



## UK Rail Webinars on the Western Balkans

**Martin Vickers MP, The Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to the Western Balkans, The Department for International Trade (DIT), UK Export Finance (UKEF) and the Railway Industry Association (RIA) are pleased to announce rail webinar events covering five Western Balkans countries in two sessions, are now open to all UK railway suppliers to sign up to attend.**

Today, more than ever, rail infrastructure projects across the Western Balkans are being hailed as an integral part of their economic recovery plans for the region, with the potential for EU funded support, which may offer good opportunities for UK companies.

Please join us at these two webinars to learn from local officials about the key railway-focused initiatives and opportunities in Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia along with how UK Export Finance can support you.

### **Agenda and Timing:**

Session One - Wednesday 25th May, 13:30 – 15:30

- Martin Vickers (5mins)
- Albania (20mins)
- Kosovo (20mins)
- North Macedonia (20mins)
- UKEF (20mins)
- Martin Vickers close (5mins)
- 30mins contingency time

Session Two - Tuesday 7th June, 13:00 – 14:30

- Martin Vickers (5mins)
- Montenegro (20mins)
- Serbia (20mins)
- UKEF (20mins)
- Martin Vickers close (5mins)
- 30mins contingency time included

Each country speaker will take questions at the end of their presentation and a general Q&A session will follow ahead of the closing remarks.

### **Dates**

Wednesday 25th May  
- 13:30 – 15:30  
Tuesday 7th June  
- 13:00 – 14:30

### **Costs**

Free to attend.

### **Registration**

The event is open to all UK registered companies.

Registration in advance is required (open until 20 May).

### **[Register here](#)**

Please note you will be first required to create an account if you have not used the RIA booking system before.

On successful registration delegates will receive an automated email confirmation.

Registration will allow delegates to attend both sessions, although an actual MS Teams link for each webinar will be emailed directly to delegates the day before the event. Company registration information will be shared with the hosts.

The event will be recorded, and we expect presentations will be available afterwards for registered delegates.

## Country backgrounds:

**Albania** - After decades of disinvestment since the collapse of communism in Albania in 1991, the Albanian Government is working on plans for improvement of existing rail lines and the development of new ones. Backed by loans from EBRD, EIB and investment grants from the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF), the Albania Government aims to rehabilitate existing rail lines and create new routes. Work has already begun on a link between Albania's largest Port Durres and the country's capital Tirana. The aim of the Albanian Government is to connect the Albanian rail network to neighbouring countries, with planned connections to Greece and Kosovo. In October 2020, Kosovo and Albanian Governments signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) paving the way for the construction of a railway line that will link the Adriatic port of Durres to Pristina.

**Kosovo** - The railway network in Kosovo currently consists of 334 km of railway line, 103 km of which are freight-only. However, due to lack of investment and damage during the conflict, much of the network is not functioning. In recent years, there has been an increase in investment to renew some lines, including with loans from EBRD, EIB and investment grants from the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF). The new government is keen to rehabilitate and extend the railway network, with plans which include investing redeveloping inter-city lines, new passenger and freight terminals, and a major new line connecting Kosovo and the Albanian port of Durres.

**North Macedonia** - The railway infrastructure is old and aged. The Government has ambitious plans to renovate approximately 160 km of the existing railway network, mainly along Corridor 10 connecting Greece through North Macedonia with Serbia i.e. the Mediterranean Sea with the rest of Europe. The country plans to build an additional approximate 160 km of railways, mainly along Corridor 8 connecting Albania through North Macedonia with Bulgaria i.e. the Adriatic with the Black Sea. These corridors will strongly enhance goods and passenger movement in the country and around the Western Balkans region. The projects are at different phases and different levels of maturity. Total CAPEX is estimated around € 1.35 bn, with some of the funding secured from EBRD, WBIF, IPA etc.

**Montenegro** - The Government is planning a major increase in infrastructure projects following a strong economic rebound after COVID and the completion of a section of highway which had crowded out other investments. Montenegro's two railway lines connect to Serbia and Albania, effectively extending the EU TEN-T network to the Western Balkans. Around 50% of the railway line connecting Montenegro's Port of Bar to Serbia's capital Belgrade has been reconstructed and/or repaired, but slow speeds in some sections mean the 296 mile journey takes around 11 hours. The railway line connecting Montenegro to Albania is currently only used for freight but there are plans to expand to passenger traffic. There are also plans to extend Montenegro's railway network to Bosnia and Herzegovina, develop intramodality at the Port of Bar and renew rolling stock. The current railway project pipeline foresees a need for 510-million-euro investment. So far, investment has been financed through a mixture of EU loans and other financial instruments (e.g. Western Balkan Investment Framework), but the Government is exploring PPP options as well. You will obtain an insight into the national and regional investment opportunities in the sector, with a detailed overview of the different sub-sectors and the overall drivers of the investment agenda.

**Serbia** - After decades of disinvestment the Serbian government has embarked on an ambitious reconstruction of major railway assets. The Government recently opened a completely new high-speed line from Belgrade to Novi Sad which will extend to the Hungarian border and effectively connect Belgrade with Budapest and the rest of Europe. Backed with a 10-year 400 mil EUR engagement by the World Bank (2021), Serbia has committed strongly to strengthen the infrastructure and institutions in order to enable cleaner transport. Further ambitions within the Serbia 2025 investment plan include investing 700 million EUR in a line between Belgrade and Niš and an additional 2 billion EUR between Niš and North Macedonia.



UK Export  
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The voice of the UK rail supply community