



AGENDA ¹

Western Balkans Competitiveness Outlook 2024

Fact-finding Meeting Albania

28 September 2023
Tirana, Albania

Tirana Marriott Hotel

Simultaneous interpretation will be provided



#OECDseeurope

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 (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 system; (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 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 not only *"as guidance and inspiration for pursuing an ambitious, inclusive and sustainable reform agenda in the Western Balkans"* but also *"provide a necessary and useful evidence base for the post-COVID-19 recovery of the region."*

■ THE MEETING

While the meeting will provide an overview of **Albania's assessment status for all five thematic clusters** of the Competitiveness Outlook's, it will in particular **zoom in 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 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, particularly within the skills cluster. Additionally, potential policy options will be explored, allowing for an exchange of ideas and perspectives on how to address the identified challenges and 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, academia representatives.

Contacts

Ms. Elma AGA
Policy Analyst
Tel: +(33-1) 45 24 74 36
Email: Elma.AGA@oecd.org

28 SEPTEMBER 2023

FACT-FINDING MEETING

TIRANA MARRIOTT HOTEL

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 the skills cluster. By achieving these objectives, the meeting aims to enhance understanding, facilitate informed decision-making, and contribute to the overall improvement of Albania's skills policies and its competitiveness more broadly.*

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

09:00-09:10 **OPENING REMARKS**

- **Mr. Endrit Yzeiraj**, Deputy Minister for Economy, Ministry of Finance and Economy, Albania

09:10-09:30 **INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

- **Ms. Elira Demiraj**, General Director of Economic Development, Ministry of Finance and Economy, Competitiveness Outlook Co-ordinator for Albania
- **Ms. Elsa Dhuli**, General Director, INSTAT, Competitiveness Outlook Statistical Office Co-ordinator for Albania
- **Ms. Ledia Muço**, Economic and Trade Advisor, EU Delegation to Albania
- **Mr. Umur Gökçe**, Economic Advisor, OECD South East Europe Division

09:30-09:45 **COMPETITIVENESS OUTLOOK 2024: BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVE 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, which contributes to the versatility and relevance of the assessment. During this intervention, the OECD will provide a short recap of the Competitiveness Outlook methodology and familiarize stakeholders with the 2024 assessment process.

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

Questions and answers

09:45-10:15 **TOUR-DE-TABLE OF DIMENSION CONTACT POINTS**

Each Dimension Contact Point 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, clarifying any doubts, and acquire insights on the data collection process.

Moderators:

- **Ms. Elira Demiraj**, General Director of Economic Development, Ministry of Finance and Economy, Competitiveness Outlook Co-ordinator for Albania
- **Ms. Elma Aga**, Policy Analyst, OECD South East Europe Division

- **Competitiveness Outlook 2024 Dimension Contact Points**

SESSION 1

10:15-11:10 COMPETITIVENESS OUTLOOK 2024: DATA GAPS – SKILLS POLICY IN ALBANIA

Drawing on the preliminary inputs collected in the 2024 Competitiveness Outlook assessment, the OECD will provide an overview of the policy landscape affecting skills in Albania by shedding light on the main policy developments that have occurred since the last Competitiveness Outlook assessment in 2021. The OECD will try to fill the data gaps on three policy areas that make up the skills cluster: (1) **Education policy**; (2) **Employment policy**; and (3) **Science, technology and innovation**.

The session will aim to **collect additional insights on ongoing and planned policy initiatives** with a view to have an accurate understanding of the policies, in particular relevant to skills. The session will contribute to the fact-finding process by providing a zoom-in on government priorities and recent achievements in the area of skills policy in Albania.

Moderator:

- **Ms. Elira Demiraj**, General Director of Economic Development, Ministry of Finance and Economy, Competitiveness Outlook Co-ordinator for Albania

Presenters:

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

Open discussion

11:10-11:25 COFFEE BREAK

SESSION 2

11:25-11:35 OPENING REMARKS

- **Ms. Olta Manjani**, Deputy Minister for Employment and Skills, Ministry of Finance and Economy, Albania

11:35-12:50 COMPETITIVENESS OUTLOOK 2024: KEY CHALLENGES & POLICY SOLUTIONS – SKILLS IN ALBANIA

The objective of this session is to **identify priority areas for improvement and explore possible policy interventions in skills policies**. Open discussions will contribute to the fact-finding process by providing valuable information for policy development and decision-making to enhance skills for a more sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

Moderator:

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

Presenters:

- **Ms. Elma Aga**, Policy Analyst, OECD South East Europe Division
- **Mr. Martin Kohtze**, Project Manager, OECD South East Europe Division
- **Mr. Ali-Fuad Turgut**, Project Manager, OECD South East Europe Division

Open discussion

12:50-13:00 CLOSING REMARKS

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

13:00-14:00

LUNCH