalities, a key challenge facing the health care system is to improve accessibility for all citizens, although the legislation stipulating equal access to health is in place. Ensuring good quality accessible public health care for all citizens including marginalised groups is one of Bosnia and Herzegovina's key reform priorities.

(Chapter 28: Consumer and health protection)



# BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

on its European path

#EUenlargement

## Key milestones

### JULY 2008

Signature of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement & entry into force of the Interim Agreement on trade

### JUNE 2015

Entry into force of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement

### FEBRUARY 2016

Bosnia and Herzegovina submits EU membership application

### MAY / DECEMBER 2019

Commission Opinion on EU membership application: 14 key priorities, endorsed by the EU Council conclusions

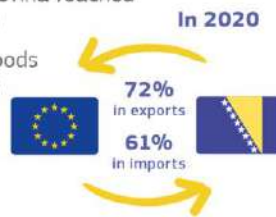
### OCTOBER 2020

Commission proposes Economic & Investment Plan to support and bring the Western Balkans closer to the EU



## Trade & investment

- The EU is Bosnia and Herzegovina's biggest trading partner
- The EU's Foreign Direct Investment in Bosnia and Herzegovina reached €228 million in 2020
- Volume of trade in goods with the EU was €9.6 billion in 2020



## Mobility & empowerment

- Visa-free travel to the EU since December 2010
- Over 12,169 participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina in student, academic and youth exchanges under ERASMUS+ (2014-2020)
- €35.15 million in support to civil society (2014-2020)



## EU funding

- The EU is the largest provider of financial assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina
- €1.19 billion in EU pre-accession funds (2007-2020)
- €2.4 billion in loans from European Investment Bank since 1999
- €284.3 million provided since 2009 in Western Balkans Investment Framework grants, to leverage investments of estimated €3.6 billion



## Supporting transformation

- Strengthening democracy: rule of law, justice and fundamental rights
- Reforming public administration
- Fostering competitiveness and supporting business development
- Working towards a cleaner environment and safer food supply

## Support for key sectors



## COVID-19 response

In December 2020, the Commission adopted a **€70 million** package of grants to help fund the access of Western Balkans partners to COVID-19 vaccines. A part of these grants covered the delivery of 650,000 doses of BioNTech/ Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines to all the Western Balkans - funded by the EU and facilitated by Austria - between May and August 2021. In February 2021, the Commission launched a project of over €7 million jointly with WHO, to support readiness for vaccination efforts and resilient health systems in the Western Balkans.

Last updated: 10/2021



**Kosovo\***

## **Summary of the report**

The situation in the north of Kosovo remains challenging, in particular in terms of corruption, organised crime, and the conditions for freedom of expression.

Kosovo is at an early stage in the fight against organised crime. It made limited progress during the reporting period on the investigation and prosecution of organised crime cases.

In July 2020, Europol and the Kosovo Police concluded a Working Arrangement.

## **Fundamental rights**

Efforts to improve the drug addiction treatment programmes in prisons and prison medical facilities are ongoing in light of the CPT recommendations.

There is a lack of services and programmes for the prevention and reintegration of children victims of drug abuse.

## **Justice, freedom and security**

Kosovo is at an early stage/has some level of preparation in this area. Some progress was made, including on counterterrorism and fight against and prevention of violent extremism through the reintegration of foreign terrorist fighters and their families from the conflict zone. However, the entry into force of several laws important to combatting organised crime has not yet led to tangible results. Results achieved by prosecution and courts remain poor. Sustained efforts are needed to have more proactive investigations, final court decisions and final confiscation of assets. The authorities continued to make progress in managing regular and irregular migration by further increasing accommodation capacities and stepping up preparedness in case of increased influx of migrants, despite the difficult context of COVID-19 pandemic. However, the National Centre for Border Management should be fully operationalised. In July 2020, Europol and the Kosovo Police concluded a Working Arrangement.

Kosovo has only partly followed the recommendations of the 2020 report, especially related to violent extremism. The other recommendations remain outstanding.

Therefore, in the coming year, Kosovo should in particular:

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\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

- continue implementing programmes on rehabilitation and reintegration, inside and outside the prison system by safeguarding coordination of pre-release and post-release processes, and ensuring that the Reintegration Division of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, is fully funded (through a specific budget), staffed and trained, and that it has dedicated and experienced staff from the health, education and social services;
- establish a Joint Threat Assessment Centre, including a threat level grading system on terrorism related risks;
- implement the relevant action plan to make the National Centre for Border Management fully operational, and to strengthen inter-institutional and international cooperation and coordination against transnational organised crime and in the field of migration and asylum;
- Improve migration governance through enhancing government capacities for data collection and analysis, as well as capacity to respond to the increased migration inflow (biometric registration, reception, identification of vulnerable, improved communication).

## Cooperation in the field of drugs

### *Institutional set-up and legal alignment*

The legislative framework to combat illicit handling of and trafficking in narcotic drugs is based on the 2007 Law on Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursors. A more comprehensive, revised draft law that in turn is aligned with more recent EU legislation is yet to be adopted. Drugs and trafficking-related crimes are dealt with through the Criminal Code.

A coordination mechanism has been established to prevent and combat drug trafficking and the illicit use of precursors. To this end, and in accordance with the current strategy and action plan (2018-2022), the National Drug Observatory (NDO) is established within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, though with limited resources and a vacancy at its head since January 2019. While a decision was taken to increase the number of personnel, this has not yet been implemented. Difficulties also remain regarding the sustainable and routine collection of drug-related data throughout Kosovo. The national Early Warning System (NEWS) is not fully operational. Kosovo continued to cooperate with the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and in September 2020, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Health signed a Working Arrangement with them. The agreement provides for the exchange of expertise and information on drug related issues. Due to the lack of a head of the NDO, cooperation with EMCDDA does not always run smoothly.

### *Implementation and enforcement capacity*

Kosovo continues to be both a storage and a transit country for narcotic drugs and their derivatives. Overall, drug seizures remain low: around 256.7 kg of marijuana, 8.9 kg of heroin, and 2.7 kg of cocaine were seized in 2020.

During 2020, the Kosovo Police registered 1,006 new drug-related cases (1450 in 2019). Out of the total number of cases, 170 were charged as drug trafficking, 802 as illegal possession of drugs and 33 were related to cultivation. In 2020, 1,217 people were indicted for drug-related offences and 367 people were found guilty by the courts (five were acquitted). In May 2021, the Kosovo Police, in close cooperation and in joint investigation with Italian and Albanian police seized 400kg of cocaine. It was the biggest one-off seizure of cocaine ever in Kosovo.

Provisions are present for the secure storage of seized drugs awaiting destruction. However, a protocol for the handling, storage and destruction of drug precursors is still not in place.

Organised crime groups continue to play a dominant role in large-scale drug trafficking and subsequent distribution in the EU. However, all actors in the chain of justice, including law enforcement, struggle with efficiency and inter-agency cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking. The prosecution service remains too understaffed and insufficiently trained to efficiently deal with drug-related offences. Increased cooperation and coordination among law enforcement agencies in the Western Balkan region is paramount. This can only take place through vastly improved inter-agency cooperation and exchange of information at all levels.

Educational and public awareness campaigns for the prevention of drug abuse are implemented. A 24-hour drug abuse hotline, is available, and addiction treatment and methadone therapy is being offered.

### **Other issues related to drugs**

The legislation on customs measures governing intellectual property rights (IPRs) and export controls for cultural goods is aligned with the EU acquis, but the legislation on drug precursors requires further alignment.

(Customs)



# KOSOVO\*

on its European path

#EUnlargement



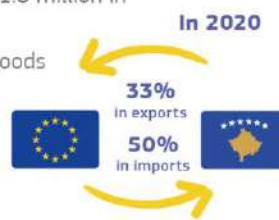
## Key milestones

- MARCH 2011**  
EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade-Pristina started
- APRIL 2013**  
'Brussels Agreement' between Belgrade and Pristina concluded
- APRIL 2016**  
Entry into force of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement
- MAY 2016**  
The European Commission proposes visa-free travel for the people of Kosovo
- OCTOBER 2016**  
First meeting of the EU-Kosovo Stabilisation and Association Council
- JULY 2018**  
Commission confirms that Kosovo has fulfilled all outstanding visa liberalisation benchmarks
- OCTOBER 2020**  
Commission proposes Economic & Investment Plan to support and bring the Western Balkans closer to the EU



## Trade & investment

- The EU is Kosovo's biggest trading partner
- The EU's Foreign Direct Investment in Kosovo reached €151.6 million in 2020
- Volume of trade in goods with the EU was €1.3 billion in 2020



## EU funding

- The EU is the largest provider of financial assistance to Kosovo
- €1.21 billion in EU assistance funds (2007-2020)
- €280 million provided in European Investment Bank loans since 1999
- €198.7 million provided since 2009 in Western Balkans Investment Framework grants, to leverage investments of estimated €1.8 billion



## Mobility & empowerment

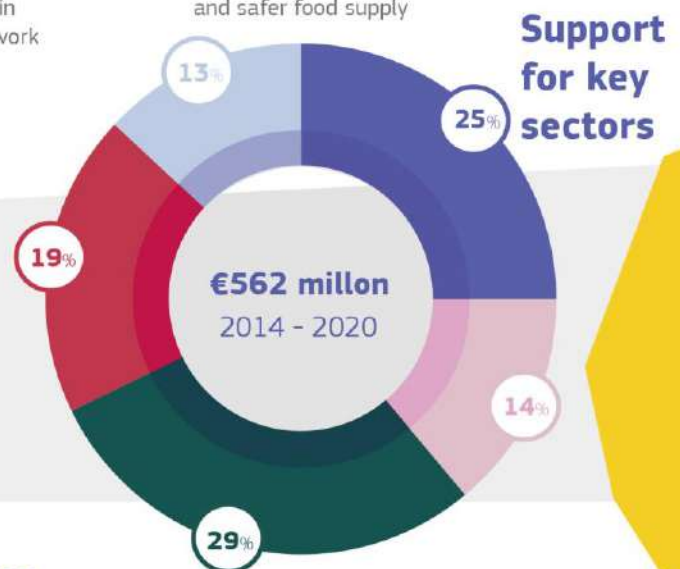
- Over 3,412 participants from Kosovo in student, academic and youth exchanges under ERASMUS+ (2014-2020)
- 364 'Young Cells Scheme' grants have been awarded to public administration scholars
- 4,000+ young and disadvantaged people received employment and entrepreneurship training
- €18.5 million in support to civil society (2014-2020)



## Supporting transformation

- Strengthening democracy: rule of law, justice and fundamental rights
- Reforming public administration
- Fostering competitiveness and supporting business development
- Working towards a cleaner environment and safer food supply

- Democracy and governance
- Rule of law and fundamental rights
- Environment, climate action and energy
- Competitiveness, innovation, agriculture and rural development
- Education, employment and social policies



## COVID-19 response

In December 2020, the Commission adopted a **€70 million** package of grants to help fund the access of Western Balkans partners to COVID-19 vaccines. A part of these grants covered the delivery of 650,000 doses of BioNTech/ Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines to all the Western Balkans - funded by the EU and facilitated by Austria - between May and August 2021. In February 2021, the Commission launched a project of over €7 million jointly with WHO, to support readiness for vaccination efforts and resilient health systems in the Western Balkans.

\* 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



## Montenegro

### Summary of the report

Track record on seizure and confiscation of assets needs to be further improved.

Montenegro has some level of preparation/is moderately prepared in the fight against organised crime. It made some progress in addressing last year's recommendations, in particular in improving access for law-enforcement agencies to key databases and increasing the number of investigators and experts in key areas. The number of organised crime cases investigated and prosecuted continued to grow, and the number of cases adjudicated at courts nearly tripled. International police cooperation is well established and continued to yield results, with unprecedented drug seizures abroad. However, the capacity to address tobacco smuggling and money laundering is not yet at the expected level. Montenegro still needs to address some systemic deficiencies in its criminal justice system, including the way organised crime cases are handled in the courts.

### Chapter 23: Judiciary and fundamental rights

#### Freedom of expression

In March 2021, the Appellate Court upheld the first-instance judgement of the Podgorica Higher Court sentencing an investigative journalist to one year in prison on charges of acting as intermediary in a drug trafficking operation. The ruling raises concerns about journalists' ability to perform their duties professionally and without fear of legal repercussions.

### Chapter 24: Justice, freedom and security

Montenegro is moderately prepared in the area of justice, freedom and security. The legislative and institutional frameworks are largely in place. Some progress was achieved in addressing last year's recommendations, in particular as regards the capacity to manage mixed migration flows and the integration of refugees. The Ministry of Interior has improved dialogue with the civil society and the inclusiveness of the decision-making process. However, the structural challenges hampering the criminal justice system have not been addressed, such as the widespread use of plea bargains and the narrow approach towards financial investigations.

In the coming year, Montenegro should in particular:

- Limit the use of plea bargains to exceptional cases, in order to enhance the transparency and the credibility of the judicial response to organised crime through a more deterrent and consistent sanctioning policy;

- Review the legal and operational approach towards financial investigations, money laundering, asset recovery, to align it with EU and international standards and practices, establish an integrated approach between all the bodies involved and provide them with the necessary legal and operational tools to create the conditions for establishing a convincing track record in this area;
- Further strengthen the capacities in border management, by addressing the critical gaps in human resources and equipment; take the necessary steps to establish an Advance Passenger Information System, and a biometric registration system that follows the Eurodac model.

### Fight against organised crime

Montenegro has some level of preparation/is moderately prepared in the fight against organised crime. Some progress was made in addressing last year's recommendations, in particular as regards improving the access of law-enforcement agencies to key databases and increasing the number of investigators and experts in key areas.

The number of organised crime cases investigated and prosecuted continued to grow, and the number of cases adjudicated at courts nearly tripled. A well established international police cooperation continued to yield results, with unprecedented drug seizures in the country and abroad. However, the capacity to address tobacco smuggling and money laundering is not yet at the expected level. Montenegro still needs to address some systemic deficiencies in its criminal justice system, including the way organised crime cases are handled in the courts.

In the coming year, the country should in particular:

- Continue to increase the efficiency of criminal investigations by: i. establishing an interoperable system with a single search feature; ii. restoring the full use of special investigative measures (SIMs), in full respect of constitutional principles; and iii. increasing the number of investigators and experts in key areas such as financial investigations, cybercrime, forensic, SIMs;
- Address the lengthy duration of trials and frequent adjournments in organised crime cases; ensure a stronger mutual understanding between courts and the prosecution on some key legal concepts such as money laundering and the quality of evidence;
- Enhance the strategic monitoring of the criminal justice system by establishing a centralised database in the area of organised crime and high-level corruption, collected from all relevant authorities, for analysis and policy making purposes.

### *Institutional set-up and legal alignment*

The human resources involved in the fight against organised crime increased to 82 (from 72 in 2019), and ten positions still need to be filled. New positions were created in the department for the fight against drugs smuggling. However, this is still insufficient to cope with the workload in this area.

### *Implementation and enforcement capacity*

International drug smuggling and gang-related murders remain typical features of Montenegro's criminal scene. Some 13 gang-related murders occurred in Montenegro in 2020 and 5 homicides involving Montenegrin criminal groups occurred abroad, including in Spain, Germany, Austria and Greece.

The capacity to investigate organised crime continued to grow. The number of cases brought by the police to the SPO almost doubled in 2020, with 76 cases compared to 39 in 2019. The SPO conducted 25 investigations in organised crime cases, targeting 178 people and 22 legal entities. Some 273 people were indicted in 2020 (for 95 in 2019) as well as 57 legal entities. In April 2021, the police arrested in Kotor the alleged leader of one of Montenegro's main criminal groups, the so-called Kavač clan, in a large police operation conducted in cooperation with an EU Member State and with the support of Europol. Charges were brought against him and 13 other members of the group. Five more arrests and the prevention of at least five homicides took place in the first three months of 2021. In August 2021, the police arrested five alleged members of the Škaljari clan across several locations in the country, following an investigation, also supported by Europol, into planned assassinations and attacks targeting members of the prosecution and the police.

The constant increase in the number of investigations in the last two years has resulted in a surge of court judgements and convictions in 2020. There were 63 organised crime cases adjudicated by the Podgorica High Court in 2020 (against 329 defendants), from 22 in 2019 and 15 in 2018. Some 51 final convictions were pronounced, including 44 cases based on plea bargains. As regards serious crime, 222 convictions were pronounced (for 170 in 2019), including 125 plea bargains.

The number of communications exchanged with foreign police services through Interpol and Europol decreased in 2020, to respectively 48 634 and 3 998, due to reduced exchange flows worldwide. However, international police cooperation continued to play a strategic role in the fight against criminality despite COVID-19 constraints. Ten Montenegrin crime group members were arrested abroad in 2020. In April 2021, two high-ranking members of one of Montenegro's main crime groups were arrested in Portugal and eventually extradited to Montenegro. Eight tons of cocaine were seized abroad in relation to Montenegrin crime groups (39 kg in 2019) in cooperation with foreign police services. Eight members of organised crime groups were also arrested in Montenegro based on arrest warrants from foreign Interpol offices.

Montenegro expanded its participation in the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) for weapons and explosives, facilitation of illegal migration, cybercrime, synthetic drugs, cocaine, cannabis, heroin and environmental protection. In September 2020, Montenegro engaged 103 officers in the Joint Action Days for South East Europe, Europol's operation focused on irregular migration, drug and arm smuggling that had gathered 34 countries. Other Joint Action Days (JAD), such as JAD Danube 5 and JAD Mobile 3 brought tangible results, such as seizures of vehicles and vessels, detected forged documents, seized tobacco and drugs, and the prevention of smuggling of 52 migrants by sea. The EMPACT platform for combating narcotics was instrumental for unveiling drug smuggling chains and contributed to number of arrests and to large drug seizures.

Montenegro's capacity in asset recovery is progressively improving but the number of final confiscations remains limited. Some 15 final confiscation decisions were issued in 2020. Some EUR 5,8 million were returned to the State budget in 2020 as a result of confiscations. Twelve decisions on temporary seizures were issued, including substantial real estate, vehicles, bonds and money. The Asset Recovery Office played an increasing role in detecting and tracing assets, with 84 requests for verification received in 2020 (from 37 in 2019), including 64 of them received from foreign partners.

## Cooperation in the field of drugs

### *Institutional setup and legal alignment*

Montenegro's legal framework in this area is not fully aligned with the EU acquis. The national drug information system does not fully meet EU standards. The National Drug Observatory is embedded in a newly created Directorate for the prevention of drug abuse in the Ministry of Health. It remains understaffed and continues to have reduced budget autonomy.

Good technical and scientific capacity exists in the Institute of Public Health, forensic laboratory and other institutions dealing with drug-related issues, but data collection on drugs is not compliant with the EU standards. National data sets are not provided to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) in the requested form and timelines. In 2020, Montenegro provided for the first time in five years a national drug report to the EMCDDA.

The National Early Warning System is not ready to be linked to the EU Early Warning System, as it has limited operational capacity, lacks defined procedures and sufficient involvement of law enforcement and health authorities. A multi-disciplinary Task Force for the Early Warning System on New Psychoactive Substances has been set up. The strategy for the prevention of drug abuse 2013-2020 came to an end and is yet to be replaced by a new one.

Montenegro needs to strengthen its National Drug Observatory, increase the technical capacity of the National Early Warning System and provide the conditions for full participation in the activities of the EMCDDA and the Reitox network, including the ability to provide national data.

### *Implementation and enforcement capacity*

Montenegro continued to be a key transit country for drugs, as a part of the Balkan route, in particular for cannabis produced in Albania and transiting through Montenegro towards the EU. The authorities seized 3.1 tons of drugs in 2020 (from 2.4 tons in 2019), mainly marijuana. In two prominent cases, the Montenegrin police in close cooperation with Albanian police unveiled criminal groups smuggling marijuana from Albania, leading to the arrest of 27 people and the seizure of 2.7 tons of marijuana on the territory of Montenegro. In August 2021, police seized more than one ton of cocaine worth EUR 100 million near Podgorica, in the largest seizure in the country's history.

Montenegro actively participates in drug-related multi-country police operations. In 2020, this led to a total amount of 8 tons of cocaine and 46 kg of marijuana seized abroad. In August 2021, following a 9-month long operation investigating the Montenegrin Škaljari criminal group activities in the Spanish Canary Islands, the Spanish authorities arrested four Montenegrin citizens and

seized over 400 kg of cocaine and nearly half a million euros in cash. The operation involved Spanish, Montenegrin and Albanian authorities, as well as Europol and the use of Europol's SIENA.

In 2020, nine investigations into drug smuggling associated with organised crime were conducted against 17 people. The courts issued eight convictions for drug smuggling associated with organised crime in 2020, including seven convictions based on plea bargains. Some 158 convictions for drug smuggling associated with serious crime were issued (from 126 in 2019), of which 127 were based on plea bargains. In three cases, assets were confiscated for a total amount of EUR 12,390 and one vehicle.

The insufficient storage capacity for seized drugs has yet to be addressed. Montenegro has yet to amend the relevant legal provisions in the criminal procedure code, to make it possible to keep only a sample of psychoactive substances as evidence for court proceedings, and not the entire amount, as it is the case now.

### Judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters

Montenegro's cooperation with Eurojust continued to increase. Twenty-four cases involving Montenegro were opened in Eurojust in 2020 (a 57% increase compared with 2019), including 12 cases launched by Montenegro, mainly relating to organised crime, money laundering and drug trafficking.

### **Other issues related to drugs**

On drug precursors, Montenegro's list of controlled substances is designed to be compliant with the EU acquis. Montenegro has mechanisms in place to detect smuggled drug precursors and requires economic operators to report suspicious orders or transactions in line with EU procedures. However, national legislation remained only partly aligned. On good laboratory practices, national legislation is designed to be aligned with the EU acquis

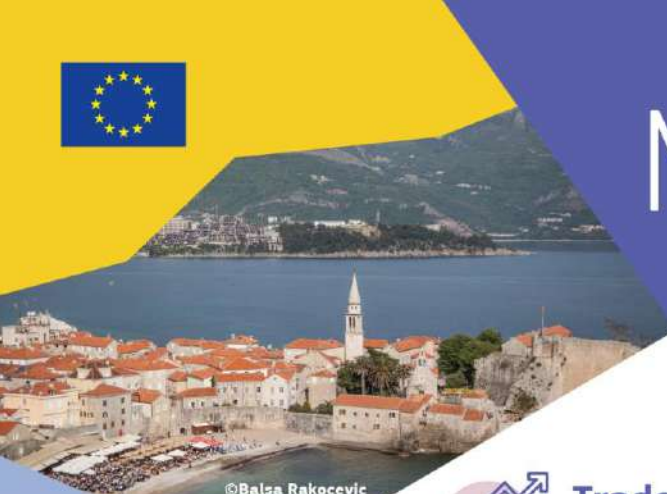
(Chapter 1: Free movement of goods)

On drug abuse prevention and harm reduction, no report was made available on the implementation of the action plan for 2019-2020 of the 2013-2020 strategy for drug-abuse prevention nor on the implementation of the guidelines on providing support to drug addicts. According to civil society, drug-related deaths are not registered. The harm reduction centres managed by civil society organisations continued with the provision of services to clients during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some opioid substitution treatment (OST) centres provided therapies to clients on a weekly basis, or organised a delivery of OST therapy to people in quarantine or their homes. Treatment options for drug users have been improved, but they should be further extended to cover all categories of drug users. A free telephone service has been organised by the Podgorica health centre.

Chapter 28: Consumer and health protection)

Further alignment of legislation on drug precursors and customs security, together with adoption of implementing legislation on the export control of cultural goods remain pending.

(Chapter 29: Customs union)



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# MONTENEGRO

on its European path

#EUenlargement

## Key milestones

### DECEMBER 2008

Application for EU Membership

### MAY 2010

Entry into force of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement

### DECEMBER 2010

EU candidate country status granted

### JUNE 2012

EU decides to open accession negotiations

### OCTOBER 2020

Commission proposes Economic & Investment Plan to support and bring the Western Balkans closer to the EU



## Trade & investment

- The EU is Montenegro's biggest trading partner
- The EU's Foreign Direct Investment in Montenegro reached €87.5 million in 2020
- Volume of trade in goods with the EU was €1.1 billion in 2020



## EU funding

- The EU is the largest provider of financial assistance to Montenegro
- €504.9 million in EU pre-accession funds 2007-2020
- €804 million provided in European Investment Bank loans since 1999
- €194.9 million provided since 2009 in Western Balkans Investment Framework grants, to leverage investments of estimated €1.8 billion



## Mobility & empowerment

- Visa-free travel to the EU since December 2009
- Over 4,153 participants from Montenegro in student, academic and youth exchanges under ERASMUS+ (2014-2020)
- Reforms of the social welfare and child-care systems implemented with EU support
- €14.4 million in support to civil society (2014-2020)



## Supporting transformation

- Strengthening democracy: rule of law, justice and fundamental rights
- Reforming public administration
- Fostering competitiveness and supporting business development
- Working towards a cleaner environment and safer food supply

## Support for key sectors



## COVID-19 response

In December 2020, the Commission adopted a **€70 million** package of grants to help fund the access of Western Balkans partners to COVID-19 vaccines. A part of these grants covered the delivery of 650,000 doses of BioNTech/ Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines to all the Western Balkans - funded by the EU and facilitated by Austria - between May and August 2021. In February 2021, the Commission launched a project of over €7 million jointly with WHO, to support readiness for vaccination efforts and resilient health systems in the Western Balkans.

Last updated: 10/2021



## North Macedonia

### Summary of the report

The country has some level of preparation in the fight against organised crime. The legislative framework is broadly in line with European standards and efforts to implement strategies against organised crime must continue. Some progress was made at the operational level, but more needs to be done to improve the effectiveness of law enforcement in fighting certain forms of crime, such as money laundering and financial crimes. Coordination remains crucial for all stakeholders involved in combatting organised crime.

### Fundamental rights

Healthcare and treatment of drug addictions in prisons continues to remain an issue of serious concern.

### Chapter 24: Justice, freedom and security

North Macedonia is moderately prepared to implement the EU acquis. Some progress was made in addressing last year's recommendations, mainly on improving operational capacities of law enforcement agencies. Implementation of the priorities of the Joint Action Plan on Counterterrorism was improved. Measures to counter violent extremism and fight terrorism need to continue. Migration management efforts continued. Registration of migrants needs to be carried out in a systematic manner and protection-sensitive profiling needs to be improved. The country should establish a proper system for managing irregular movement and stop the practice of returning migrants outside a legal framework. A more systematic approach needs to be taken to fighting the smuggling of migrants.

Most of the recommendations from the 2020 report remain outstanding. In the coming year, the country should, in particular:

- Continue the proactive implementation of the institutional reforms of the security sector (criminal police, financial units, National Coordination Centre for the Fight against Organised Crime) to achieve further tangible results;
- Continue to implement the Joint Action Plan on Counterterrorism, including in the education sector, and ensure effective performance of the National Coordinator's office by allocating sufficient budget;
- Systematically register migrants and improve protection-sensitive profiling while adopting a more systematic approach to fighting migrant smuggling.

## **Fight against organised crime**

The country has some level of preparation in the fight against organised crime. The legislative framework is broadly in line with European standards and efforts to implement strategies against organised crime must continue. Some progress was made at the operational level, but more needs to be done to improve the effectiveness of law enforcement in fighting certain forms of crime, such as money laundering and financial crimes. Coordination remains crucial for all stakeholders involved in combatting organised crime.

Some of the previous recommendations from the 2020 report remain outstanding. In the coming year, the country should, in particular:

- Further improve the track record of investigations, prosecutions and convictions for organised crime and money laundering, and demonstrate the ability to effectively dismantle large criminal networks;
- Adopt and implement the necessary legislation that would regulate the activity of the Asset Recovery Office and enhance the effectiveness of the national asset recovery system;
- Allocate the necessary financial and human resources to the investigative centres, set up in the Basic Public Prosecution Office, allowing them to increase the efficiency of the investigations and improve inter-institutional cooperation.

### Institutional set-up and legal alignment

Key institutions in the fight against organised crime include specialised police units within the Ministry of Interior. Each of them deals with different types of organised crime and financial investigation.

Regarding the legal framework, the Criminal Code is broadly in line with EU standards and criminalises trafficking in human beings, online child pornography, computer crime and drug trafficking.

### Implementation and enforcement capacity

There were indictments brought against 63 persons in 2020 in 18 cases, and against 16 persons on 3 cases in the period between January to March 2021. These crimes included trafficking in human beings, smuggling of migrants, drug trafficking, illegal trade in weapons, money laundering.

The National Coordination Centre for the Fight against Organised Crime has improved its operational capacity. All participating authorities have access to their respective databases. The Centre provides an inter-institutional exchange of information.

Cooperation with Europol is well established following the conclusion of a strategic agreement in 2007 and an operational agreement in 2011. There is operational cooperation in the fight against trafficking of human beings, weapons, and drugs.

In 2020, confiscation or seizure of criminal assets was used against 41 persons in 19 cases in first-instance verdicts. Confiscation of criminal assets should become a strategic priority in the fight against organised crime, terrorism and high level corruption in the country.

## Cooperation in the field of drugs

### *Institutional set-up and legal alignment*

A National Drugs Observatory (NDO) exists since 2007 in the Ministry of Health. However, it lacks sufficient staff and hence its operational capacity (e.g. in terms of data collection) remains limited. There is currently no National Early Warning System to liaise with the EMCDDA on new psychoactive substances and new trends. However, in the past, the NDO has regularly informed the EMCDDA about the appearance of new psychoactive substances in the country. The country will have to make the necessary efforts to secure sufficient national funding to maintain on-going data collection for all drug-related indicators.

The 2014-2020 National Drug Strategy is aligned with the 2013-2020 EU Drugs Strategy and 2017-2020 action plan. The new Strategy for the period 2021-2025 was adopted in July 2021. The draft law on Control of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances has raised serious concerns. Any changes to the law must comply with the EU acquis and international standards.

### *Implementation and enforcement capacity*

The operational capacity of the NDO is limited. It needs to have sufficient staff and regular cooperation with relevant stakeholders. A national early-warning system needs to be set up.

In 2020, there was a significant improvement in the prevention of drug trafficking. A total of 733 criminal offences were recorded, from which 857 perpetrators were reported. In the period January-June 2021, 306 criminal acts were detected, for which criminal prosecution measures were taken against 368 perpetrators. Six organised criminal groups with 24 members (four operating internationally and two nationally) were uncovered in 2020, while two organised groups of 16 members were uncovered in 2021. In 2020, the Ministry of Interior seized 1890 kilograms of marijuana, 16 kilograms of heroin and two kilograms of cocaine. In the period January – June 2021, one tone of marijuana was seized.

Cooperation with neighbouring countries is good, including on ad hoc operations. In 2020, North Macedonia participated in one coordination meeting organised at Eurojust, in a drug trafficking case.

### **Other issues related to drugs**

The licensing, monitoring and control systems for businesses dealing with drug precursors and civil explosives remain operational.

(Chapter 1: Free movement of goods)

For the people with HIV/AIDS, the Ministry of Health has a separate programme that provides funds for testing and basic monitoring tests. Antiretroviral therapy is available to all after diagnosis. The government still needs to adopt a new multiannual strategy to combat HIV.

(Chapter 28: Consumer and health protection)

The Customs Administration participated in 13 international operations to combat illicit trade in drugs, counterfeit goods, medicines, medical devices and protective equipment, weapons, explosives, dangerous waste, cultural goods, raw tobacco and tobacco products.

(Chapter 29: Customs union)



# NORTH MACEDONIA

on its European path

#EUnlargement

Last updated: 10/2021

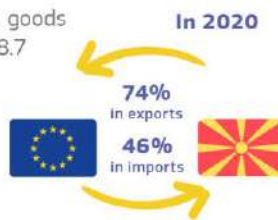
## Key milestones

- MARCH 2004**  
Application for EU membership
- APRIL 2004**  
Entry into force of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement
- DECEMBER 2005**  
EU candidate country status granted
- OCTOBER 2009**  
First recommendation to open accession negotiations
- APRIL 2018**  
Commission recommends opening of accession negotiations
- JUNE 2018**  
The Council sets out the path towards opening accession negotiations
- MARCH 2020**  
EU decides to open accession negotiations
- JULY 2020**  
Presentation of the draft negotiating framework to the Member States
- OCTOBER 2020**  
Commission proposes Economic & Investment Plan to support and bring the Western Balkans closer to the EU



## Trade & investment

- The EU is North Macedonia's biggest trading partner
- The EU's Foreign Direct Investment in North Macedonia reached €25.28 million in 2020
- Volume of trade in goods with the EU was €8.7 billion in 2020



## EU funding

- The EU is the largest provider of financial assistance to North Macedonia
- €1.25 billion in EU pre-accession funds (2007-2020)
- €940 million provided in European Investment Bank loans since 1999
- €186.2 million in grants provided since 2009 in Western Balkans Investment Framework, to leverage investments of estimated €2.1 billion



## Mobility & empowerment

- Visa-free travel to the EU since December 2009
- Over 11,600 participants from North Macedonia in higher education, vocational education and training, school education, adult learning and youth under ERASMUS+ (2014-2020)
- Pre-accession support has modernised sections of the Pan-European Corridor X motorway and railway Corridors VII and X
- €24.3 million in support to civil society (2014-2020)

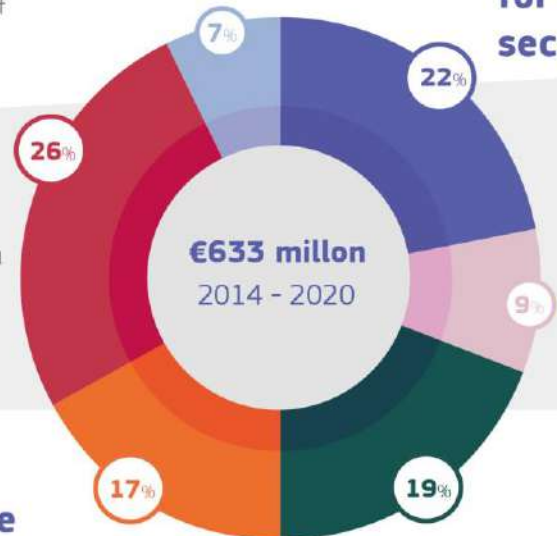


## Supporting transformation

- Strengthening democracy: rule of law, justice and fundamental rights
- Reforming public administration
- Fostering competitiveness and supporting business development
- Working towards a cleaner environment and safer food supply

## Support for key sectors

- Democracy and governance
- Rule of law and fundamental rights
- Environment, climate action and energy
- Transport
- Competitiveness, innovation, agriculture and rural development
- Education, employment and social policies



## COVID-19 response

In December 2020, the Commission adopted a **€70 million** package of grants to help fund the access of Western Balkans partners to COVID-19 vaccines. A part of these grants covered the delivery of 650,000 doses of BioNTech/ Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines to all the Western Balkans - funded by the EU and facilitated by Austria - between May and August 2021. In February 2021, the Commission launched a project of over €7 million jointly with WHO, to support readiness for vaccination efforts and resilient health systems in the Western Balkans.



## Serbia

### Chapter 24: Justice, freedom and security

Serbia has some level of preparation to implement the EU acquis on justice, freedom and security. Limited progress was made in the reporting period. Serbia continued to significantly contribute, as a transit country, to the management of the mixed migration flows towards the EU by playing an active and constructive role and cooperating effectively with its neighbours and EU Member States. It also continued to effectively implement the integrated border management strategy and its action plan. Serbia has yet to establish a convincing track record of effective investigations, prosecutions and final convictions in serious and organised crime cases, and to further align with the EU visa policy. The recommendations from the 2020 country report remain outstanding, except for continuing increasing border controls, especially border surveillance including identification and registration measures in full respect of fundamental rights, and increase efforts to detect and prevent smuggling of migrants.

In the coming period, Serbia should in particular:

- increase the technical, financial and human resources capacity of the Prosecutor's Office for Organised Crime to perform their duties;
- amend the Serbian criminal code in order to effectively criminalise the trafficking of weapons; ☐ adopt the Schengen Action Plan by ensuring a sufficient involvement of all relevant government institutions;
- refrain from further diverging from the EU visa policy and take concrete steps to fully align with it.

Serbia adopted a revised action plan for chapter 24 in July 2020. It sets out Serbia's commitments, including in terms of timelines, in order to meet the interim benchmarks of the EU common positions for these chapters. In general, indications of delays in this report are measured against the deadlines established by Serbia in these revised action plans. An implementation report of the revised action plan has not yet been published by the Ministry of the Interior. The last available report covers the period July-December 2019. Since February 2020, no meetings were held between the Negotiating Group for Chapter 24 and civil society organisations under the umbrella of the Working Group for Chapter 24 of the National Convention on the European Union.

#### Fight against organised crime

Serbia has some level of preparation in the fight against organised crime. Limited progress was made in this area. Last year's recommendations remain valid. Serbia has yet to establish a convincing track record of effective investigations, prosecutions and final convictions in serious and organised crime cases, including financial investigations leading to a track record of freezing and confiscating criminal assets. The number of convictions for organised crime decreased compared to 2019.

Serbia should adapt its approach from one based on cases to a strategy against organisations, and from focusing on cases of low or medium importance to high profile cases aiming at dismantling big and internationally spread organisations and seizing the assets.

#### *Implementation and enforcement capacity*

As regards the track record in organised crime, the data provided by Serbia show a decrease in new investigations initiated into organised crime groups: against 110 individuals in 2020, compared to 156 in 2019, 146 in 2018 and 191 in 2017. The number of indictments increased compared to 2019 (108 persons were indicted in 2020, compared to 65 in 2019). The number of first instance convictions in 2020 decreased compared to 2019: in 2020 first instance convictions were rendered against 127 individuals (out of which 81 were plea agreements accepted by the courts) compared to 167 in 2019 (out of which 42 were plea agreements accepted by the courts). Final convictions in 2020 were rendered against 72 individuals (out of which 69 were plea agreements accepted by the courts).

There is well-established cooperation with Interpol and Europol.

The number of cases where seizure and confiscation of assets occurs is still limited, and the amounts continue to be very low (in 2020, two requests for permanent confiscation of assets were accepted by the courts against four persons). A serious limitation to the application and effectiveness of the Law on seizure and confiscation of proceeds of crime lies in the fact that it only applies to a limited number of criminal offences and only if a certain threshold of material gain is reached.

In 2020, Serbia was involved in 16 cases related to organised crime opened at Eurojust, which included participation in two coordination meetings and one coordination centre. It also participated in three joint investigation teams set-up in cases related to drug trafficking (3), money laundering (1) and organised crime (1).

#### Cooperation in the field of drugs

##### *Institutional set-up and legal alignment*

The national drug strategy expires at the end of 2021 and an action plan for the period 2018 - 2021 has not yet been adopted. The Serbian National Drug Observatory is now fully staffed and operational. Serbia regularly updates and publishes reliable information on new psychoactive substances. The coordination role and responsibilities of the Office for Combatting Drugs are still not clearly delineated with regard to other state institutions. A working arrangement between the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Abuse Addiction (EMCDDA) and the Office for Combatting Drugs, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Health was signed in December 2020. Serbia has a relatively well-established Early Warning System (EWS) to liaise with the EMCDDA on new psychoactive substances and new trends. This also applies to the the associated risk assessment procedure and the subsequent control mechanism for adding new psychoactive substances (NPS) to national drug control legislation. Therefore, Serbia appears to be ready to be linked to the EU EWS as an associate/external partner.

The Serbian National Drug Observatory (NDO) benefitted in 2020 from additional full-time staff members, which led to some progress made on the three core functions carried out by the National Drug Observatory: data collection; monitoring, analysis and interpretation of the data collected and reporting and dissemination. Serbia is submitting data upon request and in the framework of the data collection exercises, although data collection, analysis and reporting are yet to be fully aligned with the requirements and the methodology of the EMCDDA.

The current legislation still requires that entire seized quantity is kept as material evidence for court proceedings. A national contact point for the transmission and analysis of samples of psychoactive controlled substances is not yet established, though the Rulebook that regulates its work was adopted in December 2020.

### *Implementation and enforcement capacity*

In 2020, 34 individuals were convicted at first instance for unlawful production and circulation of narcotics (art. 246 criminal code) within the context of organised crime (including 17 through plea agreements). 16 individuals were convicted at final instance (including 13 through plea agreements).

During the second half of 2020, a total of 3.6 tonnes of various substances (including 31 kg of heroin) were confiscated, compared to 4.5 tonnes (including 109 kg of heroin) during the second half of 2019. There were no destructions of seized psychoactive controlled substances in 2020.

In September 2020, the National Forensic Centre laboratories renewed the accreditation status during the supervisory visit of the European Network of Forensic Science Institutes' accreditation body. In January 2021, Serbia started to implement the software application 'operational drug records' for keeping records and conducting statistical analyses of seized drugs on a regular basis. The software allows for daily updates on quantities of seized drugs, and ensures e-communication with the National Forensic Centre on seized drugs. 'Security bags' were introduced preventing any tampering with collected evidence. Since January 2002, seized drugs are stored in line with clear conditions – based on a legal instruction - and in a centralised manner in five containers.

The Government is delayed in developing a programme for the prevention of the use of psychoactive substances based on scientific evidence in alignment with international standards.

### **Other issues related to drugs**

On health inequalities, access to healthcare services needs to be improved for people with disabilities, people living with HIV, children and adults who use drugs, prisoners, women involved in prostitution, LGBTI people, internally displaced persons and the Roma.

(Chapter 28: Consumer and health protection)



# SERBIA

on its European path

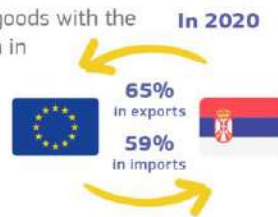
#EUenlargement

## Key milestones

- DECEMBER 2009**  
Application for EU membership
- MARCH 2011**  
EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade-Pristina started
- MARCH 2012**  
EU Candidate country status granted
- JUNE 2013**  
EU decides to open accession negotiations
- SEPTEMBER 2013**  
Entry into force of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement
- OCTOBER 2020**  
Commission proposes Economic & Investment Plan to support and bring the Western Balkans closer to the EU

## Trade & investment

- The EU is Serbia's biggest trading partner
- The EU's Foreign Direct Investment in Serbia reached €2.1 billion in 2020
- Volume of trade in goods with the EU was €25.4 billion in 2020



## EU funding

- The EU is the largest provider of financial assistance to Serbia
- €2.79 billion in EU pre-accession funds (2007-2020)
- Over €5.5 billion provided in European Investment Bank loans since 1999
- €210.2 million provided since 2009 in Western Balkans Investment Framework grants, to leverage investments of estimated €5.4 billion
- €162.2 million in disaster relief after the floods in 2014

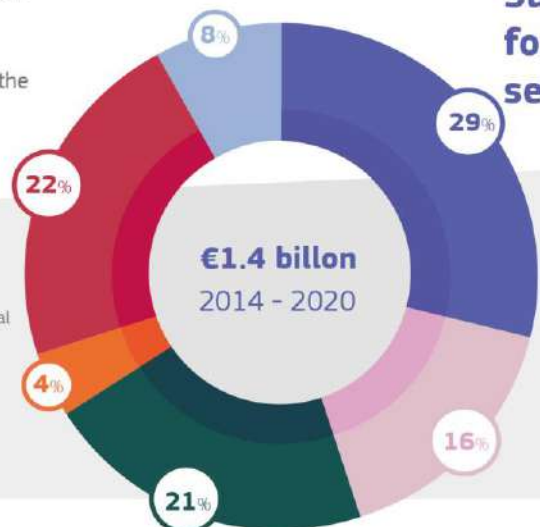
## Mobility & empowerment

- Visa-free travel to the EU since December 2009
- Around 12,400 participants from Serbia in higher education, vocational education and training, school education, adult learning and youth under ERASMUS+ (2014-2020) (Serbia is a programme country in Erasmus+ since 2019)
- €33 million in support to civil society (2014-2020)

## Supporting transformation

- Strengthening democracy: rule of law, justice and fundamental rights
- Reforming public administration
- Fostering competitiveness and supporting business development
- Working towards a cleaner environment and safer food supply

## Support for key sectors



## COVID-19 response

In December 2020, the Commission adopted a **€70 million** package of grants to help fund the access of Western Balkans partners to COVID-19 vaccines. A part of these grants covered the delivery of 650,000 doses of BioNTech/ Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines to all the Western Balkans - funded by the EU and facilitated by Austria - between May and August 2021. In February 2021, the Commission launched a project of over €7 million jointly with WHO, to support readiness for vaccination efforts and resilient health systems in the Western Balkans.

Last updated: 10/2021



## Turkey

### Summary of the report

Turkey has some level of preparation in the fight against organised crime and made limited progress. Cooperation between Europol and Turkey is based on a Strategic Agreement on Cooperation, which entered into force in July 2004. Negotiations concerning an international agreement on the exchange of personal data between Europol and the Turkish authorities competent for fighting serious crime and terrorism are ongoing, requiring Turkey to reform its legislation aligning its data protection law with the European standards. Turkey should improve its track record on dismantling criminal networks and confiscating criminal assets.

### Chapter 24: Justice, freedom and security

Turkey is moderately prepared in the area of justice, freedom and security. There was some progress, in particular in the area of migration and asylum policy. Some progress was made on strengthening surveillance and protection capacity of the eastern land border. The return of irregular migrants from the Greek islands under the EU-Turkey Statement remained suspended since March 2020. Although the volume of irregular arrivals to Greece have fallen, smuggling routes to Italy and to the government-controlled areas of Cyprus are being increasingly used. Turkey has still not implemented the provisions relating to third-country nationals in the EU-Turkey readmission agreement, despite these entering into force in October 2017. Turkey continued to make significant efforts to host and meet the needs of almost four million refugees, and in preventing illegal crossings towards the EU. Turkey still needs to align its legislation on data protection with European standards. Most of the recommendations of last year were not addressed and remain valid.

In the coming year, Turkey should in particular:

- Fully implement the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016, notably the returns from Greece and the prevention of irregular routes to all Member States and implement all the provisions of the EU-Turkey readmission agreement towards all EU Member States;
- Align legislation on personal data protection with European standards, to allow for the conclusion of an international agreement for the exchange of personal data between Europol and Turkey;
- Revise legislation and practices on terrorism in line with the European Convention on Human Rights, European Court of Human Rights case-law and the EU acquis and practices. The proportionality principle should be observed in practice;
- Adopt and implement a strategy and action plan on border management with the aim to enhance coordination between border services at the national and international levels.

## Fight against organised crime

Turkey has some level of preparation in the fight against organised crime; however there was limited progress overall. The majority of the recommendations from last year remain to be addressed.

In the coming year, Turkey should in particular:

- Collect and use aggregate statistics to facilitate threat assessment, policy development and implementation and improve the track record on dismantling criminal networks and confiscating criminal assets;
- Improve the legal framework regulating the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing further to the 2019 Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Mutual Evaluation Report and in line with the recommendations of the Venice Commission regarding the law on the prevention of financing of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; <sup>2</sup> improve its legislation on cybercrime and witness protection;
- Establish an Asset Recovery Office in line with the EU acquis;
- Conclude an international agreement on cooperation with Eurojust.

The Ministry of Interior continued the implementation of the 2019-2021 action plan for the implementation of the National Strategy on Fight against Organised Crime. This is the second action plan implemented in line with the Strategy setting out actions to reach the overall aims, including an effective institutional cooperation and coordination, as well as stronger international cooperation. The Ministry of Interior reported that the implementation rate of the Action Plan reached 90 %.

Cooperation between Europol and Turkey is based on the Strategic Agreement on Cooperation since July 2004. The completion of an international agreement on the exchange of personal data between Europol and the Turkish authorities competent for fighting serious crime and terrorism is still pending as the Turkish data protection legislation is still not in line with the EU acquis.

## Cooperation in the field of drugs

### *Institutional set-up and legal alignment*

During the reporting period, no institutional changes were introduced. Turkey has developed a hierarchical multi-layer structure to fight against drug abuse. The High Council for the Fight against Drugs is responsible for inter-institutional coordination and monitoring. It includes all ministers involved in achieving the objectives of the National Strategy and Action to Combat Illegal Drugs for 2018-2023.

The Turkish Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (TMCDDA), attached to the Turkish National Police, has been a full member of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) since 2014. Its mandate is to monitor all aspects of the use and abuse of illicit drugs, both at national and international level. It is also in charge of drafting the annual Turkish Drug Report. The TMCDDA manages Turkey's National Early Warning System (NEWS) on new psychoactive substances. A total of 928 new psychoactive substances have been included in the national legislation, 50 of which were put on the list in 2020, and an additional 10 in the first quarter of 2021.

TMCCDDA's newly developed 'instant data flow system' became operational. The system uses encryption and anonymisation to safeguard personal data, while processing aggregate data for monitoring and reporting to European and international organisations.

### *Implementation and enforcement capacity*

Turkey remains a transit route for drugs between Asia and Europe. In 2020, Turkish Law Enforcement conducted operations that resulted in the seizure of, inter alia, 93 741 221 kg of cannabis (including skunk), 1 960 kg of cocaine, 11 096 328 ecstasy tablets and 2 875 182 captagon tablets. Compared to 2020, there was an increase in the seized amounts of cannabis, cocaine and ecstasy tablets, and a decrease in other mentioned illicit drugs.

In 2020, a total of 54 325 cases (58 354 in 2019) involving 75 907 suspects (78 226 in 2019) were initiated by the prosecution for illicit drug related offences, with 18 478 suspects (21 482 in 2019) convicted. Only 345 convictions were related to production and trafficking of drugs, while the rest concerned convicted dealers, suppliers and users. In the field of prevention, the Ministry of Health (MoH) operates 81 Counselling Centres in 64 provinces. In 2020, six new Centres became operational. In addition to MoH, Turkish NGOs also operate counselling centres. The Anti-Drug Counselling Hot Line received 52 660 calls in 2020. With the consent of the caller, return calls are made to monitor and follow up treatment processes.

There are 133 treatment centres for drug dependence in 24 provinces. 55 of the centres focus on inpatient treatment, with nine dedicated for children. The remaining 78 are outpatient centres, with 11 serving children exclusively. Interpretation services are available in treatment centres. In 2020, outpatient and inpatient treatment was provided to almost 212 000 patients in these centres.

### **Other issues related to drugs**

On procedural measures, there is a specific licensing and regulation system for economic operators dealing with drug precursors, with a strict follow-up and monitoring system in cooperation with the police and customs authorities.

(Chapter 1: Free movement of goods)

(Chapter 25: Science and Research)

Turkey participates in the European Environmental Agency, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction and the Civil Protection Mechanism.

(Annex I – Relations between the EU and Turkey)



# TURKEY

on its European path

#EUenlargement

Last updated: 10/2021

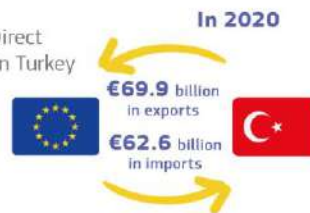
## Key milestones

- 1995**  
Customs Union enters into force
- DECEMBER 1999**  
EU candidate country status granted
- DECEMBER 2004**  
EU decides to open accession negotiations
- DECEMBER 2013**  
Visa liberalisation dialogue launched
- NOVEMBER 2015**  
First EU-Turkey Summit held
- MARCH 2016**  
EU-Turkey Statement
- JUNE 2018**  
The Council notes that Turkey's accession negotiations have effectively come to a standstill and no further chapters can be considered for opening or closing
- MARCH 2019**  
54<sup>th</sup> EU-Turkey Association Council held
- MARCH 2021**  
The European Council welcomes the de-escalation in the Eastern Mediterranean and expresses the EU's readiness to engage with Turkey in a phased, proportionate and reversible manner to enhance cooperation in a number of areas of common interest

Source: EU Data

## Trade & investment

- Turkey is the EU's sixth largest trading partner
- Approximately 42% of Turkish exports go to the EU, while the EU share in Turkish imports stands at 33%
- The EU's Foreign Direct Investment stock in Turkey reached €58.2 billion in 2018



## EU funding

- The EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey provides €6 billion in support of refugees (mostly from Syria) and host communities. An additional €535 million humanitarian funding will extend two flagship programmes launched under the Facility until early 2022, as well as protection, health and education services outside the Facility. An additional €3 billion was proposed in June 2021 to continue support for refugees and host communities for the 2021-2023 period.
- Under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, EU assistance to Turkey amounts to €3.2 billion over seven years (2014-2020) after cuts due to lack of progress on key reforms.
- Another €479.9 million were mobilised over 2014-20 through other instruments (EIDHR, IcSP, HUMA, MADAD, CBC)
- Priority areas of funding are civil society, Union Programmes (e.g. Erasmus+), migration and the rule of law.

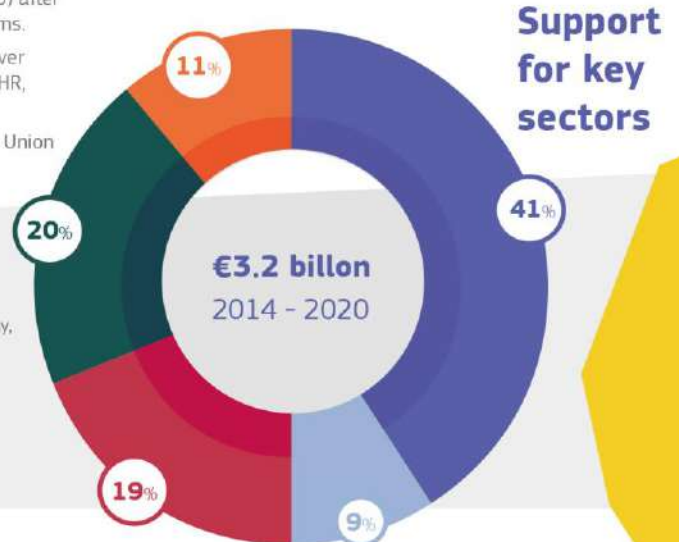
- Democracy and rule of law
- Environment and climate action, energy, competitiveness and innovation
- Education and employment
- Transport
- Agriculture and rural development

## Mobility & empowerment

- 11% of EU funding for transport sector from 2014-2020
- In 2004 - 2020: 98,800 higher education students were hosted in countries participating in the ERASMUS+ programme
- In 2004 - 2020: 32,750 higher education students were hosted in Turkey
- €220.5 million in support to civil society (2014-2020)

## Supporting transformation

- Strengthening the rule of law, the judiciary and democracy
- Reforming public administration
- Supporting governance and active citizenship
- Improving transport and energy connections
- Working towards a cleaner environment and safer food supply



## COVID-19 response

€105 million of existing EU funds have been mobilised to assist Turkey in its COVID-19 response under existing financial commitments, for the prevention and treatment of COVID-19 cases and support to the most vulnerable. Other measures include the extension of implementing periods for some projects under IPA and the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, as well as the shipment of two tubes of testing material (sufficient material for 40,000 tests) to two laboratories in Turkey. Furthermore, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism was activated in May 2020 to support Turkey in the repatriation of Turkish citizens stranded in Peru and Colombia.

