THE **EU** AND **NORTH MACEDONIA**



November 2026

North Macedonia has been an **EU candidate country** since 2005.

MARCH 2004	APRIL 2004	DECEMBER 2005	MARCH 2020	JULY 2022	DECEMBER 2023
Application for EU membership	Stabilisation and Association Agreement enters into force	European Council grants candidate status	European Council decides to open accession negotiations	Intergovernmental Conference on accession negotiations, start of the screening process	Screening process completed

GROWTH PLAN FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS

Under the **Reform and Growth Facility for the Western Balkans, €750.4 million in non-repayable grants and favourable loans** are allocated to North Macedonia for the implementation of this Reform Agenda. As of November 2026, €142.1 million has been released in recognition of progress in implementing reforms.

North Macedonia's Reform Agenda addresses critical issues and sets clear targets for progress across key policy areas. The successful implementation of these reforms will significantly enhance its **public finance management** and **public administration, digital transformation and green transition, human capital development, business democracy judicial integrity, fight against corruption and organised crime**.



The EU is North Macedonia's

- largest trade partner
- largest investor
- largest provider of financial assistance

ONGOING EU SUPPORT FOR NORTH MACEDONIA

The **EU** is the **largest provider of financial assistance** to North Macedonia. This support is provided through channels like the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), part of the EU's Global Gateway initiative.





Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance

In **2021-2027**, the EU has allocated **over €670 million** of financial and technical assistance to North Macedonia under IPA III. Assistance is provided in the form of **non-repayable grants**. This includes:

- **€50 million** for the transport sector.
- **€80 million Energy Support Package** to support vulnerable families and SMEs in North Macedonia in dealing with rising energy prices.
- **€18 million** to boost the **effectiveness and efficiency of public administration**.
- **Over €20 million to accelerate business environment reform and transformation**.
- **€67 million** via the **IPA III 2025-2027 multiannual action** for rule of law, good governance, education and European Integration.

Global Gateway in North Macedonia

In the framework of **Global Gateway**, the EU has identified investments in sustainable transport, clean energy, environment and climate, digital future, human capital and the private sector. These investments aim to support a green and digital transition and bring the region closer to **the EU's single market**.

For projects in **North Macedonia**, since 2021, the EU has provided **€665 million, expected to mobilise €1.7 billion** in total investments. This includes:

Constructing of 23.4 km of railway line

and electrification of the Kumanovo border railway to the border with Bulgaria, providing direct access to modern means of transport to **350,000 people**.

Increasing the capacity of the Bogdanci wind park

by up to 15 MW, which will produce 46 GWh of electricity annually, meeting the energy demand of **22,000 households with clean energy**, and avoid 152,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions each year.

Constructing a wastewater treatment plant

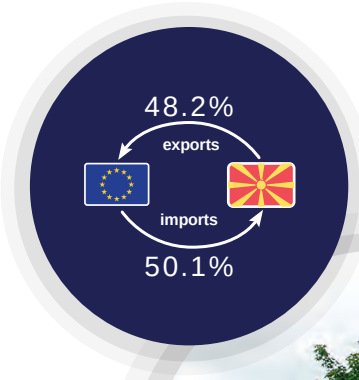
for Skopje, expected to **serve 625,000 people** and mitigate pollution of the Vardar River.

What we are **achieving together**

- Installing **496 MW** renewable energy generation capacity
- Upgrading **57 km** of new railway line
- Efficient solid waste services for **750,000 people**
- Better schools for **52,800 students** annually

CLOSE TRADE & INVESTMENT LINKS

The **EU is North Macedonia's main trading partner**. In 2025, the EU accounted for 49.5% of North Macedonia's total trade in goods (48.2% of total exports and 50.1% of total imports). Total EU Foreign Direct Investment reached €4.4 billion by 2024.



Progressive trade **liberalisation** and **mutual duty-free access** for most goods has been taking place since 2004 and is currently based on the EU – North Macedonia **Stabilisation and Association Agreement** (SAA).



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FOREIGN, SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY COOPERATION

North Macedonia **fully aligns** with the **EU Common Foreign and Security Policy** statements and restrictive measures. In addition:

- The EU and North Macedonia adopted their **Security and Defence Partnership** in November 2024.
- North Macedonia continued to **actively participate in EU crisis management missions and operations** under the **Common Security and Defence Policy**.
- In 2025, North Macedonia received **€15 million** through the third bilateral assistance measure to strengthen defence capabilities under the **European Peace Facility**, bringing total EPF support to **€38 million**.
- The Balkans Medical Task Force, in which North Macedonia participates, benefits from a **€6 million** 2022 support under the **European Peace Facility**.
- The EU supports North Macedonia in strengthening its resilience to hybrid threats, including cyber threats and foreign information manipulation and interference.



PEOPLE TO PEOPLE CONTACTS

- Since 2010, citizens from North Macedonia benefit from **visa-free travel** to the EU.
- The EU has funded over **23,500 exchanges** between EU and citizens of North Macedonia in the areas of education, training, youth, and sport under **ERASMUS+** between 2021 and 2025.
- The city of **Skopje** was awarded the title of the **European Capital of Culture 2028**.

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