

We, the Mayors of coal dependent municipalities from the Western Balkans,

Call on the European commission to support our just transition pathway towards a decarbonised local industry and to close the disparities between our active communities and the just transition regions in the EU.

During a meeting of representatives of seven coal dependent municipalities from four countries from the Western Balkans held in Skopje in March 2024, the very limited capacity of these municipalities for fundraising was a very prominent topic. Fundraising is crucial, because it enables the diversification of their economies and ensures their transition to a fossil free economy is done in a just way.

The scarcity of inspiring success stories in to the Western Balkans that can be related to just transition is a very important factor in the reluctance of local population to accept the inevitability of the process that follows the energy transition, although decision makers are already aware that significant efforts need to be made and funds must be invested in the process to make the energy transition a just one.

In addition, it was emphasised that a just transition does not only focus on the directly affected workers, but also their families and the entire communities.

To support our communities in addressing these issues, we, the undersigned Mayors of coal dependent municipalities in the Western Balkans hereby call on the European Commission to expand the support for the coal dependent municipalities through the Coal Regions in Transition Initiative to include:

- Technical assistance in developing grants for the municipalities for diversification and development of our municipalities' economies and enabling new jobs in various sectors;
- Enabling, support and promotion of small-scale success stories that would inspire the business community in coal affected regions to showcase the possibilities the transition offers for development outside of the energy sector;
- Support in seeking bilateral agreements with similar municipalities from the European Union Member states that would enable exchange of experience, equipment and know-how for overcoming the dependence on fossil fuels.

On our part, we commit ourselves to continued action at the local level on just transition and to supporting each other in creating a sustainable future for the benefit of all our citizens.

Declared by:

Mayor	Municipality	Country (and region)	Signature
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*Note: The filled in list is not published online for data protection reasons.*

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