

FOREWORD

Dear Reader,

Before you is the 2025 edition of the White Book, the leading publication of the Foreign Investors Council and a platform through which we continue the dialogue between policy makers, institutions and the wider business community. The latest edition of the White Book reflects our shared commitment to improving competitiveness, strengthening resilience and connecting the country more strongly with Europe, both in terms of legislation and in terms of supply chains.

After a record 2024 in terms of the amount of foreign direct investments (FDI), this year has shown us the challenges of doing business in a very turbulent environment. Tougher financial conditions, technological changes, geopolitical tensions, rapidly growing regulatory requirements present a challenge to everyone. All this is also reflected in Serbia where the amount of FDI was decreased in the first 8 months of this year compared to the same period last year.

We can all agree that all these negative trends further necessitate urgent establishment of a stable and predictable business climate in Serbia, the associated stable regulatory framework, further modernization and digitalization of the economy.

But progress in these areas must be deliberate, sustainable and measurable, based on real evidence.

In this regard, this year's results presented in the FIC White Book map key areas where additional commitment is needed from all key decision makers.

This year's edition records 461 recommendations, and the most significant progress was achieved in the areas of digitalization, telecommunications and energy. We especially highlight the work on the laws concerning the e-sick leave, information security, as well as the adoption of the Strategy for the Development of Artificial Intelligence.

However, no progress has been recorded in 74% of the areas, which clearly indicates that it is time to accelerate essential reforms. More efficient application of existing laws, reduction of parafiscal levies, strengthening of legal certainty and fight against gray economy are needed.

Serbia must increase the share of domestic private investments, especially through the inclusion of small and medium-sized enterprises in global value chains. Only a symbiosis of foreign, state and local investments can ensure long-term growth and stability.

As President of the Council, I believe that harmonization with EU regulation is key to reducing geopolitical risks and strengthening investor confidence. FIC remains a committed partner to the Government of Serbia in this process, with a clear focus on digital transformation, green transition, ESG principles, as well as human resource development.

I invite you to view this publication not only as a report, but as a tool for change. Every recommendation in this year's White Book is a call to action, and that's why I believe that together we can shape a business environment that will be an example in the region.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ronald Seeliger
FIC President