

Western Balkan Sustainable Charter

The Western Balkan 6's energy sector cannot be entirely focused on power generation. In order to improve prosperity, health and jobs (especially in small and medium enterprises), cleaner environment and transition towards the low-carbon and climate-resilient development, the Western Balkan 6 countries agree to tap into their high potential for energy savings and renewable energy generation. This will also help the countries meet their commitments made at the December COP-21 summit.

Under the Energy Community Treaty, the Energy Efficiency Directives (2012/27/EU, 2010/30/EU, 2010/31/EU) as well as the Renewable Energy Directive are being applied with the similar level of ambition and the same binding effect to the WB6 countries as in the EU. The WB6 countries are currently exploring the best way for improving their systems for monitoring, reporting and planning their energy and climate policies and aligning them with the Emissions Monitoring Regulation (Regulation (EU) No 525/2013).

We accept that EU funding will be directed with priority to the best performing countries, in terms of legal and regulatory framework implementation, sufficient administrative capacity of their administration, and an enabling environment regarding energy efficiency investments.

We, the WB6 countries pledge also our highest political commitment to implement the reform measures required, and give the assurance that we will allocate the necessary resources needed to match the EU contribution.

By the signing up to these commitments, the WB6 countries commit to efforts to increase the sustainability of national and regional energy markets as well as their generation and consumption patterns, while the ongoing efforts to reform and integrate electricity markets be stepped up at the same time. In line with the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change, this Declaration defines the steps for implementing an enhanced agenda leading to energy efficiency improvements and larger use of renewable energy in the region. This will be crucial not only for delivering the commitments made by the majority of WB6 countries under the Paris Agreement but will also contribute to the global response to climate change.

The WB6 countries ask the Secretariat of the Energy Community to help them coordinating and implementing the commitments under this Declaration, and to monitor the implementation.

The following three conditions will help to develop a more sustainable energy sector:

- 1. Improve the governance for energy efficiency.**
- 2. Implement smart support measures improving sustainability of energy systems.**
- 3. Foster climate action and transparency of sustainable energy markets.**

1. Each WB6 country will enhance its framework for promoting energy efficiency by means of¹

- Removing legal and regulatory barriers through amending or developing new legislation that will enable and promote ESCO (“energy service companies”) contracts, and with this, developing energy services markets (by June 2017);
- Fully implementing the Energy Performance in Buildings Directive, especially in area of setting minimum energy performance standards as a pre-requisite for large scale buildings rehabilitation programmes (by June 2017);
- Establishing well targeted programmes for public and residential buildings rehabilitation to the minimum energy performance and beyond, with particular focus on increasing the use of locally available renewable energy sources (decentralized solar-thermal heating, efficient biomass heating, high efficient heat pumps etc.) (March 2018);
- Assessing in details the possibilities for developing new or converting existing district or central heating and cooling systems using renewable energy, such as biomass or geothermal (November 2018);
- Analysing the establishment of appropriate financing mechanisms, including, if feasible, a state level fund for co-financing of energy efficiency measures resulting from the Energy Efficiency Directive 2012/27/EU especially in the public sector (by June 2018).

2. Each WB6 country will develop and implement smart support measures aimed at improving the sustainability of their energy systems by means of:

- Designing and implementing market based support schemes for the promotion of renewable energy, where needed, therefore ensuring a more cost-effective renewable energy deployment compliant with the Energy Community rules (June 2017);
- Developing effective strategies enabling the voluntary participation and engagement of citizens in renewable energy projects (June 2018);
- Developing suitable information, awareness-raising, guidance in order to inform citizens of the benefits and practicalities of developing and using energy from renewable sources (June 2018);
- Including energy efficiency and use of renewable resources in the curriculum in education and offering professional training (June 2019);
- Developing a strategy for collection and use of municipal waste for electricity and heat generation, in both public and private sectors (November 2018);
- Developing national skills and qualifications for small and medium enterprises / individuals to do business in the areas of energy efficiency and renewable (building assessors, energy auditors, installers etc.), by setting up qualification/ accreditation/ or certification schemes (June 2018).

¹ The proposed actions are all stemming from the obligations assumed under the Energy Community Treaty regarding the Energy Efficiency Directive 2012/27/EU and the Energy Performance in Buildings Directive 2010/31/EU.

3. Each WB6 country will continue working towards the implementation of robust domestic greenhouse gas emissions monitoring and reporting systems in line with EU legislation and improve transparency in sustainable energy markets by

- Reviewing the national greenhouse gas emissions monitoring and reporting systems with a view to align with the Regulation (EU) No 525/2013;
- Identifying gaps between current practices in monitoring, reporting and planning on climate and energy policies domestically and meeting the international reporting obligations;
- Establishing national indicative roadmaps for implementing measures required to increase investor confidence in sustainable energy markets;
- Strengthening the capacity of national administrative authorities to oversee and govern the national and regional sustainable energy markets in an independent, proactive and transparent manner.

* * * * *