



European Commission

November 2020

Implementing A GREEN AGENDA

for the Western Balkans

5 MAIN AREAS

- Decarbonisation: climate, energy, mobility
- Circular economy
- Depollution: air, water & soil
- Sustainable food systems & rural areas
- Biodiversity: protection & restoration of ecosystems

**#GreenAgenda
#WesternBalkans**

The **Green Agenda for the Western Balkans** is a new growth strategy for the region, leaping from a traditional economic model to a sustainable economy, in line with the European Green Deal. It is embedded in the Economic and Investment Plan, which has a truly transformative potential and aims to spur the long-term recovery of the Western Balkans and their economic convergence with the EU. The plan will be backed by a twin green and digital transition.

It sets out **concrete recommendations** to:

-  Align the region with the EU's 2050 ambition to make Europe a **carbon neutral** continent,
-  Unlock the potential of **circular economy**,
-  Fight **pollution of air, water and soil**,
-  Promote **sustainable methods of food production and supply**, and
-  Exploit the **huge tourism potential** of the region, focusing on biodiversity protection and restoration of eco-systems.

The EU will support financially the implementation of the ambitious Green Agenda through the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPAIII)*. The Western Balkans Investment Framework, the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+), and other instruments will be the main implementing mechanisms in this regard.

* IPA III funding subject to the adoption of the next Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027



01

Cleaning energy sources, protecting the climate

- > The Western Balkans is a region heavily affected by climate change. This calls for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing resilience to the impact of climate change.
- > The Western Balkan partners will be supported in aligning with the new EU Climate Law, the EU Emissions Trading Scheme as well as reducing CO₂ emissions through quotas and carbon pricing mechanisms.
- > In a region highly dependent on coal, the shift towards cleaner and renewable energy sources is a must. The EU will support this transition.
- > The EU will support the Western Balkan partners in increasing their rail capacity in deploying more environmentally friendly transport modes, including in urban areas, as well as smart mobility solutions.

Moving to a circular economy

- > Transitioning to a fully circular economy is key for the EU and Western Balkan partners to achieve a green transition.
- > The EU will support Western Balkan partners in developing strategies to improve the sustainability of raw material production, preventing, reducing, recycling and managing waste looking at the entire lifecycle of products.
- > The EU funding will also support the development of a regional agreement on the prevention of plastic pollution, in particular marine litter.



02



03

Depolluting air, water and soil

- > Air pollution in the Western Balkans is one of the highest in Europe and has a direct impact on citizens' health.
- > The EU will assist the region in aligning with EU standards related to air quality, water and waste water management. This includes modernisation of air and of water monitoring and further investment in waste-water management, also promoting water reuse in agriculture.

Building sustainable agriculture and food systems

- > Agriculture and related sectors contribute around 10% of the Western Balkans GDP.
- > The EU will step up efforts to support the sustainable development of rural areas.
- > The EU will assist the agri-food sectors in the region to increase food security and quality, reduce waste, improve compliance with EU food safety and animal welfare standards, and promote environmentally friendly and organic farming.



04



05

Protecting biodiversity and ecosystems

- > The Western Balkans have a wealth of habitats and species which need to be protected for future generations.
- > The EU will support the region in developing and implementing a Western Balkans 2030 Biodiversity Action Plan and a Forest Landscape Restoration Plan. Options for a Western Balkans Biodiversity Information Hub will be explored.