



AGENDA¹

Western Balkans Competitiveness Outlook 2024

Presentation of Preliminary Regional Findings

13 December 2023

09:00 – 16:30 UTC/GMT +3 hours

(07:00 – 14:30 UTC/GMT +1 hour)

Hybrid meeting

OECD Istanbul Centre and Zoom

Working Language: English – No simultaneous interpretation will be provided

¹ This is not a meeting of an official OECD body

The [OECD](#) is a unique forum where governments work together to address the economic, social and environmental challenges of globalisation. The Organisation provides a setting where governments can compare policy experience, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice and work to co-ordinate domestic and international policies.

Since 2000, the [OECD South East Europe Regional Programme](#) has been closely collaborating with economies of the region to foster growth, investment and employment through reforms that support competitiveness and private sector development. The programme addresses regional and national needs, capacities and reform priorities, while translating OECD standards and best practices into actionable advice for South East European (SEE) economies.

WHAT IS THE COMPETITIVENESS OUTLOOK?

Drawing on key OECD tools and standards, the [Western Balkans Competitiveness Outlook](#) publication series is the most comprehensive assessment of economic performance, governance and regulation in the six Western Balkan (WB6) economies. It covers 15 key policy areas that are interrelated and make up five thematic clusters: (1) Business environment; (2) Skills; (3) Greening; (4) Digitalisation; (5) Connectivity and Infrastructure.

The Competitiveness Outlook provides the region's policy makers with a multi-dimensional benchmarking tool, enabling them to compare performance against regional peers as well as OECD good practices, and to design future policies based on rich evidence and actionable policy recommendations.

The last edition of the Competitiveness Outlook was launched at the [Leaders Meeting of the Berlin Process Western Balkans Summit](#) in July 2021 where several Heads of State and Government praised the OECD Competitiveness Outlook's policy recommendations *"as guidance and inspiration for pursuing an ambitious, inclusive and sustainable reform agenda in the Western Balkans."*

THE MEETING

Following the launch of the 4th Western Balkans Competitiveness Outlook assessment cycle in April, the preliminary findings meeting will provide an opportunity to **present and discuss the initial regional assessment findings, including policy recommendations**. The presentation of the preliminary findings and recommendations will be structured according to the five thematic clusters (*Business environment; Skills; Greening; Digitalisation; and Connectivity and Infrastructure*). Additionally, the meeting will allow for discussions with participants to exchange ideas and perspectives on the presented regional findings and recommendations.

WHO WILL BE THERE?

The meeting will bring together the Co-ordinators of the OECD's work (Competitiveness Outlook, SME Policy Index, Circular Economy), Statistical Office representatives, and ERP and IPA Co-ordinators of each Western Balkan economy. Meeting participants will also include representatives of the European Commission, RCC and CEFTA. The meeting will be conducted in a hybrid format to also allow all Competitiveness Outlook dimension and statistical office contact points from the six Western Balkan economies, as well as EU delegations, to participate virtually.

Contacts

Mr Martin KOHTZE
Project Manager
Tel: +33145241364
Email: Martin.KOHTZE@oecd.org

Mr Ali-Fuad TURGUT
Project Manager
Tel: +33145249988
Email: Alifuad.TURGUT@oecd.org

13 DECEMBER 2023 – 09:00 – 16:30 (UTC/GMT +3 HOURS)
REGIONAL MEETING – PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

OECD ISTANBUL CENTRE

ZOOM ([REGISTER HERE](#))

Objective After completing the data collection phase and conducting fact-finding meetings in each Western Balkan economy, the objective of this meeting is to present and discuss the preliminary regional assessment findings, including initial policy recommendations, for each of the Competitiveness Outlook's five thematic clusters. Achieving this objective will assist the OECD team in refining its policy analysis and recommendations before preparing the Competitiveness Outlook reports and datahub for publication.

Master of Ceremony Mr. Umur Gökçe, Economic Advisor, OECD South East Europe Division



09:00-09:30 REGISTRATION AND WELCOME COFFEE

09:30-09:50 OPENING REMARKS

- **Ms. Marzena Kisielewska**, Head of OECD South East Europe Division
- **Ms. Sandrine Beauchamp**, Policy Officer, Private Sector and Green Economy, Thematic Support – Economic Development, DG NEAR, European Commission
- **Mr. Alexandros Mouzakit**, Economic Analyst, Unit for Candidate and Pre-candidate Countries, DG ECFIN, European Commission

09:50-10:10 COMPETITIVENESS OUTLOOK 2024 ASSESSMENT AND THE OECD ECONOMIC CONVERGENCE SCOREBOARD

The OECD will provide a recap of the *Western Balkans Competitiveness Outlook 2024* assessment process and next steps. Additionally, this session will present the OECD's new [Economic Convergence Scoreboard for the Western Balkans 2023](#), which builds on the Competitiveness Outlook to measure the region's economic convergence with the EU and OECD.

- **Mr. Ali-Fuad Turgut**, Project Manager, OECD South East Europe Division
- **Mr. Martin Kohtze**, Project Manager, OECD South East Europe Division

10:10-10:50 PRESENTATION OF KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

SKILLS CLUSTER

For each of the Competitiveness Outlook's five thematic clusters, the OECD will deliver a presentation of the preliminary regional findings, including initial policy recommendations, followed by a brief discussion.

In this session, the OECD will present its key initial assessment findings for the focus topics within the Competitiveness Outlook's Skills cluster. Those include policies aimed at developing relevant skills over the life course and putting these skills to effective use. Based on its initial analysis of the main policy challenges, the OECD will identify priority areas for improvement and discuss possible policy recommendations.

Policy Dimension Contact Points and Statistical Office representatives from the Western Balkans who contributed to the assessment of the following Competitiveness Outlook policy dimensions are especially encouraged to join this session: (1) **Education** policy; (2) **Employment** policy and (3) **Science, Technology and Innovation**.

Presenters

- **Ms. Elma Aga**, Policy Analyst, OECD South East Europe Division

Open discussion

10:50-11:30 PRESENTATION OF KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

GREENING CLUSTER

In this session, the OECD will present its key initial assessment findings for the focus topics within the Competitiveness Outlook's Greening cluster. Those include policies to enable the region's green transition, through decarbonisation, resource-efficiency and circularity, as well as policies to protect ecosystems and citizens' wellbeing. Based on its initial analysis of the main policy challenges, the OECD will identify priority areas for improvement and discuss possible policy recommendations.

Policy Dimension Contact Points and Statistical Office representatives from the Western Balkans who contributed to the assessment of the following Competitiveness Outlook policy dimensions are especially encouraged to join this session: (1) **Environmental** policy; (2) **Energy** policy; (3) **Transport** policy; (4) **Agriculture** policy and (5) **Tourism** policy.

Presenters

- **Ms. Jovana Pavlovic Djukic**, Team Lead – Green Economy and Sustainability, OECD South East Europe Division
- **Ms. Clemence Girin**, Policy Analyst, OECD South East Europe Division

Open discussion

11:30-11:45 COFFEE BREAK

11:45-12:30 PRESENTATION OF KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

DIGITALISATION CLUSTER

In this session, the OECD will present its key initial assessment findings for the focus topics within the Competitiveness Outlook's Digitalisation cluster. Those include policies that promote the adoption of digital technologies, digital inclusion, cybersecurity and the expansion of digital trade and finance. Based on its initial analysis of the main policy challenges, the OECD will identify priority areas for improvement and discuss possible policy recommendations.

Policy Dimension Contact Points and Statistical Office representatives from the Western Balkans who contributed to the assessment of the following Competitiveness Outlook policy dimensions are especially encouraged to join this session: (1) **Digital Society**; (2) **Trade** policy and (3) **Access to finance**.

Presenters

- **Ms. Marijana Petrovic**, Team Lead – Digital Policy, OECD South East Europe Division

Open discussion

12:30-14:00 LUNCH

14:00-14:35

PRESENTATION OF KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

CONNECTIVITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE CLUSTER

In this session, the OECD will present its key initial assessment findings for the focus topics within the Competitiveness Outlook's Connectivity and Infrastructure cluster. Those include policies to strengthen energy, transport and digital connectivity in the region, through the expansion of sustainable and resilient infrastructure. Based on its initial analysis of the main policy challenges, the OECD will identify priority areas for improvement and discuss possible policy recommendations.

Policy Dimension Contact Points and Statistical Office representatives from the Western Balkans who contributed to the assessment of the following Competitiveness Outlook policy dimensions are especially encouraged to join this session: (1) **Energy** policy; (2) **Transport** policy; and (3) **Digital** Society.

Presenters

- **Mr. Matija Lojpur**, Policy Analyst, OECD South East Europe Division

Open discussion

14:35-15:30

PRESENTATION OF KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT CLUSTER

In this session, the OECD will present its key initial assessment findings for the focus topics within the Competitiveness Outlook's Business Environment cluster. Those include policies to ease market entry, strengthen trade and investment policies, financial accessibility, taxation policies; and ensuring a level-playing field. Based on its initial analysis of the main policy challenges, the OECD will identify priority areas for improvement and discuss possible policy recommendations.

Policy Dimension Contact Points and Statistical Office representatives from the Western Balkans who contributed to the assessment of the following Competitiveness Outlook policy dimensions are especially encouraged to join this session: (1) **Investment** policy and promotion; (2) **Trade** policy; (3) **Access to finance**; (4) **Tax** policy; (5) **State-owned enterprises**; and (6) **Anti-corruption** policy.

Presenters

- **Ms. Zofia Polakiewicz**, Policy Analyst, OECD South East Europe Division
- **Mr. Benoit Dicharry**, Policy Analyst, OECD South East Europe Division
- **Ms. Alexandra Prokschy**, Policy Analyst, OECD South East Europe Division

Open discussion

15:30-16:15

PARALLEL SESSION 1: CONCLUDING TOUR-DE-TABLE

Room A

The Competitiveness Outlook Co-ordinators of each Western Balkan economy will be invited to reflect on the Competitiveness Outlook assessment process and how the assessment and presented initial findings can support policy making and reforms in the region.

Tour-de-table

- **Western Balkans 6 Competitiveness Outlook Co-ordinators**

15:30-16:15

PARALLEL SESSION 2: TECHNICAL SESSION WITH STATISTICAL OFFICE REPRESENTATIVES

Room B

(closed session)

The objective of this session is to discuss the data collection process, methodology and challenges experienced within the framework of the *Western Balkans Competitiveness Outlook 2024*. In that respect, the OECD team will present the data availability and gaps across different clusters, inviting Statistical Office representatives to share their views and exchange good practices.

- **Mr. Benoit Dicharry**, Policy Analyst, OECD South East Europe Division
- **Mr. Umur Gökçe**, Economic Advisor, OECD South East Europe Division

Tour-de-table

- ***Western Balkans 6 Competitiveness Outlook Statistical Office Co-ordinators***

16:15-16:30

CLOSING REMARKS

- **Ms. Sandrine Beauchamp**, Policy Officer, Private Sector and Green Economy, Thematic Support – Economic Development, DG NEAR, European Commission
- **Ms. Marzena Kisielewska**, Head of OECD South East Europe Division

19:30-21:30

NETWORKING DINNER

Meet-up at 19h30 in the lobby of the Marmara Pera hotel and short walk to the [Litera restaurant](#).