

Methodological Note on the GEO-POWER-EU Interdependence Database

Purpose

The GEO-POWER-EU **Interdependence Database** has been created as a part of the GEO-POWER-EU project funded by the European Union. It maps how nine countries in the Western Balkans (WB6) and Eastern Partnership (EaP3) regions are linked to five major external actors: the EU, the US, China, Russia and Turkey. It covers political, economic, security and societal relations, and shows how these have evolved from 2007 to 2024. The Interdependence Database shows the evolution of linkages, with a focus on the most recent developments. The database explores bilateral relations between nine countries and external actors. It does not include indicators that characterise individual countries or relations between/among individual WB6 and EaP3 countries.

The GEO-POWER EU Interdependence Database understands '*interdependence*' as relationships evident from tangible links such as:

- o institutional arrangements at the level of states (agreements, contracts, membership of intergovernmental organisations) and sub-state actors close to power (political parties, business associations, diaspora, civil society);
- o practices (e.g. aligned voting in intergovernmental fora, joint exercises or deployments);
- o exchanges (export-import, people, political meetings).

Linkages are a prerequisite for the exercise of influence. However, their establishment does not guarantee that influence.

Countries covered

The nine countries included in the mapping of interdependence, and referred to as '*countries*' are the following:

- o six Western Balkans (WB6) countries: Albania (AL), Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA), Montenegro (ME), North Macedonia (MK), Serbia (RS), Kosovo (XK);
- o three Eastern Partnership countries (EaP3): Georgia (GE), Moldova (MD), Ukraine (UA).

External actors include the EU, the US (US), China (CN), Russia (RU), Turkey (TR).

The data have been collected for the EU as a whole (or a total of 27 member states according to the current country composition), with exceptions mentioned in the notes related to individual indicators.

The data for Ukraine have been presented without the territories occupied by Russia. Historical data on Russia have been collected to capture its influence aspirations prior to the occupation of Crimea and the war. This does not suggest a position with regard to the territorial implications of the war, but reflects the reality of data collection.

Time period covered

The Interdependence Database covers annual data for 2007-2024, conditional on data availability, with a greater focus on the most recent three to five years. Data collection on an annual basis enables users to identify patterns and highlight particular years when linkages intensified.

The database will be updated annually with information about new linkages under examination until the end of the project. The next release is expected in May 2026.

Sources of information

The consortium members of the GEO-POWER-EU project collected data from available public sources, including official sources such as websites of parliaments, relevant ministries and national statistics offices, as well as by searching other public sources and requesting information from responsible authorities. The data were supplemented with information already provided in various specialised international databases. Detailed source and methodology documentation by indicator or even by data entry (if available) represent an integrated part of the online database under <https://geo-power.eu/research-output/database> and can be found for each indicator, in the *Data sources and metadata* section.

Consortium members, responsible for data collection:

wiiw – The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies – overall coordination of the Interdependence Database, data collection from international data sources;

Center for Advanced Studies Southeast Europe (CAS SEE), University of Rijeka (UniRi) – coordination;

Institute for Democracy ‘Societas Civilis’ – Skopje – Albania, North Macedonia;

Democratization Policy Council (DPC) – Bosnia and Herzegovina;

University of Belgrade – Faculty of Political Science (FPN) – Montenegro, Serbia;

VE Insight – Kosovo, assistance in data collection on Albania;

Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (GFSIS) – Georgia;

Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS) ‘Viitorul’ – Moldova;

Odesa I. I. Mechnikov National University (ONU) – Ukraine.

Limitations

As data in the Interdependence Database have been collected from various public sources and through requests, they may not provide comprehensive and complete coverage for individual indicators.

Definition of dimensions of interdependence

Building on the typologies of Levitsky & Way (2010) and Bieber & Tzifakis (2020), for analytical reasons relationships have been examined within four groups of linkages: political,

security, economic and societal. Below, you will find more detailed description of linkages explored under those four groups.

1. Political:

- 1.1. political agreements,
- 1.2. membership/participation in multilateral initiatives and international organisations in which certain external actors exert heavy influence,
- 1.3. frequency of high-level meetings/contacts (e.g. at government/head of state level),
- 1.4. diplomatic missions and their size,
- 1.5. alignment with EU foreign policy declarations,
- 1.6. agreements/cooperation at political party level (i.e. party-to-party relations).

2. Security:

Security cooperation includes bilateral and multilateral cooperation beyond military relations:

- 2.1. agreements at the level of states and state security agencies that are authorised to use force and surveillance (e.g. armed forces, police etc.), and institutionalised cooperation in response to specific security threats (e.g. cybersecurity, organised crime),
- 2.2. arms and security equipment transfers (procurement, donations),
- 2.3. security practices (e.g. joint exercises, deployments) or transnational repression (extraditions of individuals at serious risk of being subjected to the death penalty, torture or other inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment).

Economic:

- 3.1. economic agreements (e.g. free trade, investment agreement, visa-free travel as a proxy for people mobility),
- 3.2. flows of trade in goods and services, investments, development assistance, remittances; bilateral external debt,
- 3.3. business association links.

Societal:

- 4.1. flows of information via media (e.g. foreign media broadcasting in local languages; agreements between foreign media and local media to reproduce news),
- 4.2. cultural programme ties (cultural institutes and their density, scholarships etc.),
- 4.3. people-to-people contacts (bilateral migration, diaspora links, student exchanges),
- 4.4. civil society ties (civil society organisations),
- 4.5. opinion polls.

Certain types of interdependence may be conditioned not just through the relations in that domain, but also through dependencies created in other spheres. For example, security relations are also affected by political and economic arrangements, energy dependence etc. However, for reasons of clarity, the same indicator has not been included under two dimensions of interdependence (e.g. visa-free travel arrangements as both an indicator of political and economic relationships).

Suggested citation

GEO-POWER-EU (2025). Interdependence Database. <https://geo-power.eu/research-output/database> (accessed: date)

List of collected indicators

The GEO-POWER-EU Interdependence Database contains 60 indicators:

- 12 relate to the political dimension,
- 13 relate to the security dimension,
- 20 relate to the economic dimension,
- 15 relate to the societal dimension.

The full list of indicators with codes and definitions is given in the four tables below. For each indicator, there is an indicator number that defines the appearance order in the visualisation app, an indicator name that appears in an indicator selection filter, an indicator definition that appears in the visualisation app at the right-hand side of the screen when an indicator is selected and an indicator code (visible only in downloaded data files).

1. Political dimension

No.	Indicator name	Definition	Indicator code
1.1	Political agreements	Major political agreements between a WB6 or EaP3 country and an external actor, covering relations in multiple policy areas. Indicator shows the number of signed agreements in a particular year. Economic agreements (e.g. free trade and bilateral investment treaties, visa liberalisation agreements) and security agreements are excluded.	P_AGR
1.2	Leader meetings	The number of meetings of the predominant leaders of each WB6 or EaP3 country with his/her counterpart in each external actor.	P_MEETINGS_CAT2
1.3	Diplomatic missions of external actors	Number of diplomatic missions of external actors in WB6 and EaP3 countries.	P_DIPL_ACTORS_POSTS
1.4	Level of diplomatic missions of external actors	Diplomatic missions of external actors in a WB6 or EaP3 country, levels of representation according to following codes: 1 - ambassador, nuncio or secretary of the People's Bureau; singular focus; 0.75 - unknown, chargé d'affaires or minister; singular focus; 0.0 – expelled, recalled, withdrawn.	P_DIPL_ACTORS_LOR
1.5	Employees in diplomatic missions of external actors	Number of employees in diplomatic missions of external actors in a WB6 or EaP3 country.	P_DIPL_ACTORS_NUM
1.6	Diplomatic missions of countries	Number of WB6 and EaP3 countries' diplomatic missions in external actors.	P_DIPL_TARGET_POSTS
1.7	Level of diplomatic missions of WB6 & EaP3 countries	Diplomatic missions of WB6 or EaP3 countries in external actors' countries, levels of representation according to following codes: 1 - ambassador, nuncio or secretary of the People's Bureau; singular focus; 0.75 - unknown, chargé d'affaires or minister; singular focus; 0.0 – expelled, recalled, withdrawn.	P_DIPL_TARGET_LOR
1.8	Employees in diplomatic missions of countries	Number of employees in WB6 and EaP3 countries' diplomatic missions in external actors.	P_DIPL_TARGET_NUM
1.9	External actor-led multilateral initiatives and organisations	Number of multilateral initiatives and international organisations under the influence of external actors in which a WB6 or EaP3 country participates (or is a member).	P_MULTI
1.10	EU foreign policy alignment, in %	Alignment rate (in percentage terms) of each WB6 and EaP3 country with EU common foreign policy declarations.	P_EU_VOTE
1.11	Party-to-party relations	Number of formal cooperation agreements between political parties in a WB6 or EaP3 country and political parties in an external actor.	P_PARTY_FORMAL
1.12	Party-to-party informal ties	Number of informal cooperation events between political parties in a WB6 or EaP3 country and in an external actor.	P_PARTY_INFORMAL

2. Security dimension

No.	Indicator name	Definition	Indicator code
2.1	Multilateral defence alliances and initiatives	Participation of WB6 and EaP countries in multilateral defence alliances and cooperation initiatives under the influence of an external actor, number of participations in a reference year.	S_MIL_MULTI_COOP
2.2	Agreements on military cooperation	Agreements between a WB6 or EaP country and an external actor on defence/military cooperation. Indicator shows the number of agreements in force in a reference year. Agreements that have been signed but did not enter into force have been added to the dataset and have been counted only once (in the year in which they were signed). For the EU, agreements at EU level and individual member state level have been counted.	S_MIL_AGR
2.3	Military bases	The number of military bases of external actors inside the WB6 and EaP3 countries.	S_MIL_BASES
2.4	Deployment of military troops	Deployment of military troops (number of persons) of external actors inside the WB6 and EaP3 countries.	S_MIL_TROOPS
2.5	Military operations	Participation of WB6 and EaP3 countries in bilateral and multilateral military operations under the leadership of external actors outside the WB6 and EaP3 countries.	S_MIL_OPER
2.6	Military equipment transfers	Military equipment transfers from external actors to WB6 and EaP3 countries (value). Each transfer is measured by the import values in USD (TIV – trend indicator value), describing military capabilities, the fullest dataset combined by SIPRI from various sources. SIPRI TIV figures do not represent the actual sale prices for arms transfers.	S_MIL_EQ_TRANSFER_VALUE
2.7	Military equipment transfer, external actors' share	Military equipment transfers from external actors to WB6 and EaP3 countries (share of total transfers to WB6 and EaP3 countries, in %). Each transfer is initially measured by the import values in USD (TIV – trend indicator value), describing military capabilities, the fullest dataset combined by SIPRI from various sources. SIPRI TIV figures do not represent the actual sale prices for arms transfers.	S_MIL_EQ_TRANSFER_SHARE
2.8	Joint military exercises	Joint military exercises (number) of an external actor and a WB6 or EaP country, inside or outside the country.	S_MIL_EXERCISES
2.9	Multilateral police cooperation	Participation of WB6 and EaP3 countries in multilateral police cooperation arrangements under the influence of an external actor, number of participations in a reference year.	S_POLICE_MULTI_COOP
2.10	Agreements on police cooperation	Agreements between a WB6 or EaP country and an external actor on police/law enforcement cooperation. Indicator shows the number of agreements in force in a reference year. Agreements that have been signed but did not enter into force have been added to the dataset and have been counted only once (in the year in which they were signed).	S_POLICE_AGR
2.11	Agreements on justice cooperation	Agreements between a WB6 or EaP country and an external actor on justice cooperation. Indicator shows the number of agreements in force in a reference year. Agreements that have been signed but did not enter into force have been added to the dataset and have been counted only once (in the year in which they were signed).	S_JUSTICE_AGR
2.12	Agreements on other types of security cooperation	Agreements between a WB6 or EaP country and an external actor on other forms of security cooperation. Indicator shows the number of agreements in force in a reference year. Agreements that have been signed but did not enter into force have been added to the dataset and have been counted only once (in the year in which they were signed).	S_OTHER_AGR
2.13	Transnational repressions	Number of cases of transnational repression by external actors in WB6 or EaP countries (extraditions of individuals at serious risk of being subjected to the death penalty, torture or other inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment etc.).	S_REPRESSIONS

3. Economic dimension

No.	Indicator name	Definition	Indicator code
3.1	Free trade agreements	The number of full free trade agreements between a WB6 or EaP country and an external actor, which are in force in a particular year.	E_FTA
3.2	Bilateral investment treaties	Number of bilateral investment treaties (BITs) between a WB6 or EaP country and an external actor in force in a particular year. BITs include agreements entered into force before, in, or after 2007 that are still in force. Agreements signed after 2007 that are not yet in force are not included.	E_BIT
3.3	Visa liberalisation agreements	Number of visa liberalisation agreements between a WB6 or EaP3 country and an external actor that entered into force in a particular year.	E_VISAFREE_AGR
3.4	Visa-free entry to external actors	Existence of visa-free entry to external actors for passport holders of WB6 and EaP3 countries (1 – yes, 0 – no).	E_VISAFREE_ACTORS
3.5	Visa-free entry to WB6 and EaP3 countries	Existence of visa-free entry to WB6 and EaP3 countries for passport holders of external actors (1 – yes, 0 – no).	E_VISAFREE_TARGET
3.6	Exports of goods, in % of country's GDP	Exports of goods of a WB6 or EaP3 country to an external actor, in % of WB6 or EaP3 country's GDP.	E_EXP_GOODS_GDP
3.7	Imports of goods, in % of country's GDP	Imports of goods by a WB6 or EaP3 country from an external actor, in % of WB6 or EaP3 country's GDP.	E_IMP_GOODS_GDP
3.8	Exports of raw materials, in % of country's GDP	Exports of raw materials of a WB6 or EaP3 country to an external actor, in % of WB6 or EaP3 country's GDP. Primary commodities (SITC 0 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 68) include: 0 Food and live animals, 1 Beverages and tobacco, 2 Crude materials, inedible, except fuels, 3 Mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials, 4 Animal and vegetable oils, fats and waxes, 68 Non-ferrous metals.	E_EXP_GOODS_PRIMARY_GDP
3.9	Imports of raw materials, in % of country's GDP	Imports of raw materials by a WB6 or EaP3 country from an external actor, in % of WB6 or EaP3 country's GDP. Primary commodities (SITC 0 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 68) include: 0 Food and live animals, 1 Beverages and tobacco, 2 Crude materials, inedible, except fuels, 3 Mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials, 4 Animal and vegetable oils, fats and waxes, 68 Non-ferrous metals.	E_IMP_GOODS_PRIMARY_GDP
3.10	Exports of services, in % of country's GDP	Exports of services of a WB6 or EaP3 country to an external actor, in % of WB6 or EaP3 country's GDP.	E_EXP_SERVICES_GDP
3.11	Imports of services, in % of country's GDP	Imports of services of by a WB6 or EaP3 country from an external actor, in % of WB6 or EaP3 country's GDP.	E_IMP_SERVICES_GDP
3.12	FDI inward stock, in % of country's GDP	Inward foreign direct investment (FDI) stock of a WB6 or EaP3 country from an external actor, in % of WB6 or EaP3 country's GDP.	E_FDI_INWARD_STOCK_GDP
3.13	Investments from China, in % of country's GDP	China Global Investment Tracker value of investments from China to a WB6 or EaP3 country, in % of WB6 or EaP3 country's GDP.	E_INV_CHINA_GDP
3.14	Investment projects from China	China Global Investment Tracker number of investment projects from China in a WB6 or EaP3 country.	E_INV_CHINA_NUM
3.15	Gross external debt, in % of country's GDP	Gross external debt of a WB6 or EaP3 country owed to an external actor, in % of WB6 or EaP3 country's GDP. Total external debt is debt owed to non-residents, the sum of public, publicly guaranteed and private non-guaranteed long-term debt, use of IMF credit, and short-term debt (original maturity of one year or less and interest in arrears on long-term debt). The EU includes data for the EU as a whole, individual 27 EU member states, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank and European Relief Fund.	E_EXT_DEBT_STOCK_GDP
3.16	Remittances, in % of country's GDP	Remittances flow from an external actor to a WB6 or EaP3 country in a particular year, in % of WB6 or EaP3 country's GDP.	E_REMITTANCES_GDP

3.17	Official development assistance, USD m	Official development assistance (ODA), OECD definition, USD m. Grants or loans that are undertaken by the official sector at concessional terms (i.e. with a grant element of at least 25%) and that have the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as their main objective. Technical cooperation is included; support for military purposes is excluded. Aid disbursements indicator by OECD for the EU, the US and Turkey. For China, ODA-like assistance, attributed to the commitment year, only projects with indicated values, data partly estimated. For Russia, partly harmonised to OECD definition.	E_DEV_ASSISTANCE_INT
3.18	Business associations of external actors	The list of business associations (e.g. chambers of commerce) of external actors present in a WB6 or EaP3 country in 2024.	E_BUSINESS_ACTORS
3.19	Business associations of WB6 and EaP3 countries	The list of business associations (e.g. chambers of commerce) of WB6 or EaP3 countries present in external actors in 2024.	E_BUSINESS_TARGET
3.20	Compromised investments	The number of investment agreements between a WB6 or EaP3 country with an external actor with confidential content or cases of compromised investment from external actors. Indicator shows the number of agreements signed or cases occurred in a particular year.	E_CONFIDENTIAL_INV_AGR

4. Societal dimension

No.	Indicator name	Definition	Indicator code
4.1	Foreign media in local languages	The number and type of foreign outlets of external actors, broadcasting in local languages of WB6 or EaP3 countries in 2024.	SOC_M_MEDIA
4.2	Media agreements	The number and type of agreements regarding media cooperation and exchange information between a WB6 or EaP3 country and an external actor. Indicator shows the number of agreements signed in a particular year.	SOC_M_MEDIA_AGR
4.3	Cultural institutions of external actors	The presence of cultural institutions of external actors in WB6 or EaP3 target countries in a particular year, number. Presence assumed to start from 2007 if no starting year has been defined.	SOC_CULTURE
4.4	Educational ties – scholarships	The number and type of scholarships and educational programmes offered by external actors to students from a WB6 or EP3 country, available in a particular year.	SOC_EDU
4.5	Students	Educational exchange – tertiary education students from WB6 and EaP3 countries in external actors (number of persons).	SOC_EDU_STUDENT_NUM
4.6	Students relative to population	Educational exchange – tertiary education students from WB6 and EaP3 countries in external actors, per 10,000 inhabitants of a WB6 or EaP3 country.	SOC_EDU_STUDENT_REL
4.7	International migrants in external actors	The number of international migrants from a WB6 or EaP3 country in an external actor, persons, international migrant stock according to the definition used and estimated by the Population Division of the United Nations.	SOC_MIGR_STOCK_ACTORS
4.8	International migrants as a share of external actors' population	The number of international migrants from a WB6 or EaP3 country in an external actor, per thousand inhabitants of an external actor, international migrant stock according to the definition used and estimated by the Population Division of the United Nations.	SOC_MIGR_STOCK_ACTORS_REL
4.9	International migrants from WB6 and EaP3 countries	The number of international migrants from an external actor in a WB6 or EaP3 country, persons, international migrant stock according to the definition used and estimated by the Population Division of the United Nations.	SOC_MIGR_STOCK_TARGET
4.10	International migrants as a share of WB6 and EaP3 countries' population	The number of international migrants from an external actor in a WB6 or EaP3 country, per thousand inhabitants of a WB6 or EaP3 country, international migrant stock according to the definition used and estimated by the Population Division of the United Nations.	SOC_MIGR_STOCK_TARGET_REL
4.11	Diaspora links	Diaspora links, population from WB6 and EaP3 countries in external actors, persons. For the EU, foreign population by citizenship; for the US, by city of birth; for Russia, by citizenship, data from population census 2010 and 2020; for Turkey, by country of birth.	SOC_DIASP_ACTOR
4.12	Diaspora links – share in foreign population	Diaspora links, population from WB6 and EaP3 countries in external actors, share in total foreign population of external actors. For the EU, foreign population by citizenship; for the US, by city of birth; for Russia, by citizenship, data from population census 2010 and 2020; for Turkey, by country of birth.	SOC_DIASP_ACTOR_REL
4.13	Civil society organisations of external actors	Civil society organisations from external actors registered and operating in WB6 or EaP3 countries, number of active institutions in a particular year. Presence assumed to start from 2007 if no starting year has been defined.	SOC_CIVILSOC
4.14	Opinion polls	Opinion poll list of WB6 and EaP3 countries, containing an assessment of attitude towards external actors.	SOC_OPINION

4.15	Foreign authoritarian influence	Foreign authoritarian influence, number of incidents in WB6 and EaP3 countries. The Authoritarian Interference Tracker catalogues the Russian and Chinese governments' activities to undermine democracy using five tools: information manipulation, cyber operations, malign finance, civil society subversion and economic coercion.	SOC_FOR_INFLUENCE
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