

NOTE FOR JOURNALISTS

Structural reforms are essential to boost competitiveness, jobs and growth in South East Europe, says OECD

OECD, Paris, 26/02/2016

[Competitiveness in South East Europe: A Policy Outlook](#), an OECD report released today, benchmarks competitiveness in six SEE economies: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro and Serbia.

“The economies of South East Europe (SEE) need the structural reforms recommended in the OECD report to increase their competitiveness. The benefits promise to be both economic and social,” said OECD Deputy Secretary-General Douglas Frantz launching the report in Paris.

The report calls for an increasingly strategic, “whole-of-government” approach to policy making and prioritises the capacity building of civil servants, increased professionalism in public institutions, improved inter-ministerial co-ordination and reinforced stakeholder consultation mechanisms.

The report identifies a set of policies expected to enhance competitiveness in SEE, such as:

- investment in innovation and knowledge based capital;
- improved access to finance, especially for high-growth enterprises;
- active labour market policies, and
- boosting public and private investment to stimulate job creation and a sustainable recovery.

These recommendations were presented at a [high-level conference](#)¹, held today at OECD headquarters in Paris, gathering SEE policy makers, private sector and civil society representatives of OECD member countries, as well as regional organisations.

On this occasion, senior officials from the region expressed their appreciation for the OECD SEE Regional Programme and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen their policy dialogue with OECD bodies and enhanced adherence to OECD best policy practices.

Policy Handbooks on *Bridging Skills Gaps in South East Europe: The case of the food and beverage processing sector* and on *Fostering Tourism Competitiveness in South East Europe*, outlining specific options for reforms in these high-potential sectors, were also launched at this conference.

These three publications were prepared with financial support from the European Union.

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* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

¹ This meeting is not a meeting of an official OECD body.