



AGENDA<sup>1</sup>

# Western Balkans Competitiveness Outlook 2024

## Fact-finding Meeting North Macedonia

**10 October 2023**  
**Skopje, North Macedonia**

Limak Hotel Skopje

Simultaneous interpretation will be provided

<sup>1</sup> 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 (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania and Serbia).

### ■ WHAT IS THE COMPETITIVENESS OUTLOOK?

Drawing on key OECD tools and standards, the [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 cluster: (1) Business environment; (2) Skills; (3) Greening; (4) Digitalisation and technology; (5) Connectivity and infrastructure.

The Competitiveness Outlook seeks to provide 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 lauded that the OECD Competitiveness Outlook's policy recommendations serve *"as guidance and inspiration for pursuing an ambitious, inclusive and sustainable reform agenda in the Western Balkans."*

### ■ THE MEETING

While the meeting will provide an overview of **North Macedonia's assessment status for all five thematic clusters** of the Competitiveness Outlook, it will in particular **focus on the skills cluster**, comprised of the (1) Education; (2) Employment; and (3) Science, technology and innovation policy dimensions.

The meeting aims to achieve **two main objectives**:

- 1) **Closing information gaps**: The discussions will focus on obtaining any remaining information necessary to enhance the understanding of the provided inputs, particularly for the dimensions related to the Skills cluster. This will help fill any information gaps and provide a more comprehensive assessment.
- 2) **Identifying achievements, challenges, and policy priorities**: The meeting will facilitate discussions among participants to identify and discuss key achievements and challenges, notably related to North Macedonia's skills system. Additionally, potential policy options will be explored, allowing for an exchange of ideas and perspectives on how to address the identified challenges through better skills policies that further enhance competitiveness.

### ■ WHO WILL BE THERE?

The meeting will bring together the National Competitiveness Outlook Co-ordinator, **policy makers** who contributed to the government self-assessment (in particular Dimension Contact Points) and representatives of the Statistical Office. Meeting participants will also include representatives of the European Commission and **non-government stakeholders** such as NGOs, private-sector and academia representatives.

#### Contacts

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**10 OCTOBER 2023**  
**FACT-FINDING MEETING**  
**LIMAK HOTEL SKOPJE**

**Objective** *The objective of the meeting is two-fold: Firstly, to gather necessary data and insights to bridge any existing information gaps identified by the OECD; and secondly, to identify and discuss notable achievements, challenges, and potential policy options for North Macedonia's skills system. By achieving these objectives, the meeting aims to enhance understanding, facilitate informed decision-making, and contribute to the overall improvement of North Macedonia's skills policies and its competitiveness more broadly.*

**08:30-09:00**    **REGISTRATION AND WELCOME COFFEE**

**09:00-09:30**    **OPENING REMARKS**

- **Ms. Elena Ivanovska**, State Advisor, Prime Minister's Office, Competitiveness Outlook Co-ordinator for North Macedonia
- **Ms. Maria Kanellopoulou**, First Counsellor, Head of Section Economic issues, Institution-Building, Cross-Border Cooperation, EU Delegation to North Macedonia
- **Mr. Umur Gökçe**, Economic Advisor, OECD South East Europe Division

**09:30-09:50**    **COMPETITIVENESS OUTLOOK 2024: BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND PROCESS**

The fourth edition of the Competitiveness Outlook will provide Western Balkan policy makers with a multi-dimensional benchmarking tool to compare their performance across 15 policy dimensions and enable them to design future policies based on rich evidence and actionable policy recommendations. The publication draws on inputs and feedback from both government and non-government stakeholders to create a balanced and informed analysis.

During this intervention, the OECD will provide a short recap of the Competitiveness Outlook methodology and familiarise stakeholders with the 2024 assessment process. The OECD will also highlight the data gaps across the 15 policy areas of the 2024 Competitiveness Outlook, with a focus on the three policy areas that make up the skills cluster: (1) Education policy; (2) Employment policy; and (3) Science, technology and innovation.

**Presenters:**

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

***Questions and answers***

**09:50-10:30**    **COMPETITIVENESS OUTLOOK 2024: TOUR-DE-TABLE OF DIMENSION CONTACT POINTS**

Each Dimension Contact Point as well as the National Statistical Office will be invited to provide an update on the data collection and highlight issues that they have encountered. They will be given the opportunity to ask questions, clarify any doubts and acquire insights on the data collection process.

**Moderator:**

- **Ms. Elena Ivanovska**, State Advisor, Prime Minister's Office, Competitiveness Outlook Co-ordinator for North Macedonia

### ***Tour-de-table***

- **Ms. Marina Mijovska**, Head of Sector, MAKSTAT, Competitiveness Outlook National Statistical Office Co-ordinator for North Macedonia
- **Competitiveness Outlook 2024 Dimension Contact Points**

**10:30-10:45**      **COFFEE BREAK**

**10:45-12:15**      **COMPETITIVENESS OUTLOOK 2024: KEY CHALLENGES & POLICY SOLUTIONS – SKILLS IN NORTH MACEDONIA**

The objective of this session is to **identify priority areas for improvement and explore possible policy interventions to strengthen North Macedonia’s skills system**. Open discussions will contribute to the fact-finding process by providing valuable information for policy development and decision-making that promote the development and effective use of relevant skills for more sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

#### **Moderator:**

- **Mr. Umur Gökçe**, Economic Advisor, OECD South East Europe Division

#### **Presenters:**

- **Ms. Alexandra Prokschy**, Policy Analyst, OECD South East Europe Division
- **Mr. Martin Kohtze**, Project Manager, OECD South East Europe Division

#### ***Open discussion***

**12:15-12:30**      **CLOSING REMARKS**

- **Ms. Elena Ivanovska**, State Advisor, Prime Minister’s Office, Competitiveness Outlook Co-ordinator for North Macedonia
- **Mr. Umur Gökçe**, Economic Advisor, OECD South East Europe Division

**12:30-13:30**      **LUNCH**