



# Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans

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# Digital Agenda - Key milestones

- July 2017 - At the Trieste Summit Western Balkans leaders endorsed for the first time digital integration as one of the components of the Multiannual Action Plan for a Regional Economic Area.
- February 2018 – The EU strategy for the Western Balkans was presented - one of the six flagship initiatives was the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans (DAWB).
- May 2018 - The Western Balkans governments declared their support for the Digital Agenda.
- June 2018 - The European Commission launched the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans at the Digital Assembly in Sofia, Bulgaria.
- April 2019 – Regional Roaming Agreement signed by all six economies.





## Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans

- In the Western Balkans strategy, the flagship "Digital agenda for the Western Balkans" identified 5 main priorities:
  - Lowering the cost of roaming
  - Deployment of broadband
  - Strengthening the digital economy and society
  - Capacity building in digital trust and security, digitalisation of industries
  - Adoption, implementation and enforcement of the EU acquis
- Work is done in close cooperation with the governments in the region and with the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC).





# Roaming

- 2 aspects:
  - Roaming within the region
  - Roaming between EU and WB
- Regional roaming
  - New agreement signed by all six at the Digital Summit in Belgrade on 4-5 April 2019.
    - Extension of existing roaming agreement from 4 to 6 (adding Albania and Kosovo\*).
    - Progressively lowering of tariffs down to Roam Like At Home by 2021.
- EU – WB roaming
  - No legal basis for an agreement and enforcement (until joining the EU).
  - Based on voluntary, commercial agreements between operators.
  - A need to address the economic environment of the telecom operators
    - Equal and fair treatment (no preference to incumbents).
    - Rule of law, enforcement of existing rules.
    - Harmonisation and market based fees for frequencies and building permits, etc.
    - Streamlining and simplification of procedures for investments and rollout



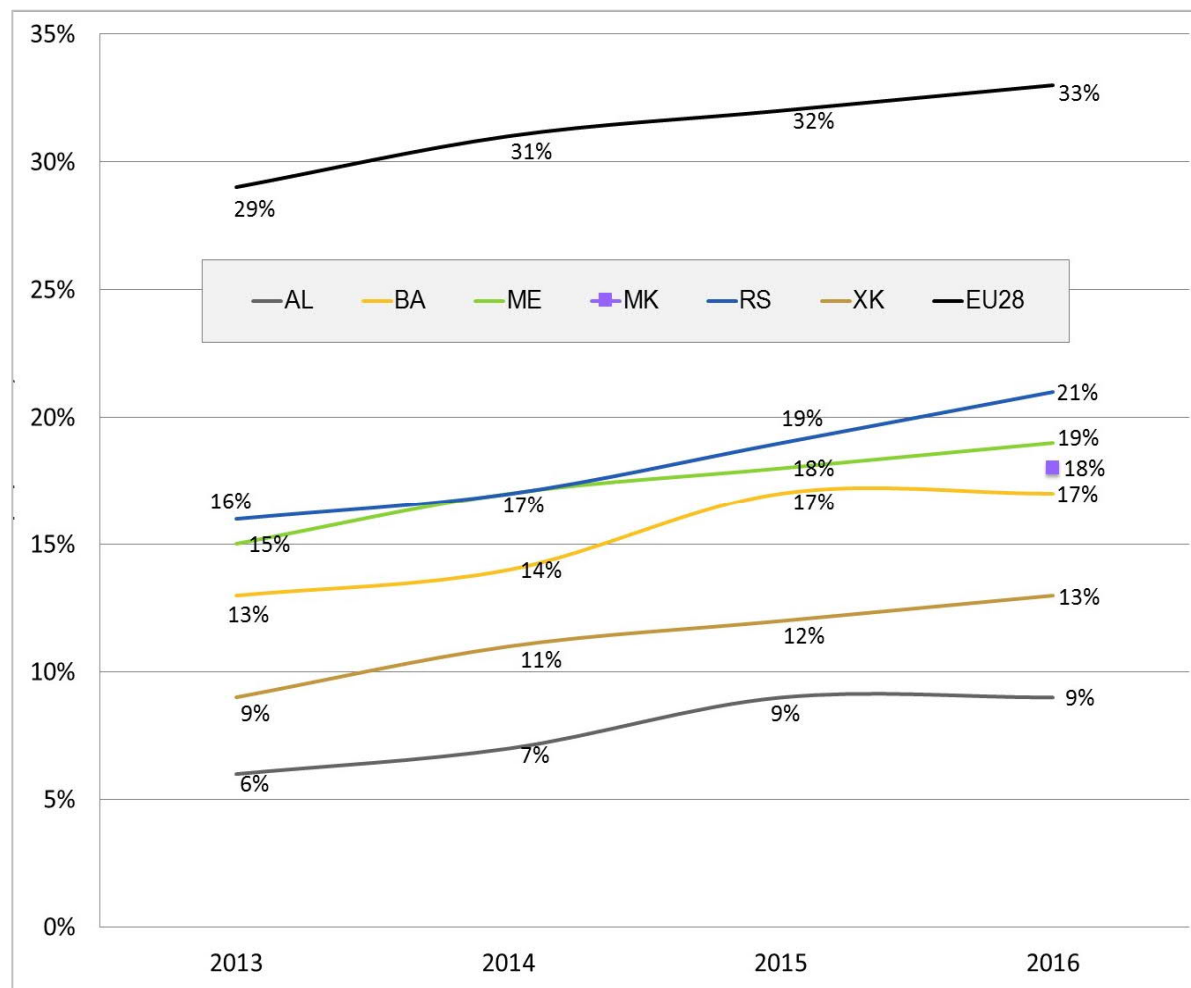


# Deployment of broadband

- A large digital gap between Western Balkans and the EU.
- Remote areas not well connected and in general low average speed.
- Broadband is foundation for the digital transformation (e.g. eGov, eHealth, digitalisation of industry, research and innovation, SMEs and start-ups, education, digital skills).
- Critical to economic growth in the region.
- Businesses – large and small – can reduce costs by relocating to rural regions, which increases local employment opportunities, tax revenues and investments.
- The basis for future developments – smart cities, autonomous vehicles, 5G roll-out, etc



## Broadband penetration rate (% of population)





## Strengthening the digital economy and society

Alignment with the EU in relevant areas and increased cooperation

- eGovernment action plan (Public Administrations)
- ISA programme for digital public services and cross-border interoperability
- eProcurement
- eHealth network

### Digital Skills

- Code Week (3 times more participants in 2018 vs 2017), bringing coding skills and digital literacy to the region
- Digital Opportunity Traineeships for students in WB
- Startup Europe Summit 2018 in Sofia, enabling regional startups to connect and network with major European hubs





# Cybersecurity & trust and digitalisation of industry

- The EU and the Western Balkan region have a common objective to improve online security and trust.
- Alignment with eIDAS regulation (eID)
- The Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans supports capacity building in trust and security.
- A Regional Cybersecurity project is expected to be adopted by the Commission in July. The aim is enhancing their cyber-resilience capacities.
- Digital Innovation Hubs - act as one-stop-shops where companies — especially SMEs and startups — get access to technology-testing, financing advice, market intelligence and networking opportunities.







# Enlargement & EU acquis

- In order to incorporate the region in existing EU networks:
  - WB6 is now participating in the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) to support telecom regulators.
  - The EU has opened the Broadband Competent Offices (BCO) network to the region to share the experiences from the EU Member States. – Important for Broadband.
  - Code Week – WB participation up with 300% 2018 vs 2017
  - Startup Europe Network
  - Digital Innovation Hubs
  - European Artificial Intelligence Alliance
  - EU Blockchain Observatory & Forum

