



27 April 2026

Joint civil society statement

As the latest fossil fuel crisis starts to bite, Western Balkan governments must avoid further gas addiction and leapfrog to a renewable future!

For the second time this decade, Europe is in an oil and gas crisis, once again highlighting the danger of dependence on imported fossil fuels. The diversification strategy promoted by the EU for decades has shown its limits, and the inherent vulnerability to market disruptions and price hikes remains. As a result, the EU has rightly identified that the solution to the crisis is to wean itself off of fossil fuels, and to push forward with electrification and renewables.

But the United States has liquified gas (LNG) to sell and influence to buy. For several years already it has been targeting the Western Balkans, pushing projects like the [Greece to North Macedonia interconnector](#), [LNG terminals in Montenegro](#) and [Albania](#) and the [southern gas interconnection](#) between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

At this week's [Three Seas Initiative Summit](#) in Dubrovnik, an inter-governmental agreement is planned on the latter, while a planned US-Montenegro agreement has already met with [strong resistance](#) from civil society and people living near the planned LNG terminal in Bar.

Compared to many of our EU neighbours, the Western Balkan countries have low or no gas dependence. The EU is working to reduce gas demand, but by 2024 fossil gas still made up 20.6% of gross available energy.¹ In the Western Balkans, most gas-dependent countries are Serbia (14.3%) and North Macedonia (11.6%). In Bosnia and Herzegovina gas makes up less than 3% of energy, with Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo not connected to international gas infrastructure. This is an advantage which they must capitalise on, not a disadvantage to be remedied.

For many years, the EU promoted the same 'diversification' narrative for Serbia, North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina as it did for the EU, and promoted gasification of the remainder of the region. We are relieved to see that this has now finally changed, with fossil gas projects no longer eligible for priority project status under the Energy Community Treaty or for EU funding.

But the messages from the EU are too subtle for the governments in the region to hear. And they're being drowned out by the United States' [overt lobbying](#). Across the region, governments are [actively planning](#) gas pipelines, power plants and LNG terminals that could collectively [triple their 2023 gas consumption](#). These would either entrap the countries in costly dependence, or end up as stranded assets.

- Albania relies on hydropower and solar for its electricity, as the two floating oil-fired units moored at Vlora since 2022 [barely generate](#) any power. The Trans Adriatic Pipeline passes through the country to Italy, but so far no exit point has been built on Albanian territory. Yet Albania plans to transition *towards* fossil fuels: it is [planning](#) at least two gas power plants, at Roskovec and Vlora, an LNG terminal, and a distribution system in Korca. [Works recently started](#) at Roskovec despite a series of permitting irregularities and a lack of secured financing.

¹ [Eurostat data](#).

- Bosnia and Herzegovina mainly uses gas to heat Sarajevo, but in the last two years the Federation entity has developed much [bigger ambitions](#). The Republika Srpska entity has made no secret of its plans to keep using Russian gas by building a new pipeline from Serbia, but has recently [signed an agreement](#) for a pipeline within Republika Srpska, from Šepak to Novi Grad that would connect to the existing pipeline. The Federation has mainly concentrated on the [southern gas interconnection](#), heavily pushed by the US. But the current Federal government has also revived plans for two more pipelines from Croatia, added 85 kilometres to the southern gas interconnection and started planning [three gas power plants](#).
- Kosovo is the only economy in the region whose energy strategy [rightly rules out building a gas pipeline](#). But even there, the government has left open the option of teaming up with a neighbouring country to build a gas power plant.
- Montenegro's spatial plan, after massive controversies around plans for an LNG terminal at Bar, does not include the terminal or associated power plant plans. But after its adoption, in September 2025, the Prime Minister [signed a memorandum](#) with Japan's JERA for a feasibility study for an LNG terminal and power plants.
- North Macedonia [announced](#) the start of works on the gas interconnector from Greece last year, although expropriation is not yet completed and several legal issues are outstanding. It also plans to build at least two more gas power plants, far beyond what is foreseen in its current National Energy and Climate Plan or energy strategy, and in 2025 [signed a memorandum](#) with Türkiye's Kazancı Holding for unspecified gas plants and distribution grids.
- Serbia's [difficulty](#) in securing its gas supply has not put its government off steadily expanding the country's gas network, and [signing an agreement](#) with Azerbaijan for a 500 megawatt gas power plant in Niš. It also plans a new plant in Novi Sad.

In addition to the climate impacts of fossil gas, which are often underestimated, these plans don't make economic sense. None of the projects have had up-to-date, convincing feasibility studies presented to the public, and they would almost certainly end up as stranded assets or heavily subsidised by taxpayers to keep them going. Permitting, expropriation and construction could easily take a decade and the infrastructure alone would cost billions, even before the costs of gas are included.

By the time they are complete, the economic and policy environment will discourage gas even more. We've seen this before when governments in the region were planning new coal plants. Most were, thankfully, not built, but those which were now face the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), more stringent emissions standards, and carbon pricing.

Even if some of the planned gas projects do not go ahead, their planning is diverting enormous resources from heading towards a 100% renewable future. The region does not have money, human capacity or time to waste on such costly distractions.

Appropriately-sited solar and wind generation, supported by existing hydropower and strong grid connections, is much more cost-effective for electricity generation, while heat pumps, geothermal, and ambient or leftover heat avoid import dependence for heating and cooling. Instead of falling into the

decades-old trap of gas dependence, Western Balkan governments finally need to increase energy efficiency and focus on electrification of the heat and transport sectors.

We therefore call on:

- Western Balkan governments to:
 - cancel their plans to expand gas infrastructure and power/heat generation;
 - concentrate on leapfrogging to a 100% renewable, energy efficient future instead;
 - decide on their own energy plans, in line with EU legislation and policy, based on updated and publicly available evidence and genuine public consultations;
- The European Commission to make publicly clear to the governments that increasing gas lock-in is now at odds with EU climate and energy policy, and that they should not prevent the effective decarbonisation of their countries by investing in gas infrastructure or power generation;
- The Croatian and Greek governments to take a responsible stance towards increasing gas lock-in in their neighbouring Western Balkan countries and refrain from making further commitments on joint gas infrastructure;
- Other EU governments and donors to clearly and publicly convey to the region's government that the Western Balkans is in a different situation to the EU due to its low gas dependence; that times have changed and the EU is reducing gas use, and that they must use this opportunity to avoid gas dependence.

Supported by:

1. Aarhus center in BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina	 UDRUŽENJE AARHUS CENTAR U BIH
2. Active Mobility Albania	Albania	 activemobility
3. Association for development, education, and ecological ethics POLYMATH 13	North Macedonia	 ПОЛИМАТ 13 POLYMATH 13
4. Association for Environmental Protection and Promotion EKO-ZHIVOT	North Macedonia	 EKO ЖИВОТ
5. Balkans Forward Fondacija	Serbia	 BALKANS FORWARD FOUNDATION

6. Belgrade Open School	Serbia	
7. CEE Bankwatch Network	Regional	
8. CELIM Shqiperi	Albania	
9. Center for Climate Change	North Macedonia	
10. Center for Environment / FOE Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina	
11. Center for environmental research and information Eko-svest Skopje	North Macedonia	
12. Center for Green Politics	Serbia	
13. Climate Action Network Europe	Regional	
14. Critical Education Centre	Serbia	
15. DEM Dvizenje na Ekologisti na Makedonija	North Macedonia	
16. Democratic Dialogue Network	Serbia	

17. Eco-team Montenegro



18. EcoZ Kosovo



19. EDEN center Albania



20. Eko akcija Bosnia and Herzegovina



21. EKO ELEMENT Bugojno Bosnia and Herzegovina



22. Eko Forum Zenica Bosnia and Herzegovina



23. ENECA Serbia



24. Energetska zadruga Sunčani krovovi Perlez Serbia



25. Environment Engineering Group Serbia



26. European Environmental Bureau EU



27. Foundation BFPE for a Responsible Society Serbia



28. GARD	Albania	
29. Nansen Dialogue Centre	Serbia	
30. Network Albania	Albania	
31. NGO Alternative Kakanj	Bosnia and Herzegovina	
32. NGO EKO-Leonardo	BiH	
33. NGO Unski smaragdi	Bosnia and Herzegovina	
34. NGO SEED	Montenegro	
35. Organic Agriculture Association.	Albania	
36. Platform for Social Development and Innovation - CORE	Serbia	
37. Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA)	Albania	
38. RESET HUB	North Macedonia	

39. Resources in Development NGO Albania



40. The Green Tank Greece



41. UNECOOP Serbia



42. Vojvodina Environmental Movement Serbia



43. Youth Cultural Center - Bitola North Macedonia



44. Za Zemiata - Friends of the Earth Bulgaria



45. Zdravo i zeleno Serbia



46. Zelena akcija / FoE Croatia Croatia



47. Zelena Srbija Serbia



This activity is part of the 'Green Agenda Navigator' project supported by the European Union. The project is implemented by the [Belgrade Open School](#) in cooperation with six regional partners: the [Aarhus Centre Association](#), [Eco-Team](#) organization, [Eco-Z](#) organization, the Center for Environmental Research and Information [Eko-Svest](#), the [Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment](#) organization and [CEE Bankwatch Network](#).