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## 2.8 BILLION FROM THE EU TO SERBIA: 'THE BALKANS A PRIORITY IN THE NEXT PERIOD'

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The European Union, as the largest donor of financial aid, has given Serbia with a total of 2.8 billion worth of grants since 2007 through pre-accession funds. As well as being the main donor, the Union is also Serbia's largest trading partner.

The new EU budget for the period 2021 to 2027 treats the Western Balkans as a priority, the European Commission says.

The European Commission underlines that the EU's commitment to Serbia and the Western Balkans as a whole is reflected in political as well as economic support for the transformation processes.

As regards the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), the EU has allocated 2.8 billion for Serbia since 2007. At the same time, the European Investment Bank has guaranteed 2.8 billion of favourable loans since 1999, underlined the Commission's spokesperson Ana Pisonero.

In addition to grants and favourable loans aimed at transforming and meeting the required conditions for future EU membership, Serbia has received 210.2 million in grants through the Western Balkans Investment Framework, as a joint instrument of the European Commission, financial institutions and bilateral donors.

The largest amount of EU money allocated to Serbia goes to support reforms in the areas of democracy and governance, environment and energy, agriculture and rural development in the country, as well as the rule of law, education and transport, said the European Commission.

Some of the EU's biggest investments in transport infrastructure in Serbia include bridges, such as Sloboda, Gazela and Žeželj, followed by roads and border crossings.

EU investments can also be found in the segment of air and water purification in Serbia, solid waste disposal (Subotica, Sremska Mitrovica, Uzice), medical equipment, as well as funding for Erasmus+ student programmes and public administration reforms.

From 2014 to 2020, the EU has allocated 210.2 million to help civil society organisations in Serbia. In 2014 alone, the EU gave 210.2 million of humanitarian aid to mitigate the consequences of the devastating floods in Serbia.

The EU Delegation in Serbia says that Serbia, in the Western Balkans region, receives most of the EU money from the IPA funds. In addition to about 2.8 million from EU funds each year, the EU

Member States donated more than half a billion euro to Serbia between 2007 and 2016, while the EU Member States investments in Serbia, for the period 2014-2017 alone, amounted to €6 billion.

<https://www.serbianmonitor.com/en/2-8-billion-from-the-eu-to-serbia-the-balkans-a-priority-in-the-next-period/>

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