

## **Tirana Conclusions of Local Self-Governments of the Western Balkans on the Implementation of the Green Agenda**

We, Mayors from the Capitals of the Western Balkan economies, participating in the Local Self-Governments (LSGs) Forum organised in Tirana in the margins of the Berlin Process Summit 2023,

Gathered through our regional cooperation networks, Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and Network of Associations of Local Authorities in South East Europe (NALAS),

Recognising the critical role that LSGs play in the implementation of Sofia Declaration on the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans (GAWB),

Commending the efforts of RCC and NALAS for initiating the LSGs Forum as a permanent platform for regional dialogue and cooperation at the local level on the implementation of GAWB,

Acknowledging the environmental challenges faced by our cities and local communities, ranging from air pollution to waste management and wastewater treatment, and in alignment with the goals and objectives outlined in the Sofia Declaration on GAWB,

Being aware that LSGs have the potential to contribute significantly to and accelerate green development and the desired transformation of our region through a range of local climate actions, including but not limited to environmental protection, urban green mobility and resource efficiency at the local level,

Recognising the challenges faced by local authorities in the Western Balkans to adequately finance and deliver on the green transition and actions to address climate change at the local level,

Emphasizing that our collective experience in the implementation of relevant policies at the Western Balkan economies' level can provide valuable insights and feedback, following a bottom-up approach, to support policy-making processes at regional and economy-wide levels, thereby contributing to the attainment of the GAWB objectives as outlined in the Sofia Declaration,

Recalling the GAWB Action Plan, which has tasked the Regional Cooperation Council with establishing a cooperation framework for local governments with the overall objective of enabling knowledge-sharing, awareness raising, and replication of best-practice examples contributing to the GAWB objectives in the region, and alignment with the spirit of cooperation and collaboration,

Acknowledging the invaluable role of the local government associations and their Network of Associations of Local Authorities in South-East Europe in facilitating collaboration, knowledge exchange, and capacity-building among local governments in our region,

Express our readiness to:

- Actively participate in the implementation of GAWB at the local level, taking concrete actions to address environmental challenges and promote sustainable development, in harmony with the goals and objectives set forth in the Sofia Declaration;

- Collaborate with the Regional Cooperation Council, Network of Associations of Local Authorities in South East Europe, and other regional and global stakeholders to make the best possible use of the LSG platform to exchange knowledge, share best practices, and engage in capacity-building activities to enhance our ability to implement green policies and initiatives effectively;
- Advocate for the inclusion of LSG perspectives in the development and revision of regional and economy-wide policies related to environmental protection, climate action, and sustainable development;
- Advocate for continued governmental dialogue at economy-wide and regional levels in the Western Balkans to improve policies, legislation and financing for local governments as well as for active citizen engagement;
- Foster partnerships and cooperation among local governments within the Western Balkans, leveraging our collective strength to drive positive change and advance the GAWB objectives, as specified in the Sofia Declaration, with the facilitation and support of RCC and NALAS;
- Promote public awareness and engagement in green initiatives, encouraging our communities to actively participate in local sustainability efforts, and other relevant initiatives such as the Covenant of Mayors;
- Appeal to the European Union and other development partners, urging them to create new opportunities for local governments to actively participate and deliver in GAWB;
- Extend the initiative to other cities and municipalities in the Western Balkans to foster regional cooperation and streamline joint efforts within the framework of GAWB.

We commit to working collaboratively to realise the vision of a greener, more sustainable future for our region and its citizens, in alignment with the overarching objectives outlined in the Sofia Declaration on the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans.

These conclusions are made in Tirana on 12 October 2023.