

# EDUCATION



The goal of the EU support to the education sector is to support education reform and help align it with the standards, policies and practices of EU countries, through building the capacity of educational institutions and education employees, aligning education with the needs of the labour market through the development of the qualifications system, the introduction of innovative and inclusive teaching practices and equipping schools with modern teaching aids. Education is considered the basis for creating new jobs, stimulating economic growth, developing individuals and society and strengthening social cohesion, as well as the basis for building a European identity respecting cultural and linguistic diversity.

## Assistance figures

**The European Union, as the largest donor in Serbia, supports the modernisation of the education system and its harmonisation with EU standards and practices. Since 2003, the EU has donated more than 100 million EUR for the improvement of pre-school education, vocational and adult education reform, renovation and refurbishing of schools and faculties, support for inclusive education, etc. The support from the European Union is implemented in cooperation with the Serbian Government.**

## Key projects

- ▶ Since 2019, Serbia takes part in the largest European education programme—**Erasmus+** as a full-fledge programme country, on the par with EU Member States. Students and teaching staff from Serbia participate in exchange and training programmes on an equal footing with their peers from the EU at all levels of education. Over 16,000 students and teachers from Serbia have been given an opportunity to study and train in European universities. Institutions from Serbia have attracted over 4,300 students and teachers from Europe.
- ▶ **The project Enhanced Equal Access to and Completion of Pre-University Education for Children in Need of Additional Support in Education, worth 4 mln EUR**, aims to enhance the quality of pre-university education for children with disabilities and from vulnerable groups. The intervention focuses on increasing the number of children with disabilities enrolled in mainstream education and improve the quality of education and additional support services in the education system.
- ▶ The European Union supports the **education system in facing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic**. The EU has donated nearly 2 million EUR to help the education system adapt to the challenges of distance learning. The Bridging Digital Divide in Serbia for the Most Vulnerable Children project focuses on the resilience of the education system to the effects of emergency situations, focusing on Roma children.
- ▶ EU invests in **educational infrastructure and the procurement of equipment for schools**. More than 300 primary and secondary schools were renovated. Numerous preschool institutions have been equipped with toys, furniture and teaching equipment. As many as 27 faculties and research centres have been provided with modern equipment. Numerous laboratories have been equipped, as well. Equipment for agricultural schools worth 2.8 million euros was purchased, which contributes to students' acquisition of practical knowledge and skills and prepares them for the labour market or continued education.
- ▶ In order to contribute to **quality education being available to every child**, the European Union has supported the engagement of pedagogical assistants to work with children who need additional help in education. In addition, over 1,000 high school students of the Roma national minority have received scholarships and better conditions for education.

## Priorities for Serbia

Serbia remains at a good level of preparation in the area of education and culture. Some progress was made by consolidating the national qualifications framework (NQF) system and taking some steps to ensure compliance of the quality assurance system in higher education with the recommendations of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

In the coming year, Serbia should in particular: increase participation in early childhood education and care, in particular of children from disadvantaged backgrounds; continue with the operationalisation of the NQF system, with additional focus on the quality and scope of non-formal education; ensure full compliance of the policy and institutional framework for quality assurance in higher education with the recommendations of the ENQA. The new Youth strategy until 2030 has been adopted and needs to be followed by an action plan and mechanisms to ensure inclusive monitoring and reporting. (Annual Report 2022)