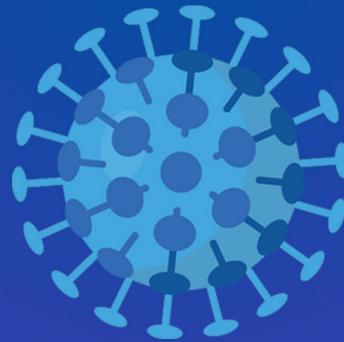




European Commission

# Reinforced EU support to the Western Balkans

## in tackling coronavirus crisis and in post-pandemic recovery



February 2021

#Coronavirus #TeamEurope

### Overview of EU support

The EU, together with the EIB, mobilised

over **€3.3 billion**

to support the Western Balkans



in tackling coronavirus health crisis



and post-pandemic socio-economic recovery



### Coronavirus health crisis



The EU supplied a **€38 million immediate support package** to the Western Balkans health sector to procure medical equipment such as masks, ventilators, visors and testing kits.



The EU supplied **free control material** developed by the EU's Joint Research Centre to Western Balkan partners to enable them check the accuracy of coronavirus tests.



The EU opened the **Joint Procurement Agreement** to the Western Balkan partners to purchase personal protective equipment.



Through the **EU Civil Protection Mechanism** EU Member States helped the Western Balkans partners by providing equipment and repatriation assistance for stranded citizens.



The EU included the Western Balkans in **information sharing** over coronavirus early warning and response, facilitated by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.



The EU exempted the Western Balkans from **export authorisations** for masks and other personal protective equipment, making them the only region outside the European Economic Area receiving such preferential treatment.



The EU quickly provided vulnerable individuals, such as Roma, with **essential food and hygiene packages**, and has put in place specific support for helping the **elderly, children, victims of domestic violence**, and **minorities** to ride out the crisis. The EU's **Instrument contributing to Peace and Stability** provided €8 million for vulnerable migrants.



The EU has allocated **€70 million** in grants to the Western Balkans to ensure availability and access to reliable, effective and EU authorized **COVID-19 vaccines**. The vaccines will be used especially for the **vaccination of priority groups** (primarily healthcare workers, the elderly, vulnerable and high- risk people). These grants will include the possibility for a certain percentage to be used to cover the costs of some of the equipment necessary for implementation of the vaccination campaigns. In collaboration with WHO, a further **€7.35 million** will help to prepare the region for the effective reception and administration of COVID-19 vaccines, including those received from COVAX and through the EU vaccine sharing mechanism with EU Member States. It will also help improve the region's resilience against health emergencies, and support it in moving towards sustainable funding for universal health care.





## Socio-economic recovery



The EU reallocated **over €467 million of Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) funding** to build-up resilience of the national health systems and to cushion for the social and economic impact of the crisis, with special attention to the most vulnerable.



The EU proposed **€750 million of Macro-Financial Assistance**, in tandem with the International Monetary Fund, to support Western Balkan governments that requested help with balancing the payment crisis.



The EU extended the **EU Solidarity Fund** to the Western Balkan partners that have started accession negotiations.



## A lifeline for Western Balkans businesses

The EU is providing **€385 million** to ensure survival in the short-term, and recovery in the medium-term of businesses in the private sector. This funding will be channelled through up to 70 local banks in the region to help **Small and Medium Enterprises** in getting more flexible terms for repayments, or easier access to new loans, and to enable entrepreneurs to cope with the immediate effects of the crisis and thrive afterwards. Through the European Investment Bank (EIB), the EU is also providing **€1.7 billion** for additional loans for **public sector investments**, and further credit to enterprises, to help safeguard jobs for the many people working in SMEs in the region.

 **€455 million**

 **European Investment Bank**

**€1.7 billion** of preferential loans

**Support for businesses**



**Public sector investment**



Focusing on SMEs, start-ups and innovative companies, this EU assistance will in particular be available for innovative businesses, farmers and agri-businesses, rural and tourism enterprises, as well as women- and youth-led businesses. It will provide a lifeline for many people all over the Western Balkans, especially those working in vulnerable and small-scale enterprises.