

EU-Western Balkan academic cooperation through Erasmus+

What is Erasmus+?

Erasmus+ is the European Union (EU) programme for education, training, youth and sport for the period 2014-2020. Erasmus+ funds academic and youth mobility and cooperation projects that involve partners from "Programme Countries" and "Partner Countries" throughout the world. The 33 programme countries comprise the 28 EU Member States plus five other European countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). Partner Countries are located all over the world and include the Western Balkans: Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro and Serbia. Erasmus+ supports activities that are closely matched with the EU's priorities for cooperation policy with third countries and regions.

International Credit Mobility

For over 30 years students and staff have moved between European universities in the Erasmus programme. Since 2015, Erasmus+ has also allowed short-term mobility between Europe and other parts of the world for students, researchers, and staff, known as 'International Credit Mobility' (ICM for short). This two-way mobility allows students to study in a foreign university for **3-12 months** (2-12 months in case of traineeships) and obtain credits which are then recognised at the sending institution as part of their degree. A grant for staff mobility is also possible for **5-60 days**.

There are distinct budgets for different regions of the world that are divided among the 33 Erasmus+ Programme Countries. Programme-Country institutions make up bilateral partnerships with universities from the Western Balkans and apply on behalf of their partners.

The budget for the Western Balkans makes up almost one sixth of the ICM budget and so far has allowed establishing **912 projects** for bilateral partnerships that organise mobility for almost **19 000 students, researchers and staff** (2015-2017).

University of Arts in Belgrade (Serbia) has a range of partnerships with universities from seven Programme Countries. Altogether, these partnerships have exchanged or will exchange 128 individuals. 26% are learners and 74% staff. Overall, 60% are Serbians moving to Programme Countries and 40% other Europeans coming to the University of Belgrade. Most exchanges cover music, performing arts, fine arts and visual arts.

More information:

Erasmus+ website:

http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node_en

Erasmus+ projects & results:

<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/>

Erasmus+ funding opportunities:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding_en

Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni Association:

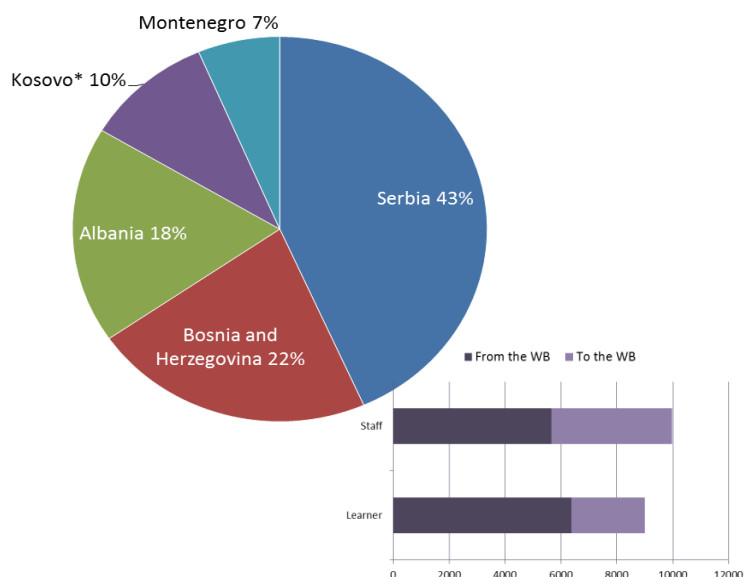
www.em-a.eu

Study in Europe: <http://ec.europa.eu/education/study-in-europe/>

ICM mobility with the Western Balkans:

912 projects, over 19 000 people moving (2015-2017)

Mobility per country:



* 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

University of Tirana (Albania) has a wide range of partnerships with universities from 23 Programme Countries. Altogether, these partnerships have exchanged or will exchange 354 individuals. 51% are learners and 49% staff. Overall, 80% are Albanians moving to Programme Countries and 20% other Europeans coming to Tirana. Most exchanges cover economics and ICT-related subjects.

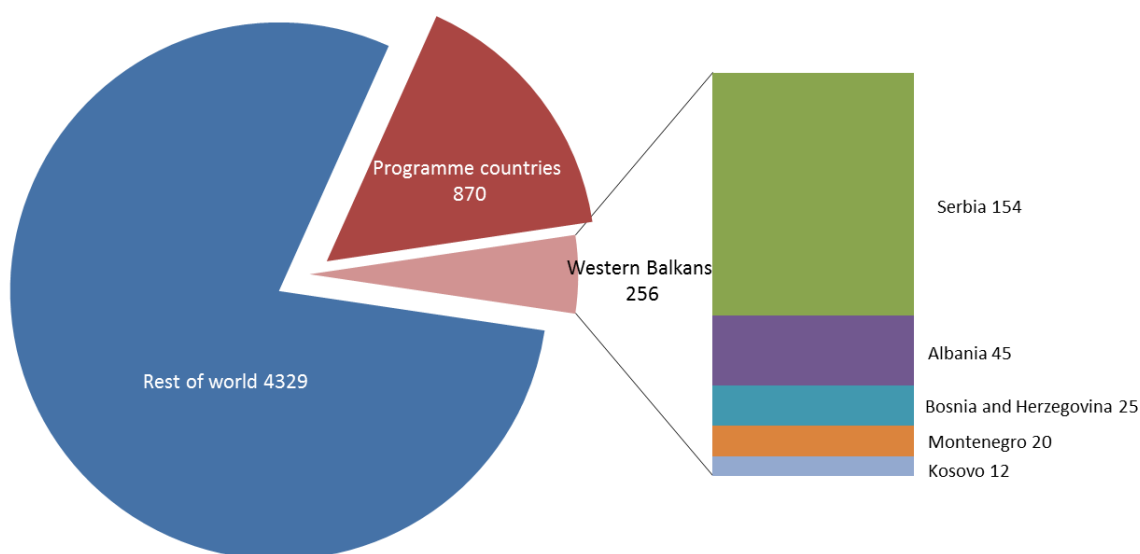
Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees

Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees (EMJMDs) award full-degree scholarships to Master students from around the world covering tuition, travel and a living allowance. The programmes last from one to two years during which students study in **at least two different Programme Countries**. Upon graduation, they are awarded a joint or double degree, or multiple degrees.

Students can apply to these programmes even if the university where they studied is not involved in any of them. They have to look for the available programmes in the **EMJMD Catalogue** and **apply directly** to the programme coordinator: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/library/emjmd-catalogue_en

Erasmus Mundus scholarships:

256 scholarships awarded to Master students from the Western Balkans (2014-2017)



Institutions from the Western Balkans can also be part of the consortia that deliver these programmes, as 'Full Partners', which means they officially award degrees, or as 'Associated Partners', where they participate in the programme in some kind of capacity, but do not award the actual joint degree.

From 2014 to 2017, **4 institutions** from the Western Balkans were involved in 3 of the 108 selected EMJMDs, all of them taking part as **Associated Partners**.

These four institutions include one university from each of the following countries: **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia**.

ASTROMUNDUS: Creating the astrophysicists of tomorrow

This two-year Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree programme offers students a unique study programme in Astrophysics with an innovative curriculum and teaching methods. It has been evaluated as an outstanding scientific programme and attracted collaboration of prestigious international research institutes and top level scholars. Four renowned European universities from Austria, Germany and Italy team up with the University of Belgrade (Serbia) to offer this joint degree, which includes study of both observational and computational astrophysics at solar, galactic and extra-galactic levels.

www.astromundus.eu

Erasmus Mundus and the Western Balkans, 2014-2017



256 scholarships
for Master students



4 organisations
from the Western Balkans
involved

Did you know... ?

Since 2012, the European Commission has organised an annual high-level meeting of the Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training (WBPET) which gathers together all Ministers of Education in the region to review the state of educational reforms in their countries, learn about the latest strategies in the EU, identify regional priorities and cooperate on regional activities. A main objective of the Platform is to share experience, good practice and engage in regional cooperation on tackling similar issues. The long-term goal is to help the Western Balkans on their way to EU accession.

More information:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/international-cooperation/western-balkans_en

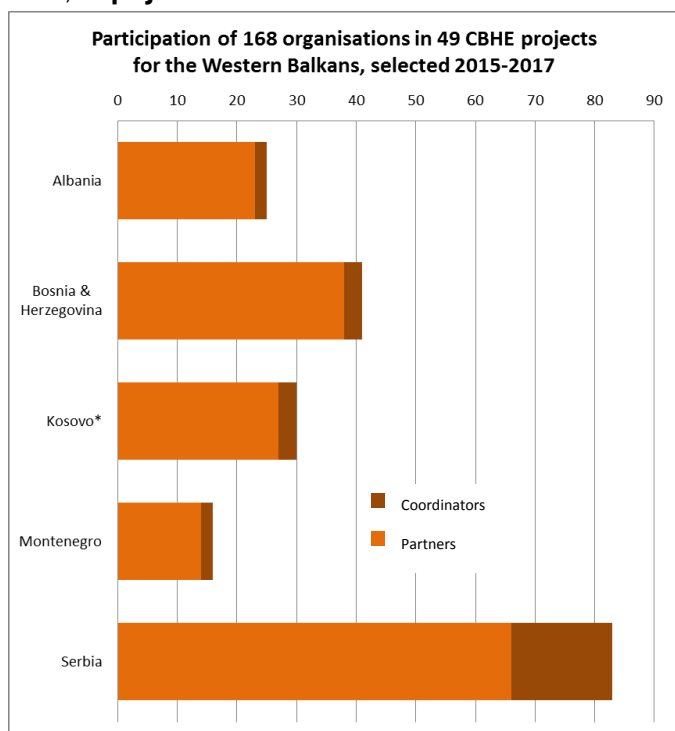
Capacity Building in Higher Education

There are two types of Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) projects, which all last from two to three years. **Joint projects** are aimed at modernising and reforming higher education institutions, developing new curricula, improving governance, and building relationships between higher education institutions and enterprises.

Structural projects can also tackle policy topics and issues, preparing the ground for higher education reform, in cooperation with national authorities.

Capacity building projects can be addressed to a group of Western Balkan countries or a single country and they can also be cross-regional and include partners from different regions of the world.

So far, **49 projects** are focused on the Western Balkans.



Waste Management Curricula Development in Serbia

This project fosters progress in environment protection, especially in the field of waste management. Serbia still produces excessive amounts of waste (mostly dumped in landfills) and manages hazardous waste by inappropriate means. Insufficient efforts have been made to tackle the problem, possibly hindering Serbian accession to the EU. The project enhances education and training of current and future workforce in the field of waste management, thus increasing the capacities of vocational higher education and the growing waste management industry.

Strengthening the internationalisation of Bosnia & Herzegovina's higher education system

The lack of standardised recognition of qualifications in accordance with the European Higher Education Area represents a drawback for the internationalisation of higher education and mobility. This project, carried out by eight higher education institutions (HEIs) and two Ministries of the country, aims to strengthen HEIs through developing and implementing strategies and indicators for internationalisation, improving national recognition, improving HEIs' capacities (human and physical), and developing criteria for assessing internationalisation and their incorporation in existing criteria for accreditation of HEIs.

Capacity-Building in Higher Education, 2014-2017



49 projects



168 organisations

from the Western Balkans involved

Did you know... ?

The European Commission contributed to the creation of the **Western Balkans Alumni Association (WBAA)**, a non-profit and non-governmental organisation targeting students and alumni from the Western Balkans. The aim of WBAA is to provide a forum which enables the exchange of information and good practices, contributes to evidence-gathering, promotes the Erasmus+ programme and other mobility opportunities, empowers young people and supports them in their pursuit towards successful employment.

Jean Monnet Activities

Jean Monnet (JM) activities aim to develop EU studies worldwide. For over 25 years they have been supporting Modules, Chairs, and Centres of Excellence to promote excellence in teaching and research on the European integration process at higher education level. The programme also supports policy debate with the academic world and a number of associations in the domain of EU studies.

Out of a total of 966 successful applications worldwide between 2014 and 2017, 22 are from the Western Balkans, managed by institutions from Bosnia & Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. They comprise **16 Chairs, Modules and Centres of Excellence, 3 Networks** and **3 Support to Associations** projects.

Jean Monnet Chair: "EU enlargement and its impact on the Western Balkans"

This project run by the Marin Barleti University of Tirana contributes to the promotion of European studies with 500 teaching hours at higher education level, as well as deliverables and events for academics, policy-makers and civil society. High level representatives delivered speeches/lectures during the project life span, using innovative methodologies which have contributed to a bigger impact and dissemination.

Hot topics were treated around the Chair's main theme such as the impact of EU enlargement on the Western Balkans, human rights and minorities, religion tolerance, women leadership in local governments, Roma integration, the refugee crises in Europe and the situation in Greece, Brexit implications on EU enlargement etc.

Erasmus+ and Youth

Erasmus+ provides a wide range of opportunities for youth organisations, individuals and groups working with young people.

a) Mobility Projects for Young People and Youth Workers

Organisations from the Western Balkans can participate as partners in mobility projects for young people and youth workers. Three types of activities can be supported under this Action:

- Youth Exchanges:
8 472 participants from the Western Balkans, 2014-17
- Youth Workers Mobility:
4 232 participants from the Western Balkans, 2014-17
- Volunteering Projects (individual or groups):
563 participants from the Western Balkans, 2014-17

https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities/young-people-and-youth-workers_en

Diversity – Intercultural dialogue – Integration

29 young people (age 14-19) and 4 youth workers from Serbia, the Czech Republic, Ukraine and Austria took part in this project. The main purpose was to allay fears evoked by the increased flow of refugees and to use the diversity of different cultures to enhance a peaceful way of living together. The programme contained workshops, discussion panels, free acting games, intercultural evenings, communication games, excursions, sports and leisure time. The participants found common rules for their community, learned to understand different needs based on different backgrounds and found a new and exciting group dynamic. New friendships formed special and unique bonds across borders. The Youth Exchange became a pattern for a diverse, human and tolerant society.

b) Capacity Building in the Field of Youth

Capacity Building projects in the Field of Youth cover a range of activities that encourage cooperation between organisations active in youth empowerment, education of youth, youth training and other relevant socioeconomic sectors in Programme and Partner Countries from different regions of the world. The projects aim to recognize and improve youth work, non-formal learning and volunteering, and consequently link this to education systems and the labour market.

More info: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities/organisations/innovation-good-practices/capacity-building-youth_en

"Balkan without Hate"

The main aim of this project is to explore how young people and youth work can benefit from the creation of genuine youth documentaries on what kind of (multicultural) societies we want to live in. The purpose is also to showcase that youth from different national identity groups can work together and produce something valuable. The purpose is to show that not all young people are looking for a fight, and that they also have solutions and ideas on how they would like the Balkans and Europe to function without hate.

Youth Capacity Building projects and the Western Balkans -2017



153
projects



143
organisations



10 027
individuals

c) Structured Dialogue: meetings between young people and decision-makers in the field of youth

These are projects which promote the active participation of young people in democratic life and foster debate around youth policies and how they should be shaped. The ultimate goal is to obtain results which are useful for policy-making. Such projects can take the form of meetings, conferences, consultations and thematic events and have involved 486 young people from the Western Balkans in the 2014-2017 period. A Structured Dialogue project has three phases:

- Planning and preparation;
- Implementation of the activities;
Evaluation, including possible follow-up actions.

Model European Union Strasbourg 2015

The Model European Union Strasbourg Project began out of the need to enable young people to better understand how the European Union works and to help them achieve decision, debate and cooperation skills. Its core aim is to educate young people in a non-formal learning environment about the decision-making process in the EU and therefore the interactions between its institutions. The project also facilitates direct communication between young people and policy-makers.

Every year we welcome more than 150 young participants, including representatives from different countries in the Western Balkans.

School and adult education

The **eTwinning platform** allows school teachers to implement classroom-to-classroom projects, as well as exchange information and experiences with their peers, and benefit from professional development opportunities. National Support Services in **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina** and **Serbia** provide support and training for schools taking part. More info: www.etwinning.net

EPALE, the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe, is a multilingual community for everyone with a professional role in Adult Learning. In addition to a calendar of courses and events, news and blog posts, it offers interactive features such as partner-finding, communities of practice and collaborative spaces. National Support Services are available in **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro** and **Serbia** to inform and support participation of all adult education professionals. More info: <https://ec.europa.eu/epale/>

In these same Western Balkan countries, national coordinators promote Adult Learning, provide policy advice and support, and gather and disseminate best practices. More info: https://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/adult-learning/adult_en