

## **1<sup>st</sup> Sustainability Forum**

### ***“Clean Energy for a Sustainable Future”***

Vienna, 9 June 2017

#### **Chair’s Conclusions**

The first Sustainability Forum took place under the auspices of the Energy Community and the Balkan Green Foundation on 9 June 2017 in Vienna. The Forum gathered Ministers responsible for energy, environment and climate change of the Energy Community Contracting Parties, high-level officials of the European Commission, government officials, representatives of the private sector, civil society, non-governmental organisations and academia to discuss the best ways to contribute towards a low-carbon transition of the Energy Community.

The participants acknowledged that energy, environment and climate change policies are intrinsically linked and need to be addressed in a coordinated manner. The participants also agreed that one of the main remaining barriers to further progress in the low-carbon transition in the Energy Community region is the lack of recognition of this strong interlinkage as well as the limited human resources assigned to climate action in the relevant ministries, along with the lack of awareness of climate change risks.

The participants recognized the importance of the Energy Community as the organization covering energy and climate issues and welcomed a process of closer collaboration to contribute to a higher quality of legislation in this field as well as to mainstream climate policy across sectors.

The participants reiterated their support to the Nationally Determined Contributions made in the framework of the Paris Agreement and supported the establishment of an Energy Community Climate Action Group to guide the low-carbon transition at regional level and facilitate the work on integrated national energy and climate plans.

The participants took note of the progress achieved under the Sustainability Charter and the priorities ahead to be further discussed at the Western Balkan 6 Summit in Trieste. They highlighted that continued investment in the energy sector, in particular in renewable energy deployment, low-carbon technologies and energy efficiency remains critically important for ensuring energy security and sustainable economic development.

The participants exchanged views on the importance of energy transition through the development of market-based support measures, innovative business models, clean energy technologies and consumer-led energy initiatives. They welcomed the increased efforts of local authorities, civil society, non-governmental organizations, energy service companies and international financial institutions in fostering the uptake of renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions at local level.

The participants stressed that the low-carbon transition should be inclusive with a high level of transparency of actors from state to civil society. Energy issues and climate justice are becoming the drivers of interconnectivity and equality in the Energy Community region in the light of EU integration.

The participants welcome the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Energy Community Secretariat and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to strengthen cooperation on sustainable development and climate change in the countries where they both operate.