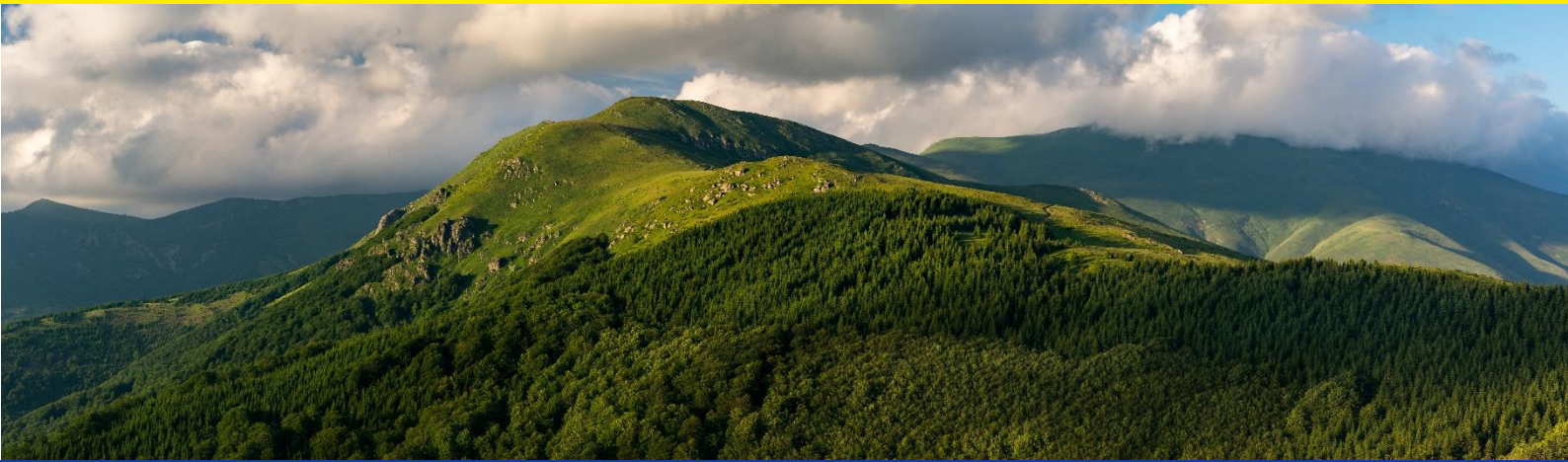




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EU4 Energy Transition: Covenant of Mayors in the Western Balkans and Türkiye

Open Regional Fund for South-East Europe – Energy, Transport and Climate Protection

Commitment to Energy Transition

The European Union is committed to support countries in South-East Europe, the Black Sea region and beyond in their energy system development in the light of climate protection. This includes the establishment of a stable regulatory and market framework, the creation of an integrated energy market, the enhancement of the security of energy supply, the improvement of the environmental situation in the region as well as fostering the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency.

EU4 Energy Transition: Covenant of Mayors in the Western Balkans and Türkiye is supporting this approach by conducting a series of activities and services in the target countries. Overall, the project is a Multi Donor Action, jointly co-financed by the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by GIZ in the Western Balkans as part of the Open Regional Fund for South-East Europe – Energy, Transport and Climate Protection (ORF-ETC) and by CPMA in Türkiye.



Project name	EU4 Energy Transition: Covenant of Mayors in the Western Balkans and Türkiye as part of the <i>Open Regional Fund for South-East Europe – Energy, Transport and Climate Protection</i>
Partner Countries	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia + Türkiye
Volume	EUR 9.335 million (EUR 8 million of European Commission; EUR 1.335 million of BMZ)
Duration	1 March 2021 to 28 February 2025
Implementing Partners	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, Central Project Management Agency (CPMA)

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

Implemented by



Our approach

The guiding principle is the EU's commitment to support climate action in its immediate neighbourhood, illustrated by the recently adopted Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, of which *decarbonisation, energy and mobility* is one of the five pillars, in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement. This action focuses particularly on reducing greenhouse gas emissions in urban areas and strengthening resilience of cities and municipalities to harmful climate change.

1. Promotion of the Covenant of Mayors initiative and approach

The action tackles climate change and supports the energy transition in the Western Balkans and Türkiye by strengthening the role of the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy Initiative (CoM) in the region as well as through providing support to municipal authorities in implementation of their climate protection plans and achievement of their targets and in enhancement of climate change resilience.



Empowering municipalities. ©GIZ

2. Municipalities' Vision

Municipal authorities in the Western Balkans and Türkiye will share a vision to decarbonise cities and to make them resilient, a vision in which citizens have access to secure, sustainable and affordable energy and are prepared to face the impacts of climate change. They will commit themselves to reduce CO₂ emissions, equaling at least the level of ambition agreed at EU level (at least 40% by 2030, and beyond, in line with the EU targets). This vision will build on the synergies between clean energy

transition, greenhouse gas emission reductions and cleaner air in the urban context.

In order to translate their political commitment into practical measures and projects, Covenant signatories commit to submit a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP) outlining the key actions they plan to undertake. Starting in February 2008, the CoM initiative has been undoubtedly one of the fastest growing European Commission programmes, and the action EU4ET builds on these dynamics, taking them up and pushing them further.



Awareness-raising. ©GIZ

Our objectives

The overall objective of the action is to deliver on the energy transition and tackle climate change in the Western Balkans and Türkiye. The specific objective is to support the CoM cities of the Western Balkans and Türkiye in delivering on their pledges under the energy and climate targets. The action will work towards these objectives by achieving the following six outputs:

1. Municipalities are empowered to participate in a multi-level governance for the development and implementation of energy and climate policies.

The action supports the creation of the Multi-Level Governance Exchange Platform, which enables municipalities to strengthen their presence in national planning. A link between the national level (developing national energy and climate plans, and national adaptation strategies and plans), and the local level (focusing on SECAPs) will be established mainly through respective municipal associations.

2. Regional and inter-regional cooperation between the CoM initiatives and the energy and climate municipalities in the Western Balkans and Türkiye supports the achievement of CoM goals.

The exchange between stakeholders provides a methodology for achieving the CoM goals and develops guidelines for municipalities. The guidelines give orientation for the preparation and implementation of SECAPs and for internal capacity development. Cooperation with the Regional CoM secretariats (e.g. Global, Europe, European Neighbourhood - East and European Neighbourhood South) will ensure knowledge transfer to the Western Balkans and Türkiye.

3. SECAPs are developed. By joining the CoM, cities commit themselves to contribute to the EU's climate protection goals and to develop their SECAP. The action provides advisory services and technical and capacity support to selected municipalities in the Western Balkans and Türkiye to develop their first SECAPs. This support is open to CoM members and municipalities proving a strong commitment to become member of CoM. The selection of the beneficiary cities is made through a competitive procedure.

4. Small-scale SECAP projects are implemented. As an incentive for the municipalities to participate in the fulfilment of the targets set by the CoM, the action provides support for the implementation of specific projects as defined in the SECAPs. These projects, ranging from energy efficiency measures to small-scale renewable power generation, will allow municipalities to generate concrete emissions reductions while improving citizens' wellbeing and tackling energy poverty.

5. Monitoring and reporting processes in line with CoM requirements are operational. Regional learning also includes advice on monitoring and reporting processes in line with the Global Covenant of Mayors Common Reporting Framework. This enables better exchange and mutual learning among municipalities. The experience from relevant initiatives such as the Energy Cities (European Association of Cities in Energy Transition) and ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability is a global network of more than 1,750 local and regional governments) will be transferred to the partner countries.

6. The Western Balkans and Türkiye CoM supporting structure is operational.

The cities will be assisted by the establishment of a technical support structure, in coordination with the Global Covenant Office and relevant regional Covenants offices. The structure will use existing good practices and instruments, provide guidelines for the preparation of action plans and evaluation tools to provide feedback to the cities, and assist in the selection of benchmarks of excellence. Associations of local authorities from the respective countries will provide a platform for this purpose.

Target Group, Direct Beneficiaries and Main Partners

The indirect final target group is the urban population in the Western Balkans and in Türkiye, which benefit from better energy planning and climate protection management at the local level.

The action directly benefits the cities and municipalities as well as municipal associations and the municipal administrations in the participating countries, including their staff.



Governance

The efficient execution of all work packages and related tasks will be ensured by a three-tier governance structure:

- A Coordination Group discusses, on a rolling basis, the progress of the action and decides on necessary adjustments of the action plan if the need arises.
- An Advisory Board shall provide guidance and promote ownership by ensuring that beneficiary institutions and stakeholders are consulted on key decisions regarding the action implementation.
- Local Project Steering Committees oversee the overall direction and policy of the Action, to ensure the accomplishment of objectives and expected results by reviewing/monitoring implementation of ongoing Work plan.

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The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that the project focuses on in its implementation are:



Complementarity and Synergy

The Action is implemented in accordance with the objectives of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance giving the priority to issues as protecting the environment, tackling climate change, ensuring greater alignment with EU environment and climate acquis.

It is a part of a wider project implemented by GIZ with additional funding from BMZ. The project pursues a holistic approach, ensuring that all components are linked in an appropriate manner and create synergies. The BMZ funded project is focusing on the integration of energy and climate planning on national level (National Energy and Climate Action Plans) which will create important synergies with the Output 1 of the Action.

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