



# EU ENLARGEMENT FACTSHEET

<http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement>

## PROMOTING REGIONAL COOPERATION

### JOINT REGIONAL EFFORTS TO ALIGN WITH EUROPEAN REQUIREMENTS

In their efforts to join the European Union, regional cooperation helps aspirant countries meet EU objectives that countries are less likely or unable to achieve on their own. It provides horizontal support, pooling individual efforts for the benefit of the common good.

### PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES ADDRESSED THROUGH REGIONAL COOPERATION

#### Economic Governance

**Objectives:** Structural reforms in aspirant countries in order for them to meet targets regarding a functioning market economy as well as economic accession criteria.

**Challenges:** Addressing unemployment is currently the priority in Southeast Europe, where there is an average unemployment rate of 23%. The creation of new jobs as well as considerable investments in infrastructure networks will be necessary to stimulate economic growth.

**Project:** [Western Balkans Investment Framework \(WBIF, 2009\)](#)

WBIF is a coordination platform with Financial Institutions which support socio-economic development through the provision of technical assistance and financing for strategic investments. This regional tool allows to pool resources from the European Commission's Instrument for Pre-Accession with those of Financial Institutions, bilateral donors and the governments of the Western Balkans, combining grants and loans for infrastructure projects.

- By the end of 2013 the WBIF has identified 144 projects for support for an amount of about € 300 million, corresponding to a total investment value of € 13 billion.

#### Public Administration Reform

**Objectives:** Enhancing democracy and governance by further improving the professionalism, capacity and efficiency of the public service, strengthening public financial management.

**Challenges:** Democratic institutions remain fragile in the enlargement countries. A de-politicised, more professional, and merit-based civil service, as well as a satisfactory administrative organization and procedures are of utmost importance.

**Project:** [Support for Improvement in Governance and Management \(SIGMA\)](#)

SIGMA is a joint initiative of the [European Union](#) and the [OECD](#) which aims to strengthen good governance and public administration reforms in the beneficiary countries, with a strong focus on how reforms can be taken forward, implemented and assessed.

#### Justice and Home Affairs

**Objectives:** Strengthening regional and cross-border cooperation in the police and judiciary in order to effectively fight against organised crime and corruption; encouraging collaboration with international law enforcement organisations and EU Member States.

**Challenges:** Aspirant countries still face challenges concerning illicit drug trafficking, terrorism prevention, cooperation between police services, and communication among prosecutors.

**Project:** [International Law Enforcement Coordination Units \(ILECUs, 2008\)](#)

It aims to create an effective international law enforcement cooperation mechanism among the beneficiary countries.

The project, worth € 2 million is funded by the EU.

### Civil society facility and freedom of media

**Objectives:** Improving the civil society's capacity to represent the citizens' needs, concerns and interests while encouraging greater transparency of government action, as well as creating an environment where media can be pluralistic and independent.

**Challenges:** Increasing the visibility of civil society organisations' (CSOs) contributions to society and improving their legal and institutional framework; combating external pressure on the media.

**Project:** [Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations \(TACSO, 2009\)](#)

TACSO is part of the Civil Society Facility (CSF), an EU mechanism that provides support to civil society organisations and stimulates an environment which supports civil society and culture in the aspiring countries.

### Good neighbourhood relations through cross-border cooperation

**Objectives:** Preparing the enlargement countries for EU cooperative decision-making and for the management of structural funds. Regional cooperation is also essential for fostering reconciliation, encouraging good neighbourly relations, and the development of the border regions.

**Challenges:** Disputes related to minority groups' issues hinder institutions as well as the reform process from functioning efficiently. The issue of North Kosovo also remains a major challenge.

**Project:** [IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes \(IPA CBC Programmes\)](#)

These programmes promote reconciliation, reconstruction and good neighbourly relations by fostering stability, security, and prosperity in the aspiring countries.

## EU FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF REGIONAL COOPERATION

### IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes financial allocation per beneficiary (in € million) in 2013

Beneficiary (2013)	€ million
Croatia	17.00
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	5.09
Turkey	10.17
Albania	10.67
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5.34
Montenegro	4.67
Serbia	11.63
Kosovo*	2.99

- Financial support (**€ 570 million** for 2011-2013) is provided through **IPA multi-beneficiary programmes**, implemented in the above-mentioned areas.
- [The Regional Cooperation Council](#), of which the EU is a member, is a **regionally led framework for cooperation** in Southeast Europe supporting the enlargement countries in the European enlargement process.

The EU has been providing financial support to the RCC secretariat since it was set up in 2008.



\*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.