

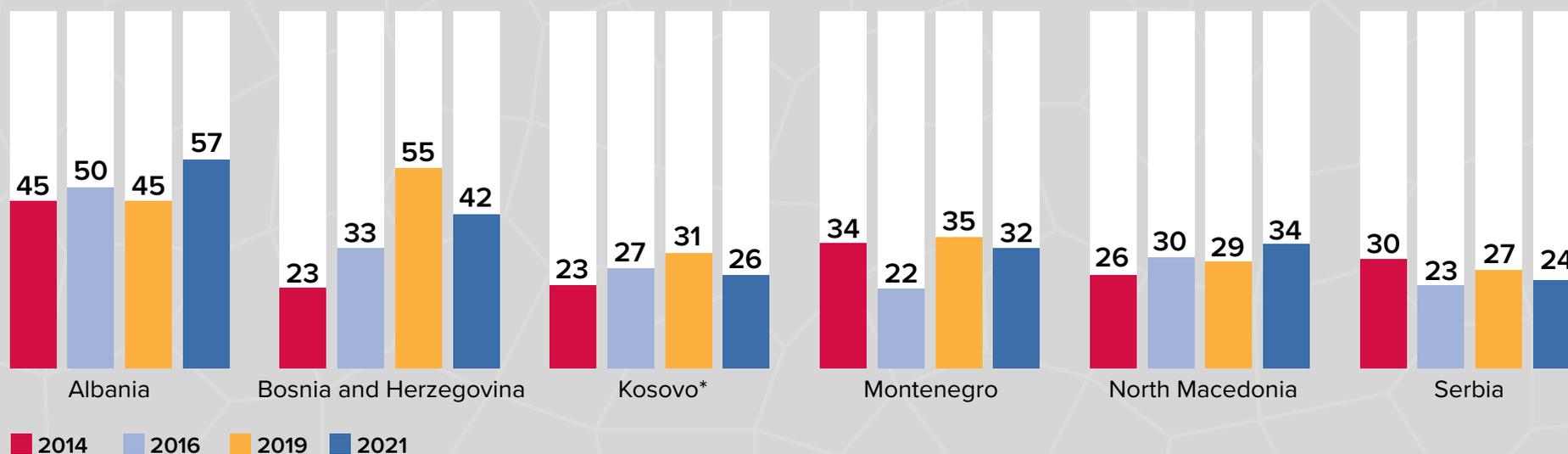
Tackling corruption and breaking the accession backlog in the Western Balkans

EU accession could provide a strong incentive for reforms

2019 SELDI Corruption Monitoring System (CMS) data showed that countries that could see the prize of accession to the EU on the horizon performed better in their fight against corruption. In 2021 this positive effect continues to be true for Serbia and Montenegro, which experience decrease in corruption pressure, but not so much for Albania and North Macedonia, where the corruption pressure increases. The latter two countries have in the past year seen their hopes for opening accession negotiations dashed.

CORRUPTION PRESSURE

in the Western Balkans remains high with mixed performance



No country should be admitted without achieving the rule of law conditionality

Upholding the rule of law should remain a core EU accession and membership conditionality, and no candidate country should be admitted in the Union before this objective is met. A persistent mechanism for enforcing EU's recommendations after accession should also be implemented. This could be achieved by extending the EU rule of law mechanism to the Western Balkans and providing regular monitoring.

- The CMS findings yet again point to the need to guarantee that the economic benefits of greater EU integration do not land in the pockets of a small clique of state capture actors. Anti-corruption reform efforts should be taken out of the grip of private interests dominating national governments.

Need of stringent monitoring of EU and national funds' distribution



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Source: SELDI Corruption Monitoring System, 2021.