THE **EU** AND **SERBIA**



November 2026

Serbia has been an **EU candidate country** since 2012.

DECEMBER 2009
Application for EU membership

MARCH 2011
EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina starts

MARCH 2012
European Council grants candidate status

JUNE 2013
European Council decides to open accession negotiations

SEPTEMBER 2013
Stabilisation and Association Agreement enters into force

JUNE 2021
Intergovernmental Conference under the revised enlargement methodology

GROWTH PLAN FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS

Under the **Reform and Growth Agenda for the Western Balkans, €1.6 billion in non-repayable grants and favourable loans** are allocated to Serbia for the implementation of this Reform Agenda. As of November 2026, **€167.6 million** has been released in recognition of progress in implementing reforms.



Serbia'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 Serbia's **business environment and private sector** development, **green and digital, human capital development** and **rule of law**, further aligning the country with EU standards and practices.

A specific pre-condition applies to Serbia and Kosovo, who must engage constructively in the normalisation of their relations.

The EU is Serbia's

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

ONGOING EU SUPPORT FOR SERBIA

The **EU** is the **largest provider of financial assistance** to Serbia. 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 (IPA)

Between **2021 and 2027** the EU has allocated over **€1.6 billion** of financial and technical assistance to Serbia under IPA III. Assistance is provided in the form of **non-repayable grants**. This includes:

- **€68 million** to strengthen the rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy.
- **€224.5 million** for good governance and EU acquis alignment.
- **€165 million Energy Support Package** to support vulnerable families and SMEs in Serbia in dealing with rising energy prices.



Global Gateway in Serbia

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 **Serbia**, since 2021, the EU has provided **€1.8 billion, expected to mobilise €7.5 billion** in total investments. This includes:

Upgrading over 2,500 km of railways

modernising 230 km of the Belgrade-Nis railway on Corridor X, improving capacity, safety and journey times, with passenger **speeds of up to 200 km/h** on parts of the line.

Reconstruction of Vlasina Hydropower Plant

the equipment upgrades will **increase the energy efficiency** of the plant and ensure reliable operation for 30 years, producing 309 GWh annually, **meeting the energy demand of 93,000 households**.

Construction of a new building for University Children's Hospital

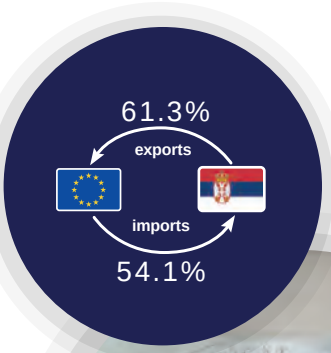
in Belgrade (Tiršova 2) with an additional 15,676 m² for **healthcare** services provided with modern technology for **over 4,700 patients** more per year.

What we are **achieving together**

- Rehabilitating **335 km** of railway lines
- Installing **460 MW** renewable energy generation capacity
- Improving sanitation services for **1,3 million people**
- Reaching **6,600 outpatient admissions** per year

CLOSE TRADE & INVESTMENT LINKS

The EU is Serbia's main trading partner. In 2025, the EU accounted for 57.1% of Serbia's total trade in goods (61.3% of total exports and 54.1% of total imports). Total EU Foreign Direct Investment reached €22 billion by 2024.



Progressive **trade liberalisation** and **mutual duty-free access** for most goods has been taking place since 2009, based on the **EU – Serbia Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA)** signed in 2008.

FOREIGN, SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY COOPERATION

Serbia's alignment rate with the **EU Common Foreign and Security Policy** remains low. In addition:

- Serbia continues to participate actively in **EU crisis management missions and operations** under the **Common Security and Defence Policy**.
- The Balkans Medical Task Force, in which Serbia participates, benefits from a **€6 million 2022 support measure** under the European Peace Facility.
- The EU supports Serbia, as well as other Western Balkans partners, in strengthening its resilience to hybrid threats, including cyber threats and foreign information manipulation and interference.



© Balkan Medical Task Force

PEOPLE TO PEOPLE CONTACTS

- Since 2009, Serbians benefit from **visa-free travel** to the EU.
- The EU has funded over **17,400 exchanges** between EU and Serbian citizens in the areas of education, training, youth, and sport under **ERASMUS+** between 2021 and 2025.



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