



MONITORING REPORT

PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY: REGIONAL COOPERATION THROUGH ENHANCED PARLIAMENTARY DIALOGUE

Montenegro

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The project “Parliamentary Diplomacy: Regional Cooperation Through Enhanced Parliamentary Dialogue” is led by the Institute for Democracy (IDSCS) with the partners from the Western Balkan region: Institute Alternativa (IA), Institute for Political Studies (ISP), CRTA - Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability, Kosova Democratic Institute (KDI), and the Network of Progressive Initiatives (NPI). You can find more about the project at the following link: <https://idscs.org.mk/en/2023/06/23/parliamentary-diplomacy-regional-cooperation-through-enhanced-parliamentary-dialogue/>

PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY: REGIONAL COOPERATION THROUGH ENHANCED PARLIAMENTARY DIALOGUE

At the Berlin Process Summit held on 10 November, 2020 in Sofia, the leaders of the Western Balkans Six (WB6), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, endorsed the Common Regional Market (CRM) 2021-2024 Action Plan and the Green Agenda 2021-2030 Action Plan.

Based on the RCC's implementation reports and desk research conducted in the period of November 2023, the Institute Alternative has a glance at Montenegro's current level of implementation of the action plans.

In order to collect relevant data, the research included consulting ministries, non-governmental organisations, the RCC office, as well as the Strategy for the Digital Transformation of Montenegro. For the digital area, the Institute Alternative addressed the Ministry of Public Administration and the Ministry of Economic Development. For matters concerning the implementation of the Green Agenda, the Institute approached the Ministry of Energy and Mining and the Ministry of Tourism, Ecology, Sustainable Development, and Northern Region Development.

Action Plan for a Common Regional Market is divided in four key areas: **1) regional tra-**

de area: free movement of goods, services, capital and people, including crosscutting measures, such as the Green Lanes, to align with EU-compliant rules and standards and provide opportunities for companies and citizens; **2) regional investment area**, to align investment policies with the EU standards and best international practices and promote the region to foreign investors; **3) regional digital area**, to integrate the Western Balkans into the pan-European digital market; and **4) regional industrial and innovation area**, to transform the industrial sectors, shape value chains they belong to, and prepare them for the realities of today and challenges of tomorrow.

The Green Agenda Action Plan is divided in five key areas: **1) Decarbonisation; 2) Circular Economy; 3) Depollution; 4) Sustainable Agriculture; 5) Protection of nature and biodiversity.**

This monitoring report will focus on the current level of implementation of the commitments undertaken within the framework of Berlin Process, with specific focus on **Regional Digital Area** (Common Regional Market) and **Decarbonisation** (Green Agenda).



Common Regional Market (CRM) - Regional Digital Area

Digital infrastructure and connectivity: Several significant accomplishments have been achieved in this field in Montenegro. These include establishing the Directorate for Broadband Internet Access, allocating radio frequencies for 5G, and signing the Western Balkan Roaming Agreement to enhance regional roaming services.

Digital skills and competence: Implementation of the Strategy for Digitisation of Education System progressed, including the creation of digital content for students, teachers, and parents to enhance knowledge and digital skills. Training sessions improved digital skills for 1,200 teachers. The Digital School expanded with online self-learning through Digionica, while two e-services were launched for enrollment in private preschools and student dormitories.

Digital economy in the era of new ICT technologies: Accomplishments include Montenegro's active participation in Digital Annual Summits, alongside the initiation of activities to establish an ICT network for civil servants, aimed at fostering the development of interoperable public administration services. Furthermore, efforts have been made to enhance coordination among public administration institutions and support capacity building in ICT. Additionally, Montenegro signed the EU's Digital Europe Programme and established the Digital Academy to bolster digital skills.

Trust and security: Montenegro has achieved significant milestones in its cyber sector, including completing a feasibility study on technical interoperability, drafting a Law on Personal Data Protection aligned with

GDPR, and establishing the CIRT unit. Plans are also in progress to establish the Agency for Cyber Security, while collaboration with ENISA and the establishment of the Regional Centre for Cyber Security underscore a commitment to enhancing cyber capabilities and fostering regional cooperation.

Green Agenda - Decarbonisation

The Ministry of Tourism, Ecology, Sustainable Development, and Northern Region Development in Montenegro is drafting a new Law on Climate Change and Ozone Layer Protection to align with EU regulations. Montenegro has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 35% by 2020 and is aiming to further reduce emissions by 55% as per the Energy Community's target. The World Bank has allocated funds for developing a Low-Carbon Development Strategy Framework. In cooperation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Ministry of tourism, ecology, sustainable development and development of north region is continuing the implementation of the project "*Enhancing Montenegro's capacity to integrate climate change risks into the planning process*" for the development of the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan-NAP, which is financed by the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Montenegro has also established a commission for public auctions of emission credits, with plans to update ETS regulations. Additionally, with IUCN support, Montenegro is implementing the ADAPT project to enhance stakeholder capacities in climate change adaptation.

Draft Mapping Matrix of Relevant Stakeholders

PRIORITY 1: COMMON REGIONAL MARKET

General overview:

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION			
None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative

COMMON REGIONAL MARKET – REGIONAL DIGITAL AREA – MONTENEGRO				
Activity	Deadline	Progress (policies, activities)	Responsible institution(s)	Next step(s)
Provide fixed broadband internet access for the vast majority of households	2024			
Establish Broadband Competence Offices (BCOs) in WB (where they do not exist) and strengthen their capacities to support broadband deployment	2021	Established national office/directorate for competence in the field of broadband access: The Directorate for Broadband Internet Access was formed. ; The Directorate for Broadband Internet Access was successfully formed within the Directorate for Electronic Communications, Postal Activities and Radio Spectrum in the Ministry of Economic Development and Tourism, which also fulfilled the obligation to establish the National Office for Broadband (Broadband Competence Office - BCO), foreseen in the Action Plan for Joint regional market (Common Regional Market).	Ministry of Economic Development	
Interconnection of academic and research networks in WB6, with the support and cooperation of GEANT	2022			



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Develop 5G roadmap for Western Balkans and ensure effective implementation in line with the timeline defined therein	2023	Mobile operators are assigned radio frequencies from the 700 MHz and 3.6 GHz bands. ; The total revenues from the allocation of radio frequencies in the public bidding process, which represent the revenues of the Budget of Montenegro, amount to 8,836,000.00 EUR. In this way, the activity Allocation of radio frequencies from the pioneering 5G bands, determined by the Roadmap for the introduction of 5G mobile communication networks adopted by the Government of Montenegro in December 2021, was successfully implemented.		
Reduce roaming charges intra-WB6 and EU-WB through implementation of WB Roaming Agreement and the Roadmap for lowering the roaming charges between EU and WB				
Complete the final phase of the Regional Roaming Agreement	2021	Western Balkan Roaming Agreement with the objective to introduce the Roam Like At Home regime as of 1 July 2021 signed and implementation started.		
Finalise the Roadmap for lowering the roaming charges between EU and WB and effective implementation in line with the timeline defined therein	2021			
Develop digital skills strategies and agree on short and mid-term regional actions for digital upskilling	2022 - 2023	Implementation of the Strategy for Digitisation of Education System progressed, in addition to the creation of digital content for students, teachers and parents, with the aim of raising the level of knowledge as well as developing digital skills of these target groups. In addition, the training on improving digital skills for 1,200 teachers was implemented.	Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation	Further implementation of the Strategy.
Establish a repository of courses and other training programmes developed by different organisations, including MOOCs with established universities based on WB gap analysis and digital skills needs for targeted groups	2022	Expansion of Digital School with the possibility of online self-learning through <i>Digionica</i> , based on the Learning Passport platform. ¹	Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation	
		Two e-services were launched for submitting applications for enrolment in private preschool institutions and student dormitories.		

1 More information on "Digital School" and "Digionica" platform, available at <https://digitalnaskola.edu.me/en/index.html>

Develop Digital Education Action Plans and promote equality in access, in particular for disadvantaged groups and minorities, particularly Roma	2022	No progress.	Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation	
Organise regular high-level meetings, including Annual Digital Summit, to ensure digital agenda stands at the forefront of regional transformation	Annually	Six events were organised (Sarajevo 2023, Pristina 2022, Podgorica 2021, Tirana 2020, Belgrade 2018, Skopje 2017).		Macedonia proposed to be the host of Digital Summit 2024.
Align standards for meta-data for open data at regional level based on EU standards to be implemented throughout the region and foster open data principle	2023			
Reach an agreement on regional interoperability of toll services in WB	2022 - 2024	No progress.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	
Agree on principles and standards used for smart cities, based on EU standards, with a view to ensure data and services interoperability	2023	Activities on establishing ICT network of civil servants for development of interoperable public administration services launched.		Further activities on strengthening coordination between public administration institutions of Montenegro and providing support in building the capacity of the network of civil servants engaged in ICT development at the central and local level and improving the efficiency of digital management.
Undertake regional actions to promote Artificial Intelligence (AI) in selected aspects and based on EU practices	2024	Government of Montenegro signed the European Union Programme <i>Digital Europe</i> (2021-2027) in June 2023. Digital Academy of Montenegro, as a platform for all, has been established for strengthening digital skills and competencies of public officials, students and the vulnerable groups of strategic importance.	Ministry of Public Administration	Trainings on AI is going to be organised through the Digital Academy. Representative of the Ministry of Public Administration is a member of WG on AI in the Council of Europe.

Undertake regional activities to facilitate participation of WB in EU HPC	2023 - 2024				
Undertake regional activities to improve availability, analysis and monitoring of high quality digital economy statistics, building on EU's DESI and ITU's ICT Development Index	2022			MONSTAT / EKIP	
Regional cooperation in regard to exchange of good practice in the field of digital transformation, in particular e-government	Annually	Regular meetings.			
Agree on minimum technical standards and specifications to allow an exchange of data and documents, and conduct pilot activities	2021 Pilots 2022 - 2023	"Feasibility study for identification of technical interoperability in Montenegro" has been completed and published, containing the relevant list of technical standards. ²	Ministry of Public Administration		
Align regional actions to ensure the protection of personal data and privacy in Western Balkans, based on EU standards	2023	Law on Personal Data Protection has been drafted, aligned with the GDPR Directive.	Ministry of Interior		Adoption of the Law.
Develop mentoring programmes for WB CSIRTs and other institutions as longer-term cooperation with advanced CSIRTs and other partners	2023	The CIRT unit exists within the Ministry of Public Administration.	Ministry of Public Administration		The Agency for Cyber Security is going to be established.
Strengthen cybersecurity capacities in the WB region through cooperation with ENISA	2021 - 2024	Montenegro is open in strengthening capacities through cooperation with ENISA.	Ministry of Public Administration		Accession to this program is expected to be launched during 2024.
Enhance resilience of cyberspace in the WB through increased participation of business community in strengthening cybersecurity capacities in WB	2022 - 2023	A Regional Centre for Cyber Security has been established, with the aim of developing cyber capacities and cyber security education.			National coordinators from each WB6 economy will be nominated and five working groups will be established on: (i) regulation issues, (ii) financial issues, (iii) training programs, (iv) technical installation and (v) international cooperation.

² More information on the feasibility study, available at: <https://www.rcc.int/pubs/147/feasibility-study-for-identification-of-technical-interoperability-in-montenegro>

PRIORITY 2: GREEN AGENDA

LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION

None

Minor

Moderate

Transformative

GREEN AGENDA – DECARBONISATION – MONTENEGRO

Activity	Deadline	Progress (policies, activities)	Responsible institution(s)	Next step(s)
Align with the EU Climate Law with a vision of achieving climate neutrality by 2050.	2025	<p>In order to further harmonise with the EU legal acquis, the Ministry of tourism, ecology, sustainable development and northern region development has been drafting a new Law on Protection from the Negative Impacts of Climate Change and Protection of the Ozone Layer.</p> <p>The new law will allow further harmonisation with the EU acquis, in particular the functioning of the emissions trading system (EU ETS) in line with the EU ETS Directive 2003/87/EC and its amendments, as well as monitoring and reporting, accreditation and verification, EU registers, free awards and auctions.</p> <p>The new law will also ensure harmonisation with the EU acquis in the area of monitoring and reporting greenhouse gas emissions in line with Regulation (EU) 2018/2066 and Regulation (EU) 2018/2067 on accreditation and data verification.</p>	Ministry of tourism, ecology, sustainable development and northern region development	Adoption of law planned for 4 th quarter 2024
Set forward-looking 2030 energy and climate targets.	2022. (Ongoing).	<p>In June 2021, the Government of Montenegro adopted the Report for the preparation of the updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) from 2020, committing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 35% compared to the base year 1990. The new target set by the Energy Community is to reduce gas emissions by 55%.</p> <p><i>The World Bank has approved funds for the development of the Low-Carbon Development Strategy Framework, which will enable the development of models, scenarios, as well as parallel consultations with stakeholders, with the aim of drafting the best possible Strategy Framework.</i></p>		End of 2026

Develop and implement integrated Energy and Climate Plans.	2022. (Ongoing).		The Ministry of Energy and Mining in cooperation with the Ministry of tourism, ecology, sustainable development and northern region development	
Prepare and implement climate adaptation strategies.	2028. (Ongoing).	In cooperation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Ministry of tourism, ecology, sustainable development and development of north region is continuing the implementation of the project “Enhancing Montenegro’s capacity to integrate climate change risks into the planning process” for the development of the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan-NAP, which is financed by the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The project covers four sectors which are most vulnerable to adaptation: water, health, tourism and agriculture.	Ministry of tourism, ecology, sustainable development and northern region development	Planned to be adopted by the end of June 2024.
Align with the EU Emissions Trading System and/or introduce other carbon pricing instruments.	2024. (Ongoing).	The Government of Montenegro has established a commission for the implementation of a public auction with the Decision on the establishment of a commission for conducting a public auction for the allocation of emission credits (“Official Gazette of Montenegro”, no. 151/22) tasked with conducting a public auction, awarding emission credits and allocating the collected funds. On February 14, 2023, the previous Ministry (Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism) announced a public call for the allocation of emission credits for 2022. In addition, by the new law the ETS regulation will be updated.		Adoption of Law, end of 2024. Finalising plan for establishment of carbon tax by the end of 2025.
Increase opportunities for the deployment of nature-based solutions to mitigate and adapt to climate change.	2025.	With the support of the IUCN, the Ministry of Tourism, ecology, sustainable development and northern region development conducts the project ADAPT, in order to strengthen capacities of stakeholders involved in the process of adaptation to climate change.		
Ensure participation of WB economies in the European Climate Pact or consider the development of a similar mechanism.	2022.			
Review and revise, where necessary, all relevant legislation to support progressive decarbonisation of the energy sector.	2023. (Ongoing).			

Prepare an assessment of the socio-economic impact of decarbonisation at the individual economy and regional level.	2022.
Prioritise energy efficiency and improve it in all sectors.	Ongoing.
Transposition and full enforcement of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive.	2023.
Support private and public buildings renovation schemes and secure appropriate financing.	Ongoing.
Increase the share of renewable energy sources and provide the necessary investment conditions.	Ongoing.
Decrease and gradually phase out coal subsidies, strictly respecting state aid rules.	Ongoing.
Ensure participation in the Coal Regions in Transition initiative for the Western Balkans.	Ongoing.
Develop programmes for addressing energy poverty and financing schemes for household renovation and providing basic standards of living.	Ongoing 2024.
Support the development of smart transport infrastructure, promote fostering of innovative technologies (such as paperless transport, artificial intelligence, multimodal passengers ticketing, mobility as a service, border/boundary crossing applications, 5G corridors, etc.).	Ongoing.
Implement the Regional Action Plan for Rail Reforms.	2023.

Define rail freight and inland waterway transport corridors.	2027.
Define an overall strategy to shift traffic from road to more environmentally friendly modes.	2021.
Identify the EU technical standards and ensure their implementation and digitalisation of all transport modes.	2030.
Implement the Regional Transport Facilitation Action Plan.	2023.
Implement the Regional Road Safety Action Plan.	2022.
Implement the Road Action Plan.	2024.
Develop and implement climate resilience plans for Western Balkan economies' transport networks.	2022.
Promote preparation and implementation of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans for urban areas in the Western Balkans.	2025.
Define sustainable mobility solutions at the regional level including plans for deployment of alternative fuels.	2024.
Define a plan for deployment and building of charging stations for electric vehicles.	2022.
Increase regional cooperation in the area of alternative fuels infrastructure development.	2023.



To obtain answers within the scope of the ministry responsible for energy and transportation, we directly contacted the relevant institutions; however, we did not receive any feedback.

An analysis of the implementation status of the Green Agenda in Montenegro, conducted by Eco-Team in the previous year, showed that the Government's results in implementing the obligations arising from the Green Agenda are very poor. In August 2023, Eco-Team announced that out of 58 specific measures covered by the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans (WB6), only one measure from all five pillars of the WB6 had been implemented so far, accounting for 2% of the total number of measures. 51% remained unrealized, while 47% were in progress.

Diana Milev Čavor, program coordinator for climate and energy at the NGO Eco-Team,

stated that it is urgent to amend the Energy Community Treaty in order to achieve decarbonization in the Western Balkan countries.

“Amending the Treaty is the only realistic next step if the European Commission truly wants to see progress in the Western Balkan countries on the path to decarbonization. This progress is currently unsatisfactory and very slow,” the statement said.

Many deficiencies and structural shortcomings have been identified in the Energy Community Treaty that have contributed to the non-fulfillment of obligations under this treaty in all countries in the region. In this regard, one of the alarming facts is that the emissions of pollutants from most coal-fired power plants in the region have not decreased but have even increased over the past five years.