

Ref: CSOs Requesting Continued Support for Energy Community 2030 EE/RES/GHG targets

Dear Commissioner Mr Arias Cañete

The Energy Community, which has brought together the European Union and its neighbours to create an integrated pan-European energy market, has been at the forefront of the Western Balkan countries' efforts to join the EU ever since it was founded in 2005.

For more than a decade now, the Energy Community has been the key vehicle for transposing numerous pieces of legislation in energy, connectivity, market development, environment and climate change. As such it has not only brought the countries of the region closer to the EU but also closer to each other.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) have for many years been an integral part of the process and continue to contribute to this process today with commitment and insight.

The last year has been marked by a rekindled interest and dedication to the Western Balkans' EU perspective, and the Energy Community has been following suit with several initiatives, all important as well as ambitious. Of these, we now write to recognise the importance and show support for the current process of setting of 2030 energy and climate targets.

As you know, the basis for this process is the Guidance document which is crucial for setting the levels of ambition for the 2030 EE, RES and GHG targets. The Guidance Document is currently being developed, with DGs Energy and Climate Action also contributing. At the moment, it is being aligned with the newly adopted EED and RED targets which the EU agreed one month ago. We believe that the full engagement of the Western Balkan Countries to the alignment with the recently adopted EED and RED targets is needed to prove their commitment to EU accession.

The strategy entitled '*A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans*' quotes 2025 as the earliest potential date for accession of some of the Western Balkan countries. Considering this timeframe, we are all certain that the region will be fully integrated in the EU in the near future. An integral part of making this vision a credible reality will be the indispensable work of the Energy Community on a gradual adaptation, not only in legislation but all aspects of the energy systems and governance, work made necessary if this transition is to benefit both people and climate.

It is for this reason that we, the undersigned organisations, hereby invite you to encourage all relevant DGs and services, which are involved in the process to follow the level of ambition set by the EU and recommended by the Energy Community Secretariat. With this support, the European Commission and the

Secretariat would speak with a progressive voice, sending a clear message to the contracting parties.

We are asking for this fully aware of the scale of the challenge. However, the Balkans must not remain isolated from the rest of Europe by an outdated energy system, which endangers the health, prosperity and wider geopolitical stability of the region, and, ultimately, of the EU. The transition of the Western Balkans to EU membership will not be possible without an effective transformation of the energy system - a fact that makes early and ambitious support for the Energy Community framework an imperative.

We thank you in advance for your attention and support.



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