

MINISTERIAL MEETING ON CLEAN ENERGY TRANSITION
IN THE WESTERN BALKANS
STATEMENT

We, the representatives of the Western Balkans, meeting in Podgorica 21 February 2019:

BEARING IN MIND:

- That we have already expressed our support for **enhanced action on climate change** in line with the 2015 Paris Agreement, with the outcome of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties in Katowice in 2018;
 - That we are committed to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner as stated in the “Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”;
 - That the 16th Energy Community Ministerial Council on 29 November 2018 adopted the **General Policy Guidelines on 2030 Targets** for the Contracting Parties of the Energy Community; where we expressed our support that the Energy Community commitments are to be in line with the **EU Clean Energy for All Europeans Package**;
 - That the European Commission in its Communication "A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans" of 6 February 2018 prioritises to **expand the Energy Union to the Western Balkans**;
- That the Declaration made at the Western Balkans Summit in Sofia on 17 May 2018 and the priority agenda attached to the Declaration proposes "to expand the EU Energy Union to the Western Balkans, focusing on **energy security** and **diversification** of sources and suppliers, including a strategy at regional level to benefit from renewables, notably hydropower"; Moreover, the Declaration recognises that improved **energy efficiency** should play a pivotal role in energy security in the Western Balkans;
- That the European Commission Communication "A Europe that protects: **Clean air for all**" was adopted on 17 May 2018;
 - That the European Commission Communication "**A Clean Planet for All**. A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy" was adopted on 28 November 2018;
 - That the Energy Community adopted a Recommendation on preparing for the development of integrated **National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs)** by the Contracting Parties of the Energy Community;
 - That principles of sustainable hydropower development have been extensively debated with the authorities and civil society in the context of the Western Balkans Investment Framework.

AGREE:

- To reaffirm our commitment to establish **equally ambitious 2030 targets for decarbonisation, renewables and energy efficiency**, in line with the 2015 Paris Agreement, and with the Energy Community obligations based on the EU Clean Energy for All Europeans Package, taking into account relevant socio-economic differences and technological developments in the Western Balkans;
- To support and facilitate this energy transition, in line with the **Energy Union objectives**, through renewable energy sources, by increasing energy efficiency, with a focus put on energy poverty and protection of vulnerable customers, increasing transmission and distribution network capacities in line with the potential of our region, providing high standards of security of supply and high quality of energy services. In this perspective, strategic reforms and policies in the energy sector will allow **reducing energy dependence** of the region and accelerating the fundamental **modernisation of the regional economy**;
- To further **engage with all relevant stakeholders**, including civil society, on our clean Energy transition paths;
- To progress as rapidly as possible with the **implementation of the acquis**, including the implementation of EU rules on competition, state aid and public procurement in the framework of infrastructure development projects, to complete all necessary reforms, as well as and to ensure our policies are fully in line with the five pillars of the Energy Union, so as to advance on our European path by building up stronger and deeper energy partnership between the EU and our region;
- To intensify efforts on better **long-term energy and climate policy planning** as a driver for investments and innovation in clean energy transition to reach Paris Agreement goals, and in particular to support work on mid-century strategies;
- To further support the swift development of our integrated **National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs)** to improve market conditions and investment environment, and to foster international cooperation on the clean energy transition, with a view to achieving long term decarbonisation goals in line with the Paris Agreement objectives;
- To complete urgently the **Connectivity Reform Measures**, to establish the Regional Electricity Market in the Western Balkans, with the objective of its integration into the EU Internal Electricity Market;
- to make progress in the context of the **Central and South Eastern Europe Energy Connectivity (CESEC) High Level Group** in better integrating electricity and gas markets in the region, including with EU Member States;
- To adhere to relevant **EU environmental legislation**, notwithstanding its transposition status, applicable international conventions, and relevant EU and international guidance developed on this basis, as the reference for sustainable hydropower development.

Agreed by the Ministers of Energy and Environment of the Western Balkans in Podgorica, Montenegro, on 21st February 2019.

 HE. Ms. Belinda Balluku, Minister of Infrastructure and energy, represented by Ilir Beitja, deputy Minister	 HE Blendi Klosi, Minister of tourism and environment Adrian Kamenica, Secretary General
 HE Mirko Šarović, Minister of foreign trade and economic relations, represented by Nedjo Kapetina, Adviser to the Minister	
 HE Valdrin Lluka, Minister of economic development	 HE Fatmir Matoshi, Minister of environment and spatial planning
<i>On behalf of</i> HE Krešnik Bekteši, Minister of economy 	 HE Sadulla Duraki, Minister of environment and spatial planning Represented by Jani Makraduli, deputy Minister
 HE Dragica Sekulić, Minister of Economy	 HE Pavle Radulović, Minister for Sustainable Development and Tourism
 HE Aleksandar Antić, Minister of Mining and Energy	 HE Goran Trivan, Minister of environment protection Represented by Biljana Filipović Dusić, Deputy Minister