

Foreword from the European Commission

In February 2018, the Commission presented the new Western Balkans Strategy, confirming the European future of the region as a geostrategic investment in a stable, strong and united Europe based on common values. This was confirmed at the Zagreb Summit in May this year.

Education, culture, youth and sport, together with research and innovation, are recognised as essential drivers to boost the region's economic development, its competitiveness and social cohesion. This is why I will soon propose a comprehensive Agenda for the Western Balkans on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport. This long-term strategy will enhance human capital development and brain circulation, and foster transition to a sustainable and knowledge-based economy.

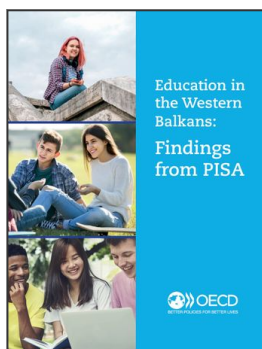
The strategy will underline the importance of solid evidence when developing inclusive and high quality education and training systems. The outcome of the comparative study in this report will be a crucial step towards the achievement of this objective. It is the result of a joint venture between the European Commission, the OECD and UNICEF, aiming to get maximum value from the 2018 PISA results, which saw the participation of the six Western Balkan countries for the first time.

This joint venture will help the region to identify gaps and develop measures to address its most pressing education needs: reduce the underachievement in basic skills, improve the management of schools, and upgrade teaching methods.

The study takes a special look at home learning and digital competences, just to highlight one success story. I am especially glad to see that digital literacy in the region has steadily improved over the years, with digital skills becoming an essential part of the everyday life of the younger generation.

Enjoy the report.

Commissioner Mariya Gabriel
European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth



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Findings from PISA

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