

The EU and Western Balkans

The European Union has given the countries of the Western Balkans the perspective of membership, and it offers financial and political incentives for reform. From the region, only Croatia has so far joined the EU, in 2013. Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania are official candidate countries. Entry negotiations have started with Montenegro and Serbia, in 2012 and 2015 respectively. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo are potential candidate countries.

The European Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker, has said he does not expect any country to join the EU during his term in office, which ends in 2019, as many analysts and politicians believe the Union must overcome its internal problems before expanding further. The EU also wants to give the countries time for progress in their reforms, related to the 1993 'Copenhagen' membership criteria, which would make their political and economic systems compatible with EU standards.

This note offers links to recent **commentaries, studies and reports on the topic from major international think tanks** on EU links with the Western Balkans, and the political and economic situation of the countries in the region. More publications on EU enlargement can be found in a [previous edition](#) of 'What Think Tanks are Thinking'.

[Is the EU turning a blind eye to the 'new strongmen' of the Balkans?](#)

Centre for European Policy Studies, July 2016

[The Western Balkans need a clear EU perspective](#)

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik, July 2016

[To be or not to be an EU member state: A question for the Balkan aspirants as well?](#)

European Policy Centre, Brussels, July 2016

[Losing the Western Balkans in Paris](#)

Centre for South East European Studies, July 2016

[Brexit or Not? What Consequences for the Enlargement Policy?](#)

European Policy Centre, Belgrade, July 2016

[The migrant crisis: A catalyst for EU enlargement?](#)

Balkans in Europe Policy Advisory Group, June 2016

[Elusive development in the Balkans: Research findings](#)

Wiener Institut für Internationale Wirtschaftsvergleiche, June 2016

[Backwardness, industrialisation and economic development in Europe: The developmental delay in Southeastern Europe and the impact of the European integration process since 1952](#)

Wiener Institut für Internationale Wirtschaftsvergleiche, June 2016

[A narrative explanation of breakpoints and convergence patterns in Yugoslavia and its successor states 1952-2015](#)

Wiener Institut für Internationale Wirtschaftsvergleiche, June 2016

[Neuer Islamismus und islamische Radikalisierung am Balkan: Aktuelle Entwicklungen und Gefahrenpotentiale](#)

Österreichische Institut für Internationale Politik, June 2016

[Serbia and the EU: A value-based EU still has its appeal](#)

European Policy Centre, Belgrade, EUForum, June 2016

[Les Balkans occidentaux, pierre de touche de la politique étrangère allemande et européenne](#)

Institut français des relations internationales, May 2016

[The agony of Macedonia: Where is the EU?](#)

Centre for European Policy Studies, May 2016

[PrEUgovor report on progress Serbia in chapters 23 and 24](#)

Belgrade Centre for Security Policy, May 2016

[At the gate of Europe: A report on refugees on the Western Balkan route](#)

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Dialogue Southeast Europe, May 2016

[Are the Western Balkans imploding?](#)

Carnegie Europe, May 2016

[The long march towards the EU: Candidates, neighbours and the prospects for enlargement](#)

Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, April 2016

[The Serbian media and the dialogue: Has there been an evolution in how Serbian media perceive Kosovo?](#)

Group for Legal and Political Studies, April 2016

[Kosovo: The limits of international post-conflict governance](#)

Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, April 2016

[The Western Balkans: Back in the EU spotlight](#)

European Union Institute for Security Studies, March 2016

[The EU and the Western Balkans: Do they share a future?](#)

Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, March 2016

[Return to instability: How migration and great power politics threaten the Western Balkans](#)

European Council on Foreign Relations, March 2016

[Balkan partnerships: Strengthening the region's ties](#)

Friends of Europe, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, March 2016

[Paradoxes of stabilisation: Bosnia and Herzegovina from the perspective of central Europe](#)

Centre for Eastern Studies, March 2016

[Escaping the first circle of hell or the secret behind Bosnian reforms](#)

European Stability Initiative, March 2016

[EU enlargement to the Western Balkans: Out of sight, out of mind?](#)

EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, February 2016

[Forever on the periphery? The return of geopolitics to EU enlargement to the Balkans](#)

Polish Institute of International Affairs, February 2016

[To serve and protect: A story about security sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

Popolari, February 2016

[Western Balkans: Between geography and geopolitics](#)

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Dialogue Southeast Europe, January 2016

[Albania and Kosovo: In quest of a common future](#)

Albanian Institute for International Studies, January 2016

[The Western Balkans and its EU integration: 2015 comparative overview](#)

Think for Europe Network, December 2015

[The EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region one year later: The fatigues of the process](#)

Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso, December 2015

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