

EU-Western Balkan 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. In 2019, Serbia became the 34th Programme Country, as it joined the programme alongside the EU Member States plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey and North Macedonia). Partner Countries are located all over the world and include the Western Balkans: Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo*, and Montenegro. 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 34 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 **2 372 projects** for bilateral partnerships that organise mobility for over **48 000 students, researchers and staff** (2015-2020).

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.

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

Country and regional factsheets:

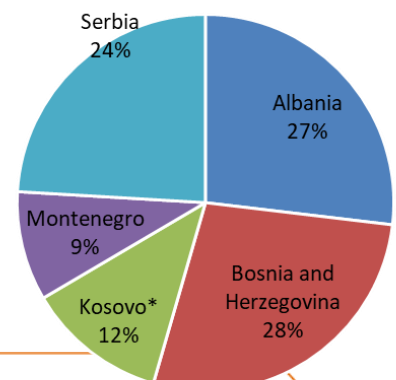
https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/factsheets_en#worldwide



ICM mobility with the Western Balkans:

Over 2 372 projects, over 48 000 people moving (2015-2020)

Mobility per country:



Student and staff mobility Western Balkans- Europe* 2015-20



* European Programme Countries under Erasmus+
Since 2019 Serbia has been a Programme Country; figures for Serbia are 2015-2018

University of Banja Luka (Bosnia & Herzegovina) has to date entered into agreements with 32 higher education institutions (HEIs) in 16 different programme countries, together moving some 316 students and staff. Partners include specialist HEIs such as the International Psychoanalytic University of Berlin and the Conservatorio di Musica Giuseppe Tartini from Trieste, Italy.

* 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

Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees

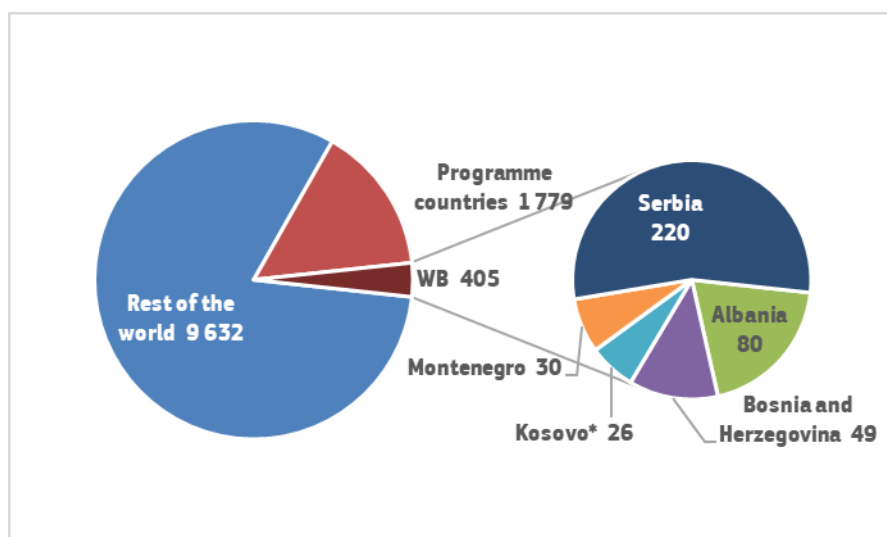
Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees (EMJMDs) award full-degree scholarships to Master students from around the world covering tuition, travel and a living allowance. The programmes last from one to two years during which students study in **at least two different Programme Countries**. Upon graduation,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

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.

Two universities from the region have taken part as full partners: the University of Sarajevo in a programme on Central European and Russian studies, and the University of Belgrade in Astromundus, a masters in astrophysics selected in 2015. The 250 Erasmus Mundus programmes selected in this period included an associate role for Western Balkans organisations on 34 occasions.

Erasmus Mundus scholarships, 2014-2020



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 with more than 700 members. 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
More information: <https://www.western-balkans-alumni.eu/>

EUROSUD: South European Studies

There are no full partners from Western Balkans countries hosting students in Erasmus Mundus master programmes. [Eurosud](#) is a two-year Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree programme that welcomed its first students in 2019. Coordinated by the University of Glasgow, the consortium includes full partners from France, Greece, Italy and Spain, and a range of associates from other Southern European countries – and beyond – including the University of Montenegro. All contribute to multi-disciplinary studies of the region that examine democracy and protest, migration, social and economic change, nationalism, European integration and the new trade and security challenges that are reshaping the region.

Erasmus Mundus and the Western Balkans, 2014-2019



405 scholarships
for Master students



36 instances of participation
from the Western Balkans

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:
https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/international-cooperation/policy-dialogue-specific-regions-and-countries-around-world_en

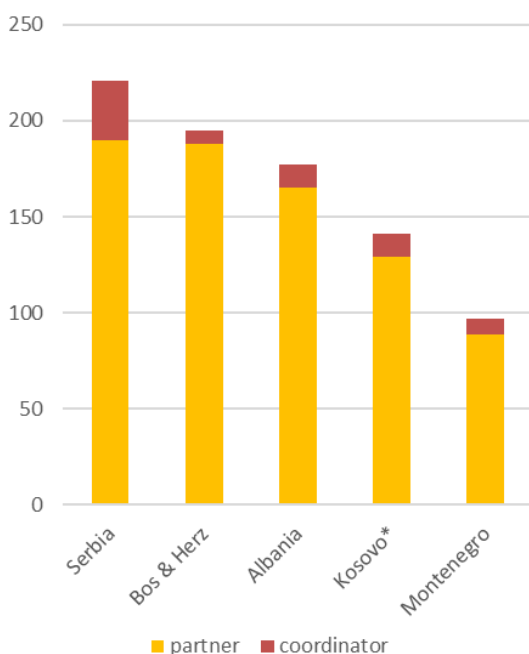
Capacity Building in Higher Education

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.

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.

Western Balkans:
Participation in CBHE projects, 2015-2020



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, 2014-2020



112 projects



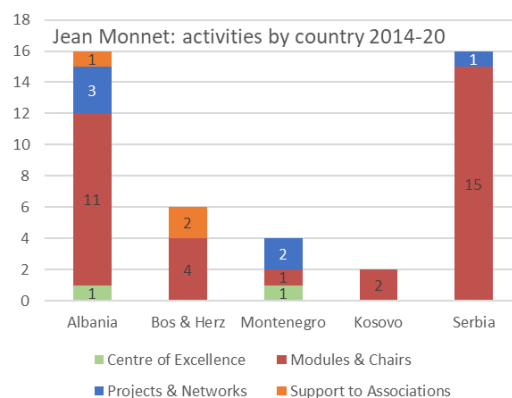
831 instances of participation

from the Western Balkans

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 1 862 successful applications worldwide between 2014 and 2020, 51 are from the Western Balkans, managed by institutions from Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia. They comprise 21 Chairs, Modules and Centres of Excellence, 5 Networks and support 3 Associations.



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.

Opportunities in the field of 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:
13 635 participants from the Western Balkans, 2014-20
8 947 participants to the Western Balkans, 2014-20
- Youth Workers Mobility:
6 589 participants from the Western Balkans, 2014-20
4 494 participants to the Western Balkans, 2014-20
- Volunteering Projects and European Solidarity Corps (individual, groups):
797 participants from the Western Balkans, 2014-20
587 participants to the Western Balkans, 2014-20

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 2015 -2020



266
projects



546
organisations



39 297
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 1 102 young people from the Western Balkans in the 2014-2020 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, North Macedonia** 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, North Macedonia** 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.](#)

January 2021