

# Kosovo in the Berlin Process:

To what extent have the commitments for the Common Regional Market and the Green Agenda been fulfilled?

December 2023

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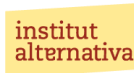
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## INTRODUCTION

The Berlin Process is a diplomatic initiative aimed at fostering regional cooperation and addressing key challenges in the Western Balkans. It was launched in 2014 by German Chancellor Angela Merkel as a response to the ongoing challenges in the region, including political instability, economic underdevelopment, and the unresolved status of certain territories.

The Berlin Process convenes yearly summits, assembling leaders from the Western Balkans, EU member states, and pertinent stakeholders to deliberate and synchronize actions. These gatherings center on diverse themes like economy, infrastructure, rule of law, security, and fostering youth collaboration.<sup>1</sup>

The objective of the Berlin Process is to enhance regional cooperation among nations in the Western Balkans, particularly focusing on infrastructure, economic development, and revitalizing multilateral relations between EU candidate countries and potential candidates from the region.<sup>2</sup>

*Kosovo is one of the countries that are part of this process, but what does the Berlin process mean for Kosovo?*

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<sup>1</sup> Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, The Berlin Process in the Western Balkans: Big Ideas, Difficult Implementation at, <https://www.swp-berlin.org/10.18449/2022C70/>

<sup>2</sup> BPRG, Berlin Process for the Western Balkans: Benefits and Challenges for Kosovo, January 2018, pg.1 at, [https://balkansgroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/THE-BERLIN-PROCESS-FOR-THE-WESTERN-BALKANS\\_GAINS-AND-CHALLENGES-FOR-KOSOVO\\_WEB\\_FINAL-1.pdf](https://balkansgroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/THE-BERLIN-PROCESS-FOR-THE-WESTERN-BALKANS_GAINS-AND-CHALLENGES-FOR-KOSOVO_WEB_FINAL-1.pdf)

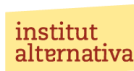
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The Berlin Process presents a valuable chance for Kosovo to have equal representation in summits, projects, and discussions. It empowers Kosovo to collaborate with regional states across various sectors, aiming for economic advancement, enhanced mobility, and the promotion of positive neighborly relationships and regional cooperation.<sup>3</sup>

In February 2023, Kosovo Assembly ratified three agreements signed within the Berlin Process with 2/3 of the votes.<sup>4</sup> As a result, it became the inaugural country in the Western Balkans to ratify these agreements in the Assembly, marking the second country in the region to swiftly ratify all three agreements. The ratified agreements encompass the Agreement on Free Movement with Identity Cards in the Western Balkans, the Agreement on the recognition of higher education qualifications within the region, and the recognition of professional qualifications specifically for doctors, dentists, and architects under the Central European Free Trade Agreement framework.<sup>5</sup>

Aside from the pivotal agreements, Kosovo has committed to executing action plans in various other domains, drawing from leaders' declarations and their pledges made during summits dating back to 2014. These statements have spurred initiatives on topics like the Common Regional Market and the Green Agenda. Kosovo stands as a signatory to both the "Sofia Declaration" outlining the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans and the Declaration for the Development of the Common Regional Market in 2020.

The following is the first monitoring report on the completion of activities stemming from the responsibilities outlined in the Action Plans associated with the Common Regional Market, specifically emphasizing Digitalization, and the Green Agenda, particularly centered on Decarbonisation.

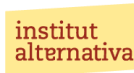
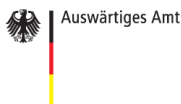
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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, page 21.

<sup>4</sup> Portal Ekonomia Online, February, 2023 at, <https://ekonomiaonline.com/ratifikohen-tri-marreshje-te-procesit-te-berlinit/>

<sup>5</sup> Telegrafi, February, 2023. <https://telegrafi.com/tri-marreshjet-e-procesit-te-berlinit-kosova-nder-vendet-e-para-qe-ratifikoi-edhe-marreshjen-per-levizje-leternjoftime-bosnje-dhe-hercegovinen/> [Retrieved on 18 July 2023]

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## METHODOLOGY

The first monitoring report will concentrate on assessing the current level of adherence of Kosovo Government to commitments made within the Berlin Process framework, particularly highlighting the Common Regional Market and Green Agenda for the Western Balkans. The report covers the developments that have occurred during period May – November 2023. Its primary audience will encompass Members of Kosovo Assembly and parliamentary staff, especially those engaged in parliamentary committees overseeing actions specified within the Berlin Process. Specifically, it will delve into the progress of the Common Regional Market, focusing on the Digitalization, and the Green Agenda, specifically addressing Decarbonisation efforts. This report aims to furnish comprehensive insights into the status of Berlin Process commitments, offering data and information crucial for parliamentary bodies to scrutinize governmental actions in these areas.

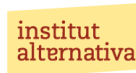
This research phase will center on the key milestones and activities outlined in the Action Plans for the Common Regional Market (CRM) and the Green Agenda. Leveraging these activities as a foundation, the research will extensively analyze Kosovo, evaluating the degree of implementation on a spectrum ranging from None to Minor, Moderate, and Transformative. It aims to pinpoint the responsible institution(s) for these initiatives and delineate the subsequent steps required for effective implementation. Additionally, the research endeavors to identify and address institutional bottlenecks that might hinder progress, fostering a sense of urgency for implementation among Members of Parliament (MPs).

The research will rely on robust data collection methods, including desk research to access existing data and conducting interviews with institutions, agencies, and business representatives to gather diverse perspectives. A variety of data sources will be utilized, such as official documents, reports from Western Balkans Institutions and the Regional Cooperation Council, statements by regional leaderships, media reports, and interview transcripts. For data analysis, thematic analysis of primary data, content and discursive analysis of interviews, and basic descriptive statistical methods like frequencies and cross-tabulations will be employed to derive comprehensive insights.

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## 1. THE IMPORTANCE OF KOSOVO ASSEMBLY ROLE IN SUPERVISING THE FULFILLMENT OF COMMITMENTS BY THE GOVERNMENT IN THE BERLIN PROCESS

In general, in the Western Balkans countries, despite Parliaments being officially recognized as the highest institutions in the political systems, they often operate with limited authority. Frequently, legislative decisions and initiatives formulated within government chambers lack adequate oversight within the parliamentary sphere, skewing the checks and balances system in favor of the executive branch. This trend reinforces the perception of feeble parliaments, heightening concerns about declining democracy in the region. Additionally, Parliaments have been sidelined in initiatives like the Berlin Process (BP), which have bolstered regional cooperation but without substantial involvement of legislative bodies.

Acknowledgment of the value of including parliaments in the BP only occurred at the Poznań Summit in 2019, despite earlier requests from regional parliamentary cooperation platforms like COSAP. Overall, while parliamentarians recognize the pivotal role of inter-parliamentary cooperation, such efforts have been largely inactive in the Western Balkans. Strengthening the institutional capabilities of Western Balkans' Parliaments concerning regional initiatives such as the Common Regional Market (CRM) and Green Agenda would enhance their role within domestic checks and balances and elevate parliamentary diplomacy at a regional level.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, reinforcing the capacities of MPs and parliamentary staff involved in pertinent committees and departments would foster sustainability and a more comprehensive approach to fortifying parliamentary diplomacy in the region, ensuring local ownership of significant regional processes.

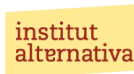
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<sup>6</sup> Conference on the Role of the Parliaments in the Berlin Process took place October 13 at, <https://www.berlinprocess.de/en/conference-on-the-role-of-the-parliaments-in-the-berlin-process-took-place-october-13>

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In Kosovo context, the monitoring report will further this process by offering vital information and data to Kosovo Assembly deputies and the public on the track record of implementation, serving as an accountability tool to encourage increased adherence to commitments made by Kosovo Government during the Berlin Process Summits. Ensuring the involvement of the Kosovo Assembly in monitoring the Kosovo Government's adherence to the commitments of the Berlin Process holds significant importance. By actively engaging the Kosovo Assembly in oversight and monitoring, there's an opportunity to reinforce accountability within the domestic framework. This involvement not only strengthens the democratic checks and balances within Kosovo but also amplifies the region's collective commitment to the Berlin Process objectives. Empowering the Kosovo Assembly to scrutinize and hold the government accountable for its commitments in the Berlin Process not only bolsters internal governance but also underscores Kosovo's commitment to regional initiatives, contributing to the broader stability and progress within the Western Balkans.

## 2. TO WHAT EXTENT HAS KOSOVO IMPLEMENTED THE COMMITMENTS FROM THE BERLIN PROCESS?

Notably, the Kosovo Government endorsed the commitments derived from the Berlin process and Kosovo Assembly demonstrated significant commitment by ratifying three main agreements with an overwhelming 2/3 majority vote. This landmark action positioned Kosovo as the inaugural Western Balkan country to ratify these agreements within the Assembly, marking the second country in the region to promptly endorse all three agreements. These ratified agreements encompass various critical facets, including Free Movement with Identity Cards in the Western Balkans, the Agreement on recognizing higher education qualifications within the region, and acknowledging the professional credentials of doctors, dentists, and architects under the Central European Free Trade Agreement framework. These agreements are part of the Common Regional Market under the Berlin process. Alongside this, two

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other focal points of this research hold significant importance within the CRM. In the upcoming chapters, the focus will revolve around evaluating the advancements within the Common Regional Market, notably emphasizing digitalization, and the other pillar of the Berlin Process, the Green Agenda, with a specific focus on decarbonization endeavors within Kosovo.

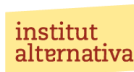
## 2.1 General overview of the level of implementation of the Action Plan on Common Regional Market: Digitalization

Level of Implementation				
Action Plan	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative
<b>Common Regional Market: Digitalization</b>			√	

Kosovo has made moderate progress in implementing the Action Plan on Common Regional Market, specifically the digitalization, outlined within the Berlin Process. Notably, Kosovo has achieved remarkable progress in enhancing its digital infrastructure and connectivity. By connecting the last non-connected village to high-speed broadband internet, Kosovo has emerged as a leader in internet penetration in Europe. Through initiatives like the Kosovo Digital Economy Project (KODE), implemented by the Ministry of Economy, over 200 villages and numerous institutions have been connected to high-speed internet, facilitating access to education and healthcare.

Additionally, Kosovo has taken substantial steps toward achieving interconnectivity in academic and research networks, exemplified by the establishment of the Kosovo Research and Education Network (KREN). However, obstacles remain, such as the non-approval of the new Higher Education Law, delaying increased collaboration among academic institutions.

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Efforts towards implementing 5G technology are underway, evident through the submission of the Digital Agenda strategy and the initiation of preparations for spectrum release. Moreover, Kosovo actively participated in regional dialogues and agreements such as the Regional Roaming Agreement (RRA), which significantly reduced roaming costs and introduced the Roam Like at Home regime in the Western Balkans.

Efforts to enhance digital skills and education are notable, although challenges persist in ensuring adequate resources and completing necessary restructuring within the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology. Despite these challenges, initiatives targeting digital skills training have commenced, benefitting thousands of individuals, particularly young people.

Kosovo has aligned various strategies and agendas with EU standards and frameworks, showcasing commitment to regional and international cooperation. However, there are ongoing efforts needed to address challenges in data exchange, cybersecurity, and the establishment of comprehensive e-government strategies to further strengthen the country's digital transformation. Additionally, fostering collaboration among regional stakeholders and advancing cyber resilience remain crucial for collective progress in the cybersecurity domain. In light of the outstanding challenges, KDI presents the following recommendations primarily directed at the Kosovo Assembly, aiming to enhance its oversight capacity in monitoring the Government's implementation of these commitments:

## Recommendations

Kosovo Assembly should concentrate its oversight efforts on several key areas reflecting the country's strides within the Berlin Process commitments. Monitoring the effective implementation of digital infrastructure projects, notably the Kosovo Digital Economy Project, and ensuring their equitable distribution across regions should be a priority. With a focus on the stalled progress due to legislative delays like the non-approval of the new Higher Education Law, MPs should work towards fostering academic collaboration and overcoming bureaucratic bottlenecks in the education sector. Oversight should also emphasize the nation's trajectory in 5G implementation, ensuring the comprehensive execution of the Digital Agenda strategy and spectrum release preparations.

Furthermore, Members of Parliament must closely monitor initiatives addressing digital skills and education, emphasizing resource allocation and restructuring within the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology. Aligning Kosovo's strategies with EU

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standards requires attention, especially in tackling challenges related to data exchange, cybersecurity, and e-government strategies. Facilitating cooperation among regional stakeholders and bolstering cybersecurity resilience should be a focal point, promoting collective advancement in these critical domains.

The Kosovo Assembly should focus on the monitoring of several critical areas to ensure the government's progress aligns with the country's digital transformation and connectivity goals:

### **Connectivity & Infrastructure:**

- Monitor the government's efforts to upgrade existing connections to 1Gbps, especially in rural areas.
- Oversee the strengthening of partnerships with entities like GEANT and the European Union's Broadband Competence Office for seamless connectivity.

### **Legislative Alignment & Policy Implementation:**

- Monitor the progress in aligning Kosovo's legislation with EU directives, particularly regarding 5G cybersecurity, Digital Services Acts, and Digital Markets Act.
- Track the execution of regional agreements such as the Roaming Agreement, ensuring reduced charges and improved connectivity.

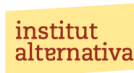
### **Digital Skills & Education:**

- Monitor the execution of digital skills strategies outlined in the Education Strategy 2022-2026, including resource allocation and program effectiveness within MESTI.
- Review initiatives ensuring equal access to digital education, especially for marginalized groups like the Roma community.

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### **Open Data, Smart Cities & Digital Transformation:**

- Oversee Kosovo's alignment with EU standards on open data and regional interoperability.
- Monitor the development and execution of the national smart city vision, ensuring accessible and responsive public services.
- Monitor involvement and engagement of stakeholders for open data usage and smart city initiatives.

### **Cybersecurity & Data Protection:**

- Oversee the implementation of cybersecurity laws and strategies, ensuring compliance with European standards.
- Track engagement with businesses and stakeholders for cyber incident reporting and participation in global cybersecurity forums.

### **Statistical Progress & E-Government:**

- Monitor preparations for the population and housing census and the Kosovo Agency of Statistics' capacities.
- Review progress in finalizing and adopting the e-Government Strategy, emphasizing robustness and independence in digital solutions.

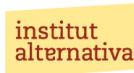
### **Regional Collaboration & Data Exchange:**

- Oversee initiatives expanding data exchange within the Western Balkans, aiming for technological modernization and security in data systems.

### **Oversight & Collaboration:**

- Monitor the strengthening of the Information and Privacy Agency's capacities for overseeing data protection laws.

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- Review collaboration efforts with organizations like SIGMA/OECD, RCC, ReSPA, and GIZ for data protection uniformity and regional cooperation.

By focusing on these areas, the Kosovo Assembly can ensure the government stays on track towards achieving its digital and connectivity targets while fostering collaboration and inclusivity across various sectors and communities within Kosovo and the broader region.

## 2.2 General overview of the level of implementation of the Action Plan on Green Agenda: Decarbonisation

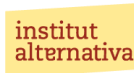
Level of Implementation				
Action Plan	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative
<b>Green Agenda: Decarbonisation</b>			√	

Aligned with the EU's goal to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, the region has pledged to attain carbon neutrality by the same year. This commitment involves endorsing the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans (GAWB) during the Sofia Summit in 2020 and subsequently approving the GAWB Action Plan at the Brdo Summit in October 2021.<sup>7</sup>

The GAWB Action Plan outlines 58 specific actions and 7 implementation roadmaps targeting: Climate policies, Sustainable energy practices, Efficient transportation systems, Circular economy initiatives, Pollution reduction strategies, Sustainable agriculture and

<sup>7</sup> Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) official website at, [https://www.rcc.int/priority\\_areas/61/green-agenda-for-the-western-balkans](https://www.rcc.int/priority_areas/61/green-agenda-for-the-western-balkans)

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food sources, as well as the Preservation of nature and biodiversity. Notably, the plan includes the incorporation of 2030 Energy and Climate Policy objectives encompassing carbon pricing, phasing out coal, pollution management, biodiversity preservation, regional collaboration, and a tentative timeline for synchronization with the EU Emissions Trading System starting in 2024.<sup>8</sup> This Chapter focuses on the level of implementation by the Kosovo institutions of 28 actions that have to do with aspects that aim to reduce carbonization. This includes renewable energy sources, environment friendly housing, transportation and other related issues.

By endorsing the Sofia Declaration on the Green Agenda, Kosovo took its initial steps toward a more sustainable transformation. Alongside other Western Balkan countries, Kosovo committed to working toward the 2050 goal of a carbon-neutral continent, aligning with the EU's stringent climate policies and reforming energy and transport sectors. Despite enacting laws to establish legal and regulatory structures for energy and climate issues, Kosovo's legislation still lacks effectiveness in addressing environmental challenges and decarbonization.

Given that the energy sector contributes to 86% of greenhouse gas emissions in Kosovo, kickstarting the decarbonization process there is pivotal. Notably, the approval of the Energy Strategy 2022 - 2031 stands out as a significant achievement, along with the groundbreaking solar energy park auction announcement, marking a turning point in Kosovo's renewable energy development. While nearing the 2020 target for renewable energy consumption, initiatives like the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, Decarbonization Strategy, and Law on Climate Change are currently pending. Efforts to combat energy poverty and improve transportation infrastructure show promise, with initiatives aiming to enhance road safety, expand electric transport options, and develop strategies for multimodal transportation.

At a broader scale, Kosovo faces several shortcomings, particularly in human and financial resources. The lack of professionals in decarbonization and related fields, as well as insufficient staff for implementing Green Agenda action plans, poses a challenge. Issues with fund security and project initiation and implementation linked to EU integration politics further complicate matters.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

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Cooperation with regional countries, especially in implementing climate resilience plans for transportation and Regional Transport Facilitation, remains lacking. Progress with the Regional Action Plan for Rail Reforms has been limited due to pending agreements, impacted by political situations.

While Kosovo has taken steps like approving the "Multimodal Transport Strategy" to guide sustainable transport, practical implementation remains uncertain. Legislation for electric vehicles and infrastructure for supply stations are pending. Regional cooperation in alternative fuels hasn't seen significant advancements.

Projects focused on energy efficiency have been initiated at a notable level, benefiting citizens directly. Overall, Kosovo has made moderate progress in legislative regulation but less in practical implementation. Ensuring proper execution of ongoing and forthcoming initiatives is crucial to meeting targets within the specified timeframe. Based on this, KDI provides the following recommendations primarily for the Kosovo Assembly, that focus on the crucial aspects where the Assembly should closely monitor the Government's actions and progress in achieving climate, energy, and transportation goals.

## Recommendations

- **Climate Change Law Endorsement:** Monitor and ensure timely endorsement of the Climate Change Law to avoid disruptions in fulfilling Green Agenda commitments.
- **Government's Climate Targets & Plans:** Oversee the Kosovo Government's actions toward meeting emission reduction and renewable energy goals by 2030, particularly timely adoption of the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) aligned with Energy Community targets.
- **Energy Strategy & Decarbonization Measures:** Monitor the implementation of the Energy Strategy 2022-2031 and the drafting of a Decarbonization Strategy. Oversee steps taken to assess and mitigate socio-economic impacts of decarbonization.

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- **Energy Efficiency & Renewable Laws:** Track and ensure the adoption of laws on energy efficiency, performance of buildings, and renewable energy sources, pending approval by the Kosovo Assembly.
- **Coal Reduction & Energy Poverty:** Monitor the gradual decrease in coal subsidies, strict enforcement of coal heating bans, and the development of programs to address energy poverty and support household renovation.
- **Transport & Mobility Strategies:** Oversee the alignment of Transport Strategies with eco-friendly approaches. Monitor the development of smart transport infrastructure, railway legislation amendments, and initiatives enhancing road safety and connectivity.
- **Sustainable Mobility & Alternative Fuels:** Monitor the progress in promoting sustainable mobility solutions and establishing regulations for electric vehicle charging stations. Focus on enhancing regional cooperation in developing alternative fuels infrastructure.
- **Climate Adaptation Strategy:** Track the drafting and implementation of the National Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation, ensuring prompt execution.

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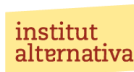
## ANNEX

### 1. Detailed data on the implementation of Common Regional Market Action Plan: Digitalization

Common Regional Market – <i>Regional digital area</i>				
Activity	Deadline	Responsible Institutions	Progress (policies, activities)	Next steps
<b>7.1. Digital infrastructure and connectivity</b>	2024	Ministry of Economy	<p>The Action Plan requires by 2024 to have fixed broadband internet access for at least 75% of households with the speed of at least 100Mbps upgradable to 1Gbps in each economy provided;</p> <p>In March 2023, World Bank reported that <b>Kosovo connected its last remaining non-connected village to high-speed broadband internet</b>, achieving one of the highest internet penetration in Europe. This milestone, achieved with World Bank support, marks a significant moment for the country's technological advancement</p>	<p>To meet the 2024 targets Kosovo's Government,, should prioritize upgrading existing connections to 1Gbps. Furthermore, promoting digital literacy programs for communities, fostering collaborations among institutions, especially in rural areas, and continually evaluating and investing in future-ready Technologies.</p>

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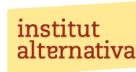
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			<p>and its population of around 1.8 million.<sup>9</sup> 201 villages, with 60,000 people were connected to high-speed broadband infrastructure, as part of the World Bank-financed <u>Kosovo Digital Economy Project (KODE)</u>, implemented by the Ministry of Economy of Kosovo. In addition to almost 5,000 households, 107 schools and 43 health institutions in remote locations are also now connected to high-speed internet of up to 100 Mbps.</p> <p>EC Country Report for Kosovo 2023 also reported that 100% of households nationwide now have access to fixed broadband electronic communications infrastructure. Fixed access internet penetration is estimated to be 125% of households, compared to 89% in the EU, and mobile telephony penetration is around 95% of the population.<sup>10</sup></p>	
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<sup>9</sup> See World Bank Report, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2023/03/21/-every-village-in-kosovo-now-connected-to-high-speed-broadband-internet-with-world-bank-support>

<sup>10</sup> European Commission, Country Report for Kosovo 2023, pg.69 at, [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD\\_2023\\_692%20Kosovo%20report\\_0.pdf](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD_2023_692%20Kosovo%20report_0.pdf)

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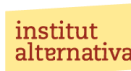
			The above information were also confirmed by the officials in the Ministry of Economy. <sup>11</sup>	
2. Establish Broadband Competence Offices (BCOs) in WB (where they do not exist) and strengthen their capacities to support broadband deployment	2021	Ministry of Economy	<p>The Action Plan envisages strengthened capacities of this Office including through setting up one-to-one cooperation with European Union BCO, their mutual cooperation and greater integration in EU BCO network.</p> <p>Broadband Competence Offices (BCO) is established in Kosovo, within the Ministry of Economy.<sup>12</sup> According to the representatives of the Kosovo’s Ministry of the Economy, BCO here is equipped and operational. Furthermore, the Office operates on a project basis rather than as a permanent unit, as its permanence was deemed unnecessary.<sup>13</sup></p>	Kosovo Government should further enhance the capabilities of the Broadband Competence Office (BCO). This should include establishing close collaboration with the European Union BCO for knowledge exchange and integration within the EU BCO network.

<sup>11</sup> KDI Interview with representatives of the Ministry of Economy, 27 November 2023, in Prishtine.

<sup>12</sup> Regional Cooperation Council, Common Regional Market Report on Implementation for 2022, pg. 27 at, <https://www.rcc.int/pubs/157/common-regional-market-report-on-implementation-for-2022>

<sup>13</sup> KDI Interview with representatives of the Ministry of Economy, 27 November 2023, in Prishtine.

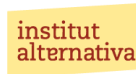
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<p>3. Interconnection of academic and research networks in WB6, with the support and cooperation of GEANT</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>Ministry of Economy</p>	<p>The Action Plan goal is that by 2024 interconnectivity of academic and research networks in WB6 is achieved and Regional collaboration and innovations is encouraged;</p> <p>The World Bank-financed project, <u>Kosovo Digital Economy Project (KODE)</u>, implemented by the Ministry of Economy supported also the establishment of the Kosovo Research and Education Network (KREN) in Kosovo that operates within the Ministry of Economy and is located in Prizren city.</p> <p>KREN connects Kosovo’s academic institutions to one-another but also to the pan-European network of universities (GÉANT), and offers opportunities for the academic community and businesses regarding access to knowledge and research networks in Europe and beyond. In addition, a data centre has been created</p>	<p>Kosovo Government should prioritize collaborating closely with GEANT to interconnect academic and research networks in the Western Balkans (WB6). Strengthening this partnership will significantly aid in achieving seamless connectivity and fostering collaborative initiatives across the region.</p>
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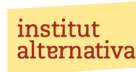
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			<p>in line with the needs of the academic community as well as a dedicated connection with KREN for all institutions of higher education. The expansion of the portfolio towards connecting primary and secondary schools is planned as a prerequisite to digitalisation of education.<sup>14</sup></p> <p>KREN is composed of a team of six officials. As of now, KREN's status remains undefined regarding whether it will operate as an agency or an NGO. Its current functioning is project-based, supported by the Ministry of Economy.<sup>15</sup></p> <p>The delays in fostering increased collaboration among academic institutions within the country lies in the non-approval of the new Higher Education Law, which contains specific provisions for cooperation among academic institutions. The reason for the</p>	
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<sup>14</sup> RCC, CRM Report 2022, pg. 34.

<sup>15</sup> KDI Interview with representatives of the Ministry of Economy, 27 November 2023, in Prishtine.

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			<p>non-approval of this law is the ratification procedure, requiring a two-thirds majority vote from non-majority communities in the Assembly.<sup>16</sup></p> <p>There is collaboration between KREN Kosovo and other Western Balkan countries, except for Serbia, where direct cooperation is absent, limited only to involvement within GEANT.<sup>17</sup></p>	
4. Develop 5G roadmap for Western Balkans and ensure effective implementation in line with the timeline defined therein	2023	Ministry of Economy	<p>The Action Plan envisages that by 2023, 5G strategy(ies)/Action Plan(s) are developed in each economy;</p> <p>The Plan also foresees agreed regional actions (example: aligned time and steps in harmonisation and assignment of European 5G pioneer bands, coordinated approach on selected aspects of 5G awarding, i.e. minimum licence duration, use of harmonised spectrum, etc.);</p> <p>Furthermore, to cover key industrial</p>	<p>In the coming year, Kosovo should in particular, conclude the alignment of Kosovo’s legislation with the EU’s Toolbox for 5G cybersecurity.</p> <p>Also, alignment with the EU Digital Services Acts and Digital Markets Act needs to be</p>

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

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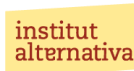


			<p>cities with 5G in each WB6 by the end of 2023. And, cover at least one main regional corridor with 5G by the end of 2025.</p> <p>In Kosovo, the Digital Agenda strategy covering the period up to 2030 has been adopted in June 2023. The policy provides a comprehensive framework for digital transformation, including 5G technologies and the digital transformation of businesses and public services.<sup>18</sup> Advanced Secure Digital Infrastructure has been identified with the aim to create suitable conditions for the development of the 5G networks and providing necessary frequency spectrum, including the so-called 5G pioneer bands. Also, the work to prepare the release spectrum for 5G started.<sup>19</sup></p>	<p>stepped up, to provide predictability for the business community.</p>
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<sup>18</sup> EC Country Report for Kosovo 2023, pg.69.

<sup>19</sup> RCC, CRM Report 2021, pg.27,28.

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			<p>The 2022 EU Country report's recommendations were mostly not addressed and still remain valid.<sup>20</sup></p> <p>The Ministry of Economy has continued to support the development of next generation of mobile networks by connecting mobile towers with fiber technology to prepare for the deployment of 5G network. During year 2022, 21 additional mobile towers were connected and the connection of another 25 mobile network towers was in the process of implementation.<sup>21</sup></p> <p>Kosovo adopted the regulation for number portability for public electronic communications services subscribers. The existing resources of the Electronic and Postal Communications Regulatory</p>	
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<sup>20</sup> EC Country Report for Kosovo 2023, pg.96.

<sup>21</sup> RCC CRM Report 2022 and KDI Interview with representatives of the Ministry of Economy.

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			<p>Authority remain limited and not proportionate to their responsibilities.<sup>22</sup></p> <p><b>Regarding 5G Roadmap</b>, the Regulatory Authority of Electronic and Postal Communications (ARKEP) <b>approved the Frequency Release Plan</b>. This plan includes all frequency bands with important economic value, namely 700 MHz, 800 MHz and similar. ARKEP has planned to assign the 800 MHz and 3.5 GHz bands to enable deployment of 5G technology. During the assignment process, ARKEP took into consideration the relevant EU recommendations specified in the 5G connectivity toolbox, with focus on improving the business environment: ensuring investment friendly access to 5G radio spectrum, promoting opportunity of infrastructure sharing, and combining coverage obligations with financial incentives. In</p>	
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<sup>22</sup> EC Country Report for Kosovo 2023, pg.96.

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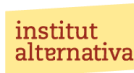
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			<p>addition to assigning frequency capacities for operators, ARKEP also foresees certain capacities for private users (90 MHz in the 3,710-3,800 MHz band). During 2022, ARKEP reduced annual fees for frequencies by 40%, and approved the new frequency allocation table, which is in line with the European common allocation table, and the plan for distribution and utilisation of the 3.5 GHz frequency band.<sup>23</sup></p> <p>The monitoring and regulation of Kosovo’s radio frequency spectrum is being conducted by the <b>National Spectrum Monitoring System</b> that was established and supported by the KODE project.<sup>24</sup></p>	
5. Reduce roaming				Kosovo should stay

<sup>23</sup> RCC, CRM Report 2022, pg. 33, 34.

<sup>24</sup> KDI Interview with representatives of the Ministry of Economy.

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<p>charges intra-WB6 and EU-WB through implementation of WB Roaming Agreement and the Roadmap for lowering the roaming charges between EU and WB</p>			<p>The signing of Regional Roaming Agreement (RRA) during the 2nd Western Balkans Digital Summit in Belgrade in April 2019 brought significant reduction of roaming costs to all WB mobile end-users from 1 July 2019. RRA is considered as one of the most important achievements of the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans as well as Multi-annual Action Plan on Regional Economic Area in the Western Balkans (MAP REA) and Common Regional Market (CRM).<sup>25</sup></p> <p>Kosovo has constructively engaged in high-level regional dialogue on digital transformation and the implementation of the Regional Roaming Agreement.<sup>26</sup></p>	<p>engaged in regional talks, overseeing the Regional Roaming Agreement's execution locally, participating in discussions to further reduce charges with the EU, raising public awareness about reduced roaming benefits, and advocating for supportive policies. This commitment will sustain Kosovo's contribution to enhanced connectivity within the Western Balkans and with the EU.</p>
<p><b>Regonal Actions</b></p>				
<p>5.1. Complete the final phase of the Regional</p>	<p>2021</p>	<p>Ministry of Economy</p>	<p>The Action Plan envisaged Zero retail roaming charges within WB6 as of 1</p>	

<sup>25</sup> RCC, Roaming, at [https://www.rcc.int/priority\\_areas/53/roaming](https://www.rcc.int/priority_areas/53/roaming)

<sup>26</sup> EU Country Report for Kosovo 2023, pg. 69.

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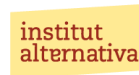
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<p>Roaming Agreement</p>			<p>July 2021;</p> <p>The ultimate goal of RRA to introduce Roam Like at Home (RLAH) regime as of 1 July 2021 in the region was successfully achieved and roaming free WB region was established, meaning that currently, WB consumers do not pay extra charges for calls, SMS and mobile data while in roaming in the region, compared to what they pay at home.<sup>27</sup></p> <p>The introduction of RLAH regime from 1 July 2021 resulted in significant increase in consumption/user of all roaming services in the region, thus confirming the high price sensitivity of WB roamers.<sup>28</sup></p> <p>Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow the implementation of</li> </ul>	
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<sup>27</sup> [https://www.rcc.int/priority\\_areas/53/roaming](https://www.rcc.int/priority_areas/53/roaming)

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. pg.30.

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			<p>RRA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance in the implementation of the Roadmap for Lowering Roaming Charges between the EU and WB</li> <li>• Facilitate and coordinate the work for a structured Regulatory Dialogue between the EU and WB</li> <li>• Maintain structured consultation with mobile operators through a transparent and all-inclusive process.</li> </ul>	
5.2. Finalise the Roadmap for lowering the roaming charges between EU and WB and effective implementation in line with the timeline defined therein	2021	Ministry of Economy	<p>The Action Plan foresees, Reduced roaming charges between WB and EU in line with milestones agreed in the Roadmap;</p> <p>In December 2022, 38 telecommunication operators from the EU and the Western Balkans agreed to lower data roaming prices. This agreement has now come into effect as of October 1, 2023, which means that data roaming between the Western</p>	

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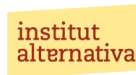
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			<p>Balkans and the EU has become more affordable for both citizens and businesses in these regions.<sup>29</sup></p> <p>These operators voluntarily committed to reducing the gap between data roaming and domestic fees when traveling between the EU and the Western Balkans in both directions. The initial reductions in prices are currently being implemented by the participating telecom operators. Many of them are offering packages with prices well below the agreed maximum limits, making them accessible to a wide range of consumers. Further reductions are planned for 2026, following the agreed glide path, with the goal of making data roaming prices close to domestic prices by 2028.<sup>30</sup></p>	
<b>7.2. Digital skills and</b>				

<sup>29</sup> European Union official page, Article: Decrease of data roaming fees between the Western Balkans and the EU, at, [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/decrease-data-roaming-fees-between-western-balkans-and-eu-2023-10-02\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/decrease-data-roaming-fees-between-western-balkans-and-eu-2023-10-02_en)

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

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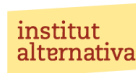


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competence				
<p>1. Develop digital skills <b>strategies</b> and agree on <b>short and mid-term regional actions</b> for digital upskilling</p>	<p>2022-2023</p>		<p>The Action Plan envisages for Regional actions to support closing of digital skills gap defined; Gaps/needs for digital skills for targeted groups (citizens, start-ups, youth, women, public administration, etc.) mapped;</p> <p>The Kosovo Government approved the <b>Education Strategy 2022-2026</b> in November 2022 prepared by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology. One of the key areas of this Strategy is Digital Education, which focuses on improving digital skills for citizens.<sup>31</sup></p> <p>However, the EC Country Report 2023 has said that, for the successful implementation, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MESTI) needs to ensure the necessary human and financial resources. The</p>	<p>Kosovo Government needs to ensure the effective execution of digital skills strategies outlined in the Education Strategy 2022-2026, particularly emphasizing Digital Education initiatives. In addition, it should swiftly allocate the required human and financial resources within the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MESTI) to facilitate successful implementation. Also, highlight the importance of fostering digitally skilled citizens, as emphasized in the finalized Digital Agenda</p>

<sup>31</sup> RCC, CRM Report 2022, pg.34.

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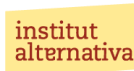


			<p>restructuring of the MESTI is still pending.<sup>32</sup></p> <p>The Ministry of Economy has finalised the draft <b>Digital Agenda for Kosovo 2030 strategic document and Action Plan 2023-2025</b> and the same was approved by the Government in June 2023. <b>Digitally skilled population</b> is one of the strategic objectives of the Strategy.<sup>33</sup></p>	<p>for Kosovo 2030. Align governmental resources and endeavors to achieve the strategic goal of nurturing a proficient digital population.</p>
<p>2. 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 group</p>	<p>2022-2023</p>	<p>Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation</p>	<p>The Action Plan goal in this regard is, increased digital skills for targeted groups (i.e. start-ups/youth, adults, basic digital skills for citizens, etc.). Furthermore, Pilot upskilling activities to address Information and communication technology (ICT) market needs conducted by 2021. Lastly, at least 50 people per economy are trained annually.</p> <p>In Kosovo, to address the digital skills</p>	<p>The Kosovo Government should continue and expand initiatives aimed at bolstering digital skills across various sectors. Strengthening ongoing programs that train ICT specialists and collaborating with projects like KODE to</p>

<sup>32</sup> EC Country Report for Kosovo 2023, pg.105.

<sup>33</sup> RCC, CRM Report 2022, pg.34.

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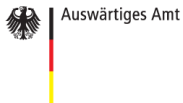




			<p>gap, with IPA II support the Ministry of Economy is in the process of training more than 1,500 beneficiaries in skills in becoming ICT specialists, such as programming, cyber security, and relevant high specialised tailored training courses.</p> <p>Likewise, in cooperation with KODE project, an additional 2,000 young people will benefit from training in the most in-demand digital skills. Over 1,300 young people have been trained so far through these two programmes.<sup>34</sup></p>	<p>empower the youth with essential digital skills is crucial. Additionally, the government should consider broadening access to such training programs and initiatives, ensuring inclusivity for all targeted groups.</p>
<p>3. Develop Digital Education Action Plans and promote equality in access, in particular for disadvantaged groups and minorities, particularly Roma</p>			<p>The Action Plan foresees Aligned actions in digital education in the region;          Aligned standards with EU Digital Competence Framework;          The Government of the Republic of</p>	<p>Kosovo Government should focus on implementing Digital Education Action Plans aligned with regional initiatives and EU standards to promote equal access, especially</p>

<sup>34</sup> RCC, CRM Report 2022, pg.34.

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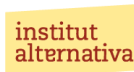


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			<p>Kosovo, has approved the Kosovo Digital Agenda 2030, which has been developed and proposed by the Ministry of Economy. The Digital Agenda takes into consideration the strategic objectives of the national development strategy, the national IT strategy, and other socio-economic policy documents of Kosovo, and is fully aligned with the latest strategies and recommendations of the European Union, such as the 2030 Digital Compass, Green Deal, Shaping Europe’s Digital Future, Path to the Digital Decade 2030, Gigabit Society Strategy, 5G Action Plan, Cybersecurity of 5G Networks, etc.<sup>35</sup></p> <p>Regarding the disadvantages groups and minorities particularly Roma, the Kosovo Government in 2022 <b>has adopted the Strategy for inclusion of Roma and Ashkali communities in Kosovo society 2022-2026 and the</b></p>	<p>for marginalized groups like the Roma community. The implementation of the Kosovo Digital Agenda 2030, incorporating inclusion strategies for communities such as Roma and Ashkali, will play a crucial role in achieving digital equity across society.</p>
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<sup>35</sup> Kosovo Government official website, Government approves Kosovo Digital Agenda 2030, at <https://me.rks.gov.net/en/blog/government-approves-kosovo-digital-agenda-2030/>

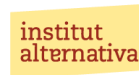
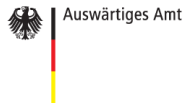
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		<b>Action Plan 2022-2024.</b>	
<b>Digital economy in the era of new ICT technologies</b>			
1. Organise regular high-level meetings, including Annual Digital Summit, to ensure digital agenda stands at the forefront of regional transformation	Annually		<p>The Action Plan foresees high-level government-business collaboration on digital transformation challenges maintained through Annual Digital Summit;</p> <p>Competitive, innovative digital ideas and solutions based on regionally agreed targets/business needs promoted;</p> <p>So far there have been five digital Summits held in the Western Balkan countries.</p> <p>The 4th Digital Summit 2021 took place from 11 to 13 October 2021 in Podgorica. The Summit Conclusions and two draft Joint Statements (i.e. on the Free Flow of Data in WB and on Interoperable Western Balkans)</p>

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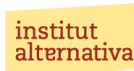
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			<p>displayed the key actions and priorities for 2022.<sup>36</sup></p> <p>The 5<sup>th</sup> Digital Summit (WBDS), was organised in September 2022 in Pristina and providing an opportunity for exchange of ideas, knowledge and experience from the WB, as well as for discussion of policy, practice, progress, and challenges of digitalisation that the region is facing. The summit conclusions reconfirmed the region’s commitment to improve the digital environment in the WB, in addition to defining actions and priorities for the upcoming year.<sup>37</sup></p> <p>Moreover, regular ICT Ministerial meetings (i.e. 1 July 2020, 25 June 2021) also served as a high-level platform to address core regional actions</p>	
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<sup>36</sup> RCC, CRM Report 2021, pg. 15.

<sup>37</sup> RCC, CRM Report 2022, pg. 21.

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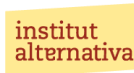
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			toward a better digitally connected region. <sup>38</sup>	
2. Align standards for metadata for open data at regional level based on EU standards to be implemented throughout the region and foster open data principle	2023	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Administration	<p>The Action Plan foresees, Standards for open data based on EU applied at regional level; Also, use of data for governmental and wider public sector needs and research are enabled.</p> <p>In order to increase the transparency and accountability of the state administration, the Government of Kosovo is implementing Open Data Initiative, managed by the Ministry of Public Administration.<sup>39</sup></p>	As stated also in the EU Country Report 2023, Kosovo still needs to align with the EU <i>acquis</i> on open data and the re-use of public sector information.
3. Reach an agreement on regional interoperability of toll	2022-2024	Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and	The Action Plan foresees for Regional interoperability of toll services to be enhanced;	Kosovo should actively engage in discussions and negotiations with

<sup>38</sup> RCC, CRM Report 2021, pg. 15.

<sup>39</sup> Kosovo's Ministry of Internal Affairs, Open Data at, <https://mpb.rks-gov.net/ap/page.aspx?id=2,33>

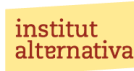
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<p>services in WB</p>		<p>Infrastructure</p> <p>Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Administration</p>	<p>Data exchange criteria and rules to be agreed; Also, shortened travel time for citizens and transport operators while crossing throughout the region;</p> <p>The path towards achieving interoperability involves legal, technical, and operational considerations, including compliance with EU directives, harmonized protocols for data exchange, and investment estimates for system upgrades. Western Balkan countries should consider implementing a phased approach to unify their electronic toll systems. Leveraging existing infrastructure and gradual alignment with EU standards would pave the way for seamless interoperability, ensuring cost-effective operations and facilitating regional integration.<sup>40</sup></p>	<p>neighboring countries to enhance regional interoperability of toll services. Collaborating closely with regional counterparts, Kosovo can work on establishing agreements and protocols for data exchange, aligning with EU directives for toll systems. Additionally, investing in infrastructure upgrades and adopting a phased approach can pave the way toward seamless interoperability. By focusing on these measures, Kosovo can significantly reduce transit times and streamline operations at</p>
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<sup>40</sup> Transport Community Report, Tolling interoperability in Western Balkans Executive, at <https://www.transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/TC-WB-Interoperability-ExecSummary-202211.pdf>

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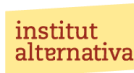


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			Regarding the travel time, according to the World Bank, “delays at crossings in the Western Balkans are five times longer than in many EU countries and trucks spend some 26 million hours at crossings in the region each year – that’s nearly 3,000 years”. <sup>41</sup>	border crossings, fostering economic growth and regional connectivity.
4. Agree on principles and standards used for smart cities, based on EU standards, with a view to ensure data and services interoperability	2023	Ministry of Local Government Administration and Municipalities	<p>The Action Plan goal is to have an improved exchange of standards applied for key services, best practices, etc.; Also, established network of smart cities across Western Balkans;</p> <p>In this regard, Smart City Kosova project aims <u>to prepare a National Strategy for Smart and Sustainable Urban Development</u>, as well as <u>to prepare and communicate Overall Smart City Strategies for 7 Kosovo cities</u>, providing them with innovative approaches towards local problems and helping them to promote and generate a sustainable urban development. The</p>	<p><u>Provide support to city governments:</u> The central government should provide support to municipalities to develop capabilities that enable investments in smart city projects.</p> <p><u>Strengthen inter-municipal cooperation:</u> This could be achieved by establishing a network of cities, an initiative to connect cities for sharing</p>

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

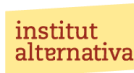
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			<p>project involves 5 universities from 5 different countries (University for Business and Technology – Kosova, TU Wien-Austria, ETH Zurich-Switzerland, HafenCity Universität-Germany and Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University-Turkey) with more than 20 experts/professionals from academia and other experts/professionals from partner institutions and industry. Prishtina, Prizren, Ferizaj, Peja, Gjilan, Vushtrria and Lipjan Municipalities, which all together constitute more than 30 % of Kosovo’s territory and 45 % of Kosovo’s population, will be targeted by this project. All of these 7 cities will be treated in parallel.<sup>42</sup></p> <p>With its technological and non-technological dimensions, Smart City initiative can help overcome the limitations of traditional urban development that tends to manage urban infrastructure systems in silos. By using</p>	<p>knowledge and actions.</p> <p><u>Assign leadership on the municipal and national level:</u> cities create posts that provide guidance and support for the implementation of digital strategy.</p> <p><u>Develop national smart city vision and strategy:</u> Kosovo to develop a Smart City vision and strategy, including the challenges that cities face, and the opportunities and benefits that smart cities bring to these urbanization issues.</p> <p><u>Digital transformation of public services:</u> Kosovo</p>
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<sup>42</sup> Institute for Urban Studies and Spatial Planning official webpage at, <https://cus.uvt-uni.net/project/smart-city-kosova/>

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			<p>digital technologies, such as Open Data, they help connect different city stakeholders, improve citizen involvement, offer new and enhance existing services, and provide context-aware views on city operations. Smart City development is, however, highly complex, challenging and context-specific.<sup>43</sup></p>	<p>has already taken action on the digital transformation of its public services. However, it needs to make sure that these services are accessible and answer the needs of the citizens.</p> <p><u>Encourage involved stakeholders to use open data:</u> in order for Kosovo to create a culture of open data and use data for creating smart city solutions, is crucial to involve different stakeholders, from data scientists to urban planning designers and innovators. An option could be to establish an Open Data</p>
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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

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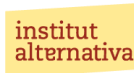


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				Institute that brings together governmental institutions and businesses as their work on developing technical standards and specifications for integrating digital solutions. <sup>44</sup>
5. Undertake regional actions to promote Artificial Intelligence (AI) in selected aspects and based on EU practices	2024	Ministry of Economy	<p>The Action Plan foresees WB High-level Group on AI established; Aspects of AI agreed at regional level; Action plan prepared for the agreed aspects; And, synergies with EU-led activities on AI ensured;</p> <p>On Artificial Intelligence (AI), Western Balkans committed to establish high-level regional Working Group, which will work on all aspects of AI to ensure synergies with the EU. This was agreed</p>	To advance its role in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Kosovo can prioritize forming a dedicated high-level working group focused on various aspects of AI. This group should align its strategies with EU practices and initiatives while emphasizing regional cooperation within the Western

<sup>44</sup> Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, Report: Kosovo - Smart Cities Now and the Future, pg.59-62 at <https://www.freiheit.org/western-balkans/kosovo-smart-cities-now-and-future>

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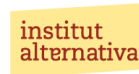
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			<p>on the 5th Western Balkans Digital summit that took place in Pristina, Kosovo, the 21 and 22 September 2022.<sup>45</sup> To better face cybersecurity threats, the WB decided to improve cooperation within the region but also with the EU, in particular the European Commission and the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity. The aim is to increase protection of critical infrastructure, preventing and detecting cyber threats as well as detecting and effectively responding to incidents.<sup>46</sup></p>	<p>Balkans. Furthermore, Kosovo can collaborate closely with the European Commission and the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity to strengthen cybersecurity measures, particularly in safeguarding critical infrastructure and bolstering capabilities to counter cyber threats and respond effectively to incidents. This approach would not only enhance regional AI capabilities but also reinforce cybersecurity resilience in Kosovo.</p>
<b>Priority Area_Regional actions</b>				

<sup>45</sup> EU official webpage, Western Balkans work jointly on improving digital transformation at, <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/node/11198/printable/pdf>

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

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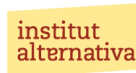


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<p>6. Undertake regional activities to facilitate participation of WB in EU HPC (The European High Performance Computing)</p>	<p>2023-2024</p>	<p>Ministry of Economy</p>	<p>The Plan foresees for all WB economies to be with EU HPC by 2024; And increased uptake of WBIF for HPC projects and investments;</p> <p>The European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking (EuroHPC) aims to improve quality of life of European citizens, advance science, boost industrial competitiveness, and ensure Europe’s technological autonomy. It is a legal and funding entity, created in 2018 and located in Luxembourg. It pools together the resources of the European Union, 32 European countries and three private partners. From Western Balkans only Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia are part of it. Other Member States and Associated States to Horizon 2020 Europe or Digital Europe Programme can also join the Joint Undertaking at any moment.<sup>47</sup></p>	<p>Kosovo can aim to enhance its participation in the European High Performance Computing (EuroHPC) initiative by exploring the opportunities available through this collaboration. Although Kosovo hasn’t yet utilized EuroHPC services, an ongoing assessment within the country demonstrates interest in potential future engagements. Kosovo could focus on meeting the eligibility criteria outlined by EuroHPC, which typically involve complying with usage policies, demonstrating</p>
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<sup>47</sup> EU official webpage, The European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking at, <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/high-performance-computing-joint-undertaking>

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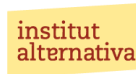


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			<p>To date, Kosovo has not made use of the services provided by EuroHPC. However, there is an ongoing assessment within Kosovo regarding the potential adoption of these services in its future endeavors.<sup>48</sup></p> <p>The criteria for accessing EuroHPC resources are similar to those for accessing general HPC services. They often include eligibility requirements, an application process outlining computational needs, compliance with usage policies, expertise demonstration, potential fees, and resource availability management during high demand. However, specific details may vary based on the EuroHPC initiative and its partnering facilities.</p>	<p>computational needs, showcasing expertise, and managing resource availability during peak demand. Active engagement in EuroHPC could pave the way for Kosovo's integration into this European initiative, potentially fostering technological advancements and collaborations in high-performance computing endeavors.</p>
7. Undertake regional activities to improve availability, analysis and	2022		The Action Plan foresees to track progress regarding regional digital competitiveness.	In the coming year, Kosovo should in particular, finalise

<sup>48</sup> KDI Interview with representatives of the Ministry of Economy.

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<p>monitoring of high quality digital economy statistics, building on EU's DESI (The Digital Economy and Society Index) and International Telecommunications Union (ITU) ICT-Information and communication technology sector, Development Index</p>			<p>Also, to identify priority areas for data collection to calculate DESI indicators. And, enhanced use of data collection for reporting purposes.</p> <p>Kosovo has some level of preparation in the area of statistics. Some progress was made in the reporting period, notably in improving: the data-collection methodology; data transmission to Eurostat; and implementation of the Eurostat peer-review recommendations. Communication between the different statistical institutions has improved, but coordination at the technical level and the use of available administrative data are insufficient.<sup>49</sup></p> <p>Kosovo has also improved the frequency of its statistical outputs. Some statistics on energy, social statistics and short-term statistics in the services sector are now being sent to Eurostat on a monthly basis, whereas they used to be sent on a</p>	<p>preparations for the population and housing census and its implementation by ensuring operational details and full coverage of the territory. Furthermore, increase the number of statistical products and send these products more frequently to Eurostat. And lastly, fill existing vacancies and increase the capacities of the Kosovo Agency of Statistics.</p>
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<sup>49</sup> EC Country Report for Kosovo 2023, pg.73.

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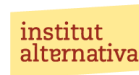


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			quarterly basis. The delayed population and housing census was planned to take place between 1 November and 31 December but has been postponed again. Last year's recommendations were partially met and remain valid. <sup>50</sup>	
8. Regional cooperation in regard to exchange of good practice in the field of digital transformation, in particular e-government	Annually	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Administration	<p>The Action Plan foresees, new and improved already existing forms of partnerships need to be established, based on the dissemination of knowledge and mutual strengthening of capacities needed for digital transformation and support for the development of e-government; Also, at least 2 regional events are organised annually;</p> <p>In Kosovo the e-government portal is operational. The platform offers over 150 fully digitalised services. However, Kosovo needs to make further efforts to</p>	<p>Kosovo should prioritize the finalization and adoption of its e-Government Strategy to complement the operational e-government portal that offers a broad spectrum of digital services. Efforts to expand service offerings and integrate permits and licenses into the platform should continue. However, there's a need for</p>

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

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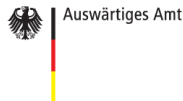
			<p>finalise and adopt the e-Government Strategy.<sup>51</sup></p> <p>Kosovo has notably expanded its array of services on the e-government platform and initiated plans to streamline and digitize permits and licenses within the same platform.<sup>52</sup></p> <p>Relying on donor support, the administration of e-government technical infrastructures persists. To streamline and digitize public services effectively, establishing robust e-government systems is crucial. This ensures uniformity in designing and maintaining digital solutions, guaranteeing their interoperability, safety, and security.<sup>53</sup></p>	<p>sustained focus on developing robust e-government systems, ensuring uniformity, interoperability, and security in digital solutions. This includes reducing reliance on external donor support for administering technical infrastructures, aiming for self-sufficiency in maintaining and innovating these digital systems to streamline and digitize public services effectively.</p>
<b>7.4. Trust and security</b>				
1. Agree on minimum	2021	All institutions and	The Plan foresees, facilitated movement	Within Kosovo,

<sup>51</sup> EC Country Report for Kosovo 2023, pg.96.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid pg.103.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid pg.15.

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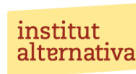
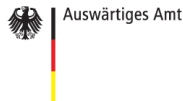
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<p>technical standards and specifications to allow an exchange of data and documents, and conduct pilot activities</p>	<p>Pilots 2022- 2023</p>	<p>agencies</p>	<p>of services across the region; And, exchange of data and documents piloted;</p> <p>In Kosovo, data quality and exchange of data across different agencies for the administration of taxes remain a challenge.<sup>54</sup></p> <p>In regional level, CEFTA TRACES NT was launched in July 2022 and was piloted to enable data and documents exchange related to phytosanitary certificates and common health entry documents. The new version of the Transparency Pack is hosted in the CEFTA cloud and brings significant improvement compared to the previous state of play. The system uses the latest technology, it is more secure and robust and easier for maintenance. All databases have been improved functionally and technically and</p>	<p>cooperation and exchange of data should be strengthened with the police, the Tax administration, the Financial Intelligence Unit, the cadastral registry and municipal authorities.</p> <p>In regional level, Kosovo and other Western Balkan countries can build on the success of CEFTA by expanding data exchange initiatives. They should invest in modern, secure technology for efficient, easy-to-maintain systems, potentially using cloud-based</p>
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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, pg. 98.

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			accompanying user manuals were distributed and users trained. <sup>55</sup>	solutions.
2. Align regional actions to ensure the protection of personal data and privacy in Western Balkans, based on EU standards	2023	The Information and Privacy Agency	<p>The Plan foresees protection of personal data and privacy in a uniform manner throughout the region is ensured.</p> <p>Kosovo's laws on personal data protection align closely with the EU's General Data Protection Regulation and the Law Enforcement Directive. The Information and Privacy Agency monitors the implementation of these laws, demonstrating independence and enhancing its capabilities. It has bolstered the legal framework by introducing regulations and guidelines for controllers and inspections. Despite constraints in budget and manpower, the Agency handles access-to-public-documents complaints and data protection issues independently and effectively.<sup>56</sup></p>	<p>For Kosovo, reinforcing the Information and Privacy Agency's capacity through increased resources and manpower can fortify its oversight and implementation of data protection laws. Emphasizing ongoing training programs for controllers and staff can further enhance expertise and efficiency. Regionally, collaboration and knowledge sharing initiatives, akin to the recent event in Brussels, are crucial. Focusing on</p>

<sup>55</sup> RCC CRM Report 2022, pg.16.

<sup>56</sup> EC Country Report for Kosovo 2023, pg.31.

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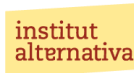


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			In regional level, recently from 18 to 22 December, in Brussels was organized the event “Data-protection in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership Region” supported by organized by SIGMA/OECD, RCC , ReSPA (Regional School of Public Administration), and GIZ. The conclusions emphasized the importance of sharing knowledge, addressing region-specific challenges like legislative alignment and capacity building, and fostering ongoing collaboration. Participants highlighted the need to implement EU standards, build networks, and continue learning from the EU to enhance data protection profiles across the regions. <sup>57</sup>	legislative alignment, capacity building, and ongoing cooperation with organizations like SIGMA/OECD, RCC, ReSPA, and GIZ will help the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership Region harmonize practices and standards, leveraging EU guidelines to strengthen data protection uniformly across the regions.
3. Develop mentoring programmes for WB Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs) and other	2023	Ministry of Internal Affairs	The Action Plan foresees upgraded capabilities of economy and other authorities (primarily CSIRTs) to prevent and detain cyber threats, to deal with cyber incidents and attacks and	Kosovo Government should actively implement the newly approved Cyber Security Law and National Cyber

<sup>57</sup> ReSPA official webpage, Data-protection in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership Region at, <https://www.respaweb.eu/0/news/592/data-protection-in-the-western-balkans-and-eastern-partnership-region>

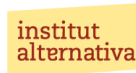
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<p>institutions as longer-term cooperation with advanced CSIRTs and other partners</p>			<p>ensure quick recovery process in case of incidents;</p> <p>In Kosovo, <b>Cyber Security Law</b>, drafted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs was approved by the Kosovo Assembly in February 2023.</p> <p>Also, <b>the National Cyber Security Strategy 2023-2027</b> was adopted in September 2023.</p> <p>In the regional level, at the Tirana Home Affairs Ministerial in September 2023, Western Balkan nations emphasized integrated border management, tackling transnational organized crime, and bolstering cybersecurity. They advocated for EU support in enhancing border security, called for joint actions against crime, and expressed intent to join the CSIRT network under NIS 2 Directive for improved cyber resilience. The meeting stressed the need for standardized cybersecurity frameworks</p>	<p>Security Strategy to fortify the country's cybersecurity infrastructure. Collaborative approaches and alignment with international cybersecurity standards are crucial for safeguarding critical infrastructure against cyber threats.</p>
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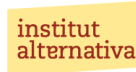


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			and collaborative approaches to safeguard critical infrastructure. <sup>58</sup>	
4. Strengthen cybersecurity capacities in the WB region through cooperation with European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA)	2021-2024	Ministry of Internal Affairs	<p>The Action Plan foresees, increased capacities of CSIRTs, technical education and training, common methodology of assessment, strengthened cooperation and information sharing to protect infrastructure and networks from cyber threats;</p> <p>Also, joint events organised, information sharing and regular assessment of progress ensured;</p> <p>In May 2023 EU launched "EU Kosovo Home Affairs Programme," a significant initiative aimed at strengthening the alignment of Kosovo's home affairs sectors with European standards and best practices. The Programme aim to address critical areas of reform in Kosovo, including the protection of critical infrastructure and cybersecurity. The project will provide assistance to</p>	<p>Kosovo Government should focus on enhancing cybersecurity capabilities aligned with European standards. And, prioritize the development of critical infrastructure protection and cybersecurity measures. Also, collaborate with the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) to bolster capacities, leverage technical education and training opportunities, and establish a unified assessment methodology. Lastly, participate actively in joint events, ensure</p>

<sup>58</sup> Berlin Process at, <https://www.berlinprocess.de/en/home-affairs-ministerial-took-place-september-14>

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			the Ministry of Internal Affairs in identifying and designating national and European critical infrastructures, as well as support in developing operator security plans. And align the legal and institutional framework of Kosovo with EU standards. <sup>59</sup>	robust information sharing mechanisms, and commit to regular progress assessments.
5. Enhance resilience of cyberspace in the WB through increased participation of business community in strengthening cybersecurity capacities in WB	2022-2023	Ministry of Internal Affairs	<p>The Plan foresees, increased support and cooperation with the private sector, cyber specialists and other stakeholders to support information sharing and knowledge exchange; Also, cooperation models developed to better and adequately address cyber security in the region;</p> <p>In Kosovo, the newly adopted Cyber Security Law foresees that Cyber Security Agency, created by this Law, will establish a communication platform with citizens and businesses that will be</p>	Kosovo should strengthen engagement with businesses, cyber experts, and stakeholders to fortify regional cybersecurity efforts. Utilize the new Cyber Security Law to establish a 24/7 platform for reporting cyber incidents and involve the private sector and civil society in the State Council for Cyber Security. Align with the

<sup>59</sup> EU official webpage, EU Launches Kosovo Home Affairs Programme to Strengthen Cooperation and Rule of Law in Kosovo at, [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kosovo/eu-launches-kosovo-home-affairs-programme-strengthen-cooperation-and-rule-law-kosovo\\_en?s=321](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kosovo/eu-launches-kosovo-home-affairs-programme-strengthen-cooperation-and-rule-law-kosovo_en?s=321)

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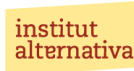
			<p>available 24/7 for reporting cyber incidents.<sup>60</sup></p> <p>Also, the businesses community and civil society will be represented at the State Council for Cyber Security, which is an independent advisory body composed of all stakeholders.<sup>61</sup></p> <p>Regarding the regional level, in Kosovo's National Cyber Security Strategy 2023-2027, is envisaged, enhancing Kosovo's presence in international and regional organizations and forums for cyber security. And, promoting national collaboration across all sectors and positioning Kosovo as a competent actor for international cooperation at both regional and global levels.<sup>62</sup></p>	<p>National Cyber Security Strategy 2023-2027 to enhance participation in global cybersecurity forums and amplify collaboration across sectors for a more robust international cybersecurity presence.</p>
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<sup>60</sup> Kosovo Cyber Security Law at, <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=70933>

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Kosovo's National Cyber Security Strategy 2023-2027 at, <https://mpb.rks-gov.net/Uploads/Documents/Pdf/AL/2692/Strategjia%20p%C3%ABr%20Siguri%20Kibernetike%20-%20ALB..pdf>

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## 2. Detailed data on the implementation of Green Agenda Action Plan: Decarbonization

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Activity	Deadline	Responsible Institution	Progress (policies, activities)	Next Steps
<p><b>1. Align with the EU Climate Law with a vision of achieving climate neutrality by 2050.</b></p>	<p>2025</p>	<p>Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure</p>	<p>Kosovo is in the process of adopting a <b>Law on Climate Change</b>.<sup>63</sup> On 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023, the Draft Law on Climate Change was approved in principle by the Kosovo Assembly. The Draft Law is still awaiting the final approval. In the first part of this Draft law its stated that the Draft Law is partially in accordance with EU Directives and Regulations on Climate.<sup>64</sup> About nine by-laws will originate from this Law, including Regulations and administrative instructions.<sup>65</sup></p> <p>After the approval of this Law, the Draft Law on Climate Change is expected to be created within the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure. Furthermore, the Ministry intends to increase its staff from one</p>	<p>The Kosovo Assembly should swiftly endorse the Climate Change Law to prevent any potential disruptions in meeting commitments outlined in the Green Agenda.</p>
<p><sup>63</sup> Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), Green Agenda Implementation Report 2022, p. 10 - <a href="https://www.rcc.int/pubs/152/green-agenda-for-the-western-balkans-action-plan-implementation-report-2022">https://www.rcc.int/pubs/152/green-agenda-for-the-western-balkans-action-plan-implementation-report-2022</a></p> <p><sup>64</sup> Kosovo Draft Law on Climate Change at, <a href="https://konsultimet.rks-gov.net/ViewConsult.php?ConsultationID=11668">https://konsultimet.rks-gov.net/ViewConsult.php?ConsultationID=11668</a></p> <p><sup>65</sup> KDI Interview with representative of Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure, 24 November 2023, Prishtina.</p>				

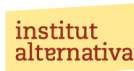


			person to four. This step is aimed at improving the Ministry's effectiveness in this specific area. <sup>66</sup>	
<b>2. Set forward-looking 2030 energy and climate targets</b>	2022	Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure & Ministry of Economy	<p>Similar to other Western Balkan countries, Kosovo has set forward-looking energy and climate targets in Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs), government strategies and other relevant documents. Although Kosovo is not one of the signatories of the Paris Agreement, since is not yet member of United Nations, it has committed voluntary to submit its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC2).<sup>67</sup> This is a document that envisages the targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and share of renewable energy by 2030 as below:</p> <p><b>-Distribution and consumption of energy from renewable sources is aimed by 2030 to be 32%.</b></p> <p>Kosovo's target in this aspect is the lowest compared to the targets set by the</p>	Kosovo Government should undertake all necessary steps promptly, to achieve the targets it has set to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and higher share of renewable energy by 2030.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> UNDP official website at, <https://climatepromise.undp.org/what-we-do/where-we-work/kosovo>

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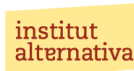
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			<p>other regional countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>The maximum share of primary energy consumption (primary energy in Kosovo is derived from coal) by 2030 is aimed to be 2.70 Mto</b> (million tonnes of oil equivalent).<sup>68</sup></li> <li>- <b>Maximum share of final energy consumption in 2030 is aimed 1.80 Mto</b> (million tonnes of oil equivalent).</li> <li>- <b>Kosovo's target for Greenhouse Gas Emissions compared to 2016 levels and absolute emissions in 2030 is aimed to be reduced by 16.3%.</b> This target is the lowest compared to the other countries in the region. In addition the aim is to emit only 8.95 MtCO<sub>2</sub> (million metric tons) of greenhouse gases in 2030, which is higher compared for example to Montenegro and Macedonia that target to emit only around 2 MtCO<sub>2</sub>.<sup>69</sup></li> </ul>	
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<sup>68</sup> Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, Action Plan, Implementation Report 2022, <https://www.rcc.int/pubs/162/green-agenda-for-the-western-balkans-action-plan--implementation-report-2022>, pg. 11.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

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<p><b>3. Develop and implement integrated Energy and Climate Plans.</b></p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure</p>	<p>With the adoption of the Governance Regulation at the 2021 Energy Community Ministerial Council, development and adoption of Integrated National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs) became a legal obligation for Kosovo and other Western Balkan countries. NECPs are an important instrument for steering the energy transition, defining economy's energy and climate goals, and policies and measures to attain them. According to the Regulation, the draft NECPs are to be submitted for the Energy Community Secretariat's review and opinion by June 2023 and adopted by June 2024.<sup>70</sup></p> <p>Kosovo has concluded the development of the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) and formally submitted it to the Energy Community Secretariat on July 10, 2022.<sup>71</sup> As of present, the Secretariat has not provided an assessment or opinion on the submitted plan. Subsequent to the</p>	<p>Kosovo Government needs to adopt in time the <b>National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP)</b>, not later than June 2024.</p> <p>This plan needs to be adopted in line with the Energy Community 2030 energy and climate targets and taking into account the recommendations issued by the Energy Community Secretariat.</p>
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<sup>70</sup> Ibid, pg.12.

<sup>71</sup> EU Country Report for Kosovo 2023, pg.112, at [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD\\_2023\\_692%20Kosovo%20report\\_0.pdf](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD_2023_692%20Kosovo%20report_0.pdf)

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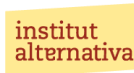
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			Secretariat's evaluation, the Plan is poised for the adoption phase.	
<b>4. Prepare and implement climate adaptation strategies.</b>	2028	Government with Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure and Ministry of Economy	<p><b>A Climate Adaptation Strategy has not been adopted yet in Kosovo.</b> The drafting work is expected to start in the second half of 2024.<sup>72</sup></p> <p>Nevertheless, there are established documents that regulate matters pertaining to climate change. On February 2019, Kosovo Government at that time adopted the <b>Strategy for Climate Change 2019-2028</b>.<sup>73</sup></p> <p>Also, the current Government adopted an <b>Energy Strategy 2022-2031</b> in March 2023, while the Implementation Plan was approved in September of same year. This Strategy sets a clear vision for decarbonisation and foresees a substantial increase of renewable energy</p>	The Kosovo Government should implement promptly the Energy Strategy 2022-2031 and start working on an Climate Adaptation Strategy in line with the commitments within Berlin Process Green Agenda.

<sup>72</sup> KDI Interview with representative of Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure, 24 November 2023, Prishtina.

<sup>73</sup> Republic of Kosovo, "Climate Change Strategy 2019- 2028 and Action Plan on Climate Change 2019- 2021" at, <https://gzk.rks.gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=29356>

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			sources in the electricity mix. <sup>74</sup>	
<b>5. Align with the EU Emissions Trading System and/or introduce other carbon pricing instruments.</b>	2024	Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure	<p><b>Carbon-pricing instruments have not yet been introduced in the Western Balkan region</b>, with the exception of Montenegro.<sup>75</sup></p> <p>Therefore, Kosovo has yet to establish a framework for carbon pricing mechanisms. However, the development of these carbon pricing schemes is currently underway, supported by the EU Energy Community.<sup>76</sup></p>	Kosovo Government needs to take necessary steps to establish a carbon pricing system in line with the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS). This action is pivotal to comply with EU regulations and prepare for the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, which commenced its transitional phase on October 1, 2023.
<b>6. Increase opportunities for the deployment of nature-based solutions to mitigate and adapt to climate change.</b>	2025	Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure	<p>The application of approaches that integrate ecosystems and nature more broadly into climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction measures is still insufficient and fragmented in all Western Balkans economies.<sup>77</sup></p> <p>Kosovo faces hurdles in nature protection: delays in adopting a sustainable development strategy, partial plans for national parks, and incomplete</p>	Kosovo Government should prioritize nature-based solutions in addressing climate change. Also, invest in projects leveraging natural ecosystems, such as reforestation and wetland conservation. Allocate resources and develop policies to integrate these solutions into climate strategies effectively. This approach ensures resilience

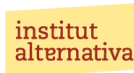
<sup>74</sup> EU Country Report for Kosovo 2023, pg.112.

<sup>75</sup> RCC, Green Agenda Implementation Report 2022, pg.13.

<sup>76</sup> KDI Interview with representative of Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure, 24 November 2023, Prishtina.

<sup>77</sup> RCC, Green Agenda Implementation Report 2022.pg.14.

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			<p>biodiversity action. Pollution and illegal activities persist in designated areas, endangering species. Progress in forestry lacks key legislation, and deforestation remains an issue. Industrial pollution controls are slow, with laws enacted but poorly implemented. Hazardous waste and industrial discharges threaten soil, water, and health. Aligning with EU directives requires better enforcement, public awareness, industry training, and permits to reduce harmful emissions.<sup>78</sup></p> <p>In this regard, IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) is implementing a project called the ADAPT project in all regional countries including Kosovo,<sup>79</sup> that map the main climate risks and hazards and their causes, provide stakeholder analysis of relevant existing projects using Nature-based Solutions (NbS), and put forward recommendations for deploying those</p>	<p>and sustainability in combating climate challenges.</p>
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<sup>78</sup> EC Country Report for Kosovo, pg.114.

<sup>79</sup> International Union for Conservation of Nature, official website at <https://www.iucn.org/our-work/region/eastern-europe-and-central-asia/our-work/adapt-nature-based-solutions-western>

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			solutions at economies' level. <sup>80</sup> A scoping study by the ADAPT project is also being prepared in Kosovo including final consultations with economy-level stakeholders. <sup>81</sup>	
<b>7. Ensure participation of WB economies in the European Climate Pact or consider the development of a similar mechanism.</b>	2022	Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure	Similar to other Western Balkan countries, Kosovo neither has made official pledges to participate in the European Climate Pact or similar mechanism. <sup>82</sup>  Part of this commitment is also, the implementation of the Climate Action Roadmap which envisages extracting total Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions statistics. In Kosovo case these statistics are only provided for years 2017-2019. During year 2022 Kosovo prepared the inventory of GHG emissions for 2020 and reported it to the European Environment Agency. <sup>83</sup>	Kosovo needs to communicate the existence and goals of the European Climate Pact and support organisations to make pledge and utilise the Pact as a platform to share stories, solutions, and suggestions.
<b>8. Review and revise, where necessary, all relevant</b>		Ministry of Economy and Ministry of	Although decarbonization is foreseen in the newly Energy Strategy adopted in	Kosovo needs to thoroughly reassess and amend, as required,

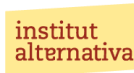
<sup>80</sup> RCC, Green Agenda Implementation Report 2022, pg. 15.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, pg. 15.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, pg. 116.

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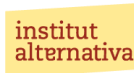


<p><b>legislation to support progressive decarbonization of the energy sector.</b></p>		<p>Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure</p>	<p>March 2023, <b>Kosovo Government has not yet drafted a Decarbonization Strategy</b>, which has been mentioned as deficiency also in the EC Country Report for Kosovo 2023.<sup>84</sup></p> <p>Kosovo's efforts to reform its electricity market face concerns about ensuring a secure electricity supply. While there has been some improvement in market liquidity and competition, Kosovo's environmental performance has regressed. The Energy Community Secretariat has ongoing infringement cases due to the absence of environmental impact assessment legislation and breaches of emission limits in large combustion plants.<sup>85</sup></p>	<p>its relevant legislation to facilitate the ongoing decarbonization of the energy sector. Furthermore, drafting a Decarbonization Strategy is crucial.</p>
<p><b>9. Prepare an assessment of the socio-economic impact of decarbonization at the individual economy and regional level.</b></p>		<p>Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure and Ministry of Economy</p>	<p>Kosovo similar to other Western Balkans Countries has begun to assess the socioeconomic impact of decarbonization at the individual economy level through a project supported by the International Monetary Fund. The goal is to ultimately develop</p>	<p>Kosovo must complete the preparations for the assessment of the socio-economic impact of decarbonization at the individual economy and regional level.</p>

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> RCC, Green Agenda Implementation report pg.20.

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			an action plan that will include recommendations for the required policy reforms to address this issue. <sup>86</sup>	
<b>10. Prioritise energy efficiency and improve it in all sectors.</b>	Ongoing	Ministry of Economy	<p>Kosovo has made some progress, notably with the adoption of an ambitious new Energy Strategy in March 2023, the launch of the first solar auction in May 2023, and with further investments in the energy efficiency of public and residential buildings in line with the Energy Support Package action plan.<sup>87</sup></p> <p>However, the lack of energy-efficiency indicators is an obstacle to reporting on energy savings.<sup>88</sup> And, implementation and enforcement of legislation on energy efficiency is still lacking.<sup>89</sup></p> <p>Kosovo increased the expertise and tools for certification of buildings.<sup>90</sup> Building certification is a process that evaluates and rates the sustainability, energy</p>	<p>Kosovo must secure additional financing and bolster institutional capabilities to improve energy efficiency in line with the Energy Strategy. Aligning the Laws on energy efficiency and energy performance of buildings with new directives mandated by the Energy Community Treaty is crucial. Implementing energy performance certification for buildings, along with adopting the Building Renovation Strategy and the Plan for nearly zero energy buildings, is urgently needed.</p>

<sup>86</sup> KDI Interview with representative of Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure, 24 November 2023, Prishtina.

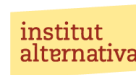
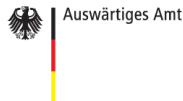
<sup>87</sup> EC Country Report for Kosovo 2023, pg.110.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, pg.75.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, pg.111.

<sup>90</sup> RCC, Green Agenda Implementation Report pg.23.

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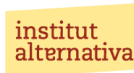
			<p>efficiency, and environmental performance of a building.</p> <p>However, Kosovo has not yet fully implemented the energy performance certification of the buildings and has not yet adopted the <b>Building Renovation Strategy</b> and the Plan for nearly zero energy buildings.<sup>91</sup></p> <p>The Law on Energy Efficiency is under revision, to change policies and undertake efficient measures.<sup>92</sup></p> <p><b>The Law on Energy</b> established an energy efficiency obligation with a target of 0.7% and the objective of buildings renovation.<sup>93</sup></p> <p>Moreover, Kosovo has opened the first auction for investors for Renewable</p>	
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<sup>91</sup> EC, Country Report for Kosovo 2023, pg.113.

<sup>92</sup> KDI Interview with representatives of Ministry of Economy, 27 November 2023, Prishtina.

<sup>93</sup> RCC, Green Agenda Implementation Report 2022, pg.23.

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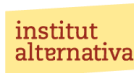
			Solar Energy with a capacity of 100 MW. This project will be implemented by the Ministry of Economy. <sup>94</sup> Also, during 2024, Kosovo is expected to open the first auction for wind power with 150 MW capacity. <sup>95</sup>	
<b>11. Transposition and full enforcement of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive.</b>	2023	Ministry of Economy	In Kosovo, <b>the Law on Energy Performance of the Buildings</b> was approved in principle in November 2023 by the Assembly and still awaits final approval. Also, the <b>Law on Energy Efficiency</b> that foresees the building performance is in the process of amending. Both of these Laws need to be aligned with the EU new Directives 113 as required by the Energy Community Treaty, to fulfill the foreseen criteria. <sup>96</sup>  Activities to strengthen expertise and tools for certification of buildings are ongoing, including on the new registry	Kosovo should ensure the transposition and full enforcement of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive.

<sup>94</sup> Ministry of Economy, Solar auction 100 MW in Kosovo, official website at, <https://reskosovo.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Solar-Prospectus-Alb-Web-quality>.

<sup>95</sup> Balkan Green Energy, official website at, <https://balkangreenenergynews.com/kosovo-to-hold-its-first-wind-power-auction-in-2024/>.

<sup>96</sup> EC, Country Report for Kosovo 2023, pg. 113.

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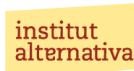
			and certification software. <sup>97</sup> However, <b>Building Renovation Strategy</b> and the <b>Plan for nearly zero energy buildings</b> have yet to be adopted. <sup>98</sup>	
<b>12. Support private and public buildings renovation schemes and secure appropriate financing.</b>	Ongoing	Ministry of Economy	<p>The Kosovo established a Fund for Energy Efficiency, as an independent, autonomous and stable institution, with the approval of the Law on Energy Efficiency (No. 06 / L-079) in November 2018. This institution aims to achieve the objectives in Energy Efficiency, promoting, supporting and implementing energy efficiency measures, as well as attracting and managing financial resources in order to finance and implement investment projects in the field of energy efficiency.<sup>99</sup></p> <p>The Fund for Energy Efficiency continues to publish regularly public calls for improvement of energy</p>	Kosovo should continue the rollout of the energy efficiency fund and implement support to residential buildings and small and medium-sized enterprises.

<sup>97</sup> RCC, Green Agenda Implementation Report 2022, pg.24.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> The Kosovo Fund for Energy Efficiency official webpage at, <https://fkee-rks.net/about-us/?lang=en>

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			<p>efficiency, mainly for municipalities. This fund has signed 73 agreements with 22 municipalities worth 9 million euros in 2022.<sup>100</sup></p> <p>There are ongoing activities to expand financing for the residential and private sector in the near future. Rules on energy efficient public procurement, Energy Service Company (ESCOs) and energy performance and supply contracts are in line with the EU Acquis.<sup>101</sup></p> <p><b>The World Bank</b> provided Kosovo with \$31 million through the Kosovo Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Project. This initiative targets the reduction of energy consumption and fossil fuel usage in public buildings. Alongside this investment, the Bank aims to assist Kosovo in improving its policy and regulatory framework concerning renewable energy and energy efficiency.<sup>102</sup></p>	
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<sup>100</sup> Kosovo Energy Efficiency Fund, Official website at, <https://fkee-rks.net/thirrjet-publike/>

<sup>101</sup> RCC, Green Agenda Implementation Report 2022, pg.26.

<sup>102</sup> The World Bank, Energy Efficiency in Kosovo, official website at, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kosovo/brief/ee-in-kosovo>

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			<p><u>Actions undertaken so far:</u> The renovation of five buildings, an investment of over three million dollars by MCC with energy efficiency measures, is aimed to enable residents to reduce their electricity costs. The Kosovo Millennium Foundation (MFK), the Millennium Challenges Corporation (MCC) and the Municipality of Pristina have, for several months now, started the project for the renovation of the "Soliterat" towers. This is being done with energy efficiency measures, a program financed by MCC SEEK - "Subsidies for Energy Efficiency in Kosovo".<sup>103</sup></p>	
<p><b>13. Increase the share of renewable energy sources and provide the necessary investment conditions.</b></p>	Ongoing	Ministry of Economy	<p>Kosovo came close to fulfilling its 2020 target for the use of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption. New targets have been adopted by the Ministerial Council of the Energy Community in December 2022.<sup>104</sup></p> <p>The adopted <b>Energy Strategy</b> sets a</p>	<p>Kosovo needs to adopt the Law on renewable energy sources that is still awaiting approval from the Kosovo Assembly.</p> <p>As also stated in the Country Report 2023, Kosovo needs to mobilize new investments in</p>

<sup>103</sup> Millennium Foundation Kosovo, official website at, <https://millenniumkosovo.org/the-iconic-soliterat-in-prishtina-to-be-retrofitted-as-part-of-aer-activity/>

<sup>104</sup> RCC, Green Agenda for the WB Action Plan Implementation Report 2022, pg.26.

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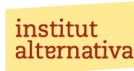
			<p>clear vision for decarbonisation and foreseeing a substantial increase of renewable energy sources in the electricity mix.<sup>105</sup> However, Kosovo has not yet adopted the Law on renewable energy sources.</p> <p>On renewable sources, by the end of 2022, Kosovo registered 276.2 MW of renewable electricity generation, 128 MW of small hydropower, 137 MW of wind, 10 MW of solar and 1.2 MW of biomass.<sup>106</sup> <b>Renewable energy sources account for just over 5% of electricity supply.</b><sup>107</sup></p> <p>On the other hand, any electricity customer connected to the low voltage distribution network with installed capacity not higher than 100kW can apply to its supplier to obtain the status of a self-consumer using the net billing scheme in place. In the Energy Strategy, the proposed target for prosumers is</p>	<p>renewable energy sources to achieve the targets of the Energy Strategy and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans.</p>
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<sup>105</sup> EC, Country Report for Kosovo 2023, pg. 111.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, pg. 112.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, pg.68.

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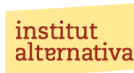
			10MW by 2025 and 100MW by 2031. <sup>108</sup> In addition, on November 2023, the Energy Regulators Office (ERO) has approved the Regulation Technical Criteria for Connecting Self-Consumers with Renewable Energy Sources to the Distribution Network. <sup>109</sup>	
<b>14. Decrease and gradually phase out coal subsidies, strictly respecting state aid rules.</b>	Ongoing	Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure	<p><b>Kosovo’s electricity generation relies heavily on coal-fired plants.</b> More than 90% of electricity is produced by two outdated, unreliable and highly polluting lignite power plants, which the government plans to refurbish.<sup>110</sup></p> <p>The <b>Energy Strategy</b> envisages the gradual replacement of the use of coal until 2050, through three strategic targets a) the gradual reduction of the carbon price, b) the promotion of renewable energy in the electricity generation mix, c) the promotion of the use of renewable</p>	<p>Kosovo should intensify efforts in establishing mechanisms that gradually decrease and eliminate coal subsidies while strictly adhering to state regulations.</p> <p>Measures for banning the use of coal for heating need to be effectively enforced.</p>

<sup>108</sup> Energy Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo, pg. 8.

<sup>109</sup> Energy Regulatory Office of Kosovo, official website at, <https://www.ero-ks.org/zrre/sq/njoftim-24>

<sup>110</sup> EC Country Report for Kosovo 2023, pg.68.

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			energy for heating. <sup>111</sup>  In 2022, Kosovo introduced for the first time subsidies for investments in more efficient and less polluting sources, which was seen as a good turning point. <sup>112</sup> Since 2012, Kosovo does not provide subsidies for coal. While, the use of coal is prohibited only in school and household institutions. <sup>113</sup> Nevertheless, coal continues to be utilized for heating purposes.	
<b>15. Ensure participation in the Coal Regions in Transition initiative for the Western Balkans.</b>		Ministry of Economy	The <b>Initiative for coal regions in transition in the Western Balkans</b> and Ukraine was launched in December 2020 and aims to help countries and regions to move away from coal towards a carbon-neutral economy, while ensuring that this transition is just. It will deliver support to coal regions in EU neighbouring countries including Kosovo. <sup>114</sup>	

<sup>111</sup> Energy Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo, pg. 8.

<sup>112</sup> EC, Country Report for Kosovo 2023, pg. 115.

<sup>113</sup> KDI Interview with representative of Ministry of Economy, 27 November 2023, Prishtina.

<sup>114</sup> [https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/oil-gas-and-coal/coal-regions-western-balkans-and-ukraine/initiative-coal-regions-transition-western-balkans-and-ukraine\\_en](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/oil-gas-and-coal/coal-regions-western-balkans-and-ukraine/initiative-coal-regions-transition-western-balkans-and-ukraine_en)

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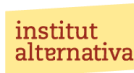
			<p>Participation in the activities of the initiative is voluntary, and it will remain at their discretion to actively engage. Moreover, the initiative is open to any region with coal mining activities and possibly coal use for energy purposes in the six economies covered by the initiative.<sup>115</sup></p> <p>The last annual meeting of the Initiative was held in November 2022 and was attended by representatives of all WB economies.<sup>116</sup></p> <p>The next meeting is expected to be held next year, where Kosovo will be the host of this meeting.<sup>117</sup></p>	
<b>16. Develop programmes for addressing energy poverty and financing schemes for household renovation and providing basic standards of living.</b>		Ministry of Economy	<p>Energy poverty levels in the Western Balkan economies are amongst the highest in Europe. Energy poverty occurs when a household must reduce its energy consumption to a degree that negatively impacts the inhabitants' health and</p>	<p>Kosovo should develop long term programs for addressing energy poverty and financing schemes for household renovation.</p>

<sup>115</sup> European Commission, Initiative for coal regions in transition in the Western Balkans and Ukraine at, [https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/oil-gas-and-coal/coal-regions-western-balkans-and-ukraine/initiative-coal-regions-transition-western-balkans-and-ukraine\\_en](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/oil-gas-and-coal/coal-regions-western-balkans-and-ukraine/initiative-coal-regions-transition-western-balkans-and-ukraine_en)

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> KDI Interview with representative of Ministry of Economy, 27 November 2023, Prishtina.

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			<p>wellbeing.</p> <p>According to EUROSTAT, the share of households in the Energy Community unable to keep homes adequately warm is much higher than the EU-27 average, with the highest levels in Kosovo, Albania and North Macedonia, followed by Montenegro and Serbia.<sup>118</sup></p> <p>All WB economies including Kosovo have already implemented some short-term measures aimed at alleviating energy poverty.<sup>119</sup> While effective in the short term, they prove inadequate for long-term alleviation of energy poverty.</p> <p>In addition, the EU's new Energy Support Package, worth EUR 1 billion in grants, was an important deliverable of the Tirana Declaration.<sup>120</sup> Under this package and via IPA III the EU provided</p>	<p>In addition, Kosovo should utilise Energy Community Secretariat's Policy Guidelines on identifying and addressing energy poverty.</p>
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<sup>118</sup> RCC, Green Agenda for the WB Action Plan Implementation Report 2022, pg.32.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, pg.32.

<sup>120</sup> EU-Western Balkans summit, Tirana Declaration, 6 December 2022.

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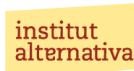
			<p><b>500 million Euro</b> in grants for immediate support towards vulnerable families.<sup>121</sup></p> <p>Starting in 2022, Kosovo initiated projects in two phases to finance the subsidization of energy-efficient equipment for households. This initiative aims to directly reduce energy demand by providing a 40% subsidy on these purchases.<sup>122</sup></p> <p>By 2024, Kosovo plans to commence the development of an energy poverty program, as outlined in the Energy Strategy. The Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning, and Infrastructure will jointly design this program.<sup>123</sup></p>	
<p><b>17. Support the development of smart transport infrastructure, promote fostering of innovative technologies</b></p>		<p>Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure and Ministry of Economy</p>	<p><b>Transport Community Treaty Secretariat</b> provided technical assistance regarding deployment of e-freight in the Western Balkans aiming to enable an interoperable electronic freight</p>	<p>Kosovo should continue to support the development of smart transport infrastructure, promote fostering of innovative technologies.</p>

<sup>121</sup> RCC, Green Agenda for the WB Action Plan Implementation Report 2022, pg.32.

<sup>122</sup> Ministry of Economy, official website at, <https://me.rks-gov.net/blog/zgjatet-afati-i-aplikimit-per-fazen-1-per-subvencionim-te-eficiences-se-energjise/>

<sup>123</sup> KDI Interview with representative of Ministry of Economy, 27 November 2023, Prishtina.

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<p>(such as paperless transport, artificial intelligence, multimodal passengers ticketing, mobility as a service, border/boundary crossing applications, 5G corridors, etc.).</p>			<p>information exchange system in the region, reducing the administrative burden for logistics operators, and facilitating multimodal transport.<sup>124</sup></p> <p>The legislative framework for deployment of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) was done by all WB economies including Kosovo.<sup>125</sup></p> <p>The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is improving the urban transport system in Pristina by providing a senior loan of up to €10 million under the Green Cities framework. The project will introduce electric bus technology to Kosovo for the first time, with the six electric buses.<sup>126</sup></p> <p>Kosovo in April 2023 has ensured 100% access to the Internet in its territory</p>	
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<sup>124</sup> RCC, Green Agenda for the WB Action Plan Implementation Report 2022, pg.37.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, pg. 37.

<sup>126</sup> European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, official website at, <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2022/ebrd-lends-10-million-for-kosovos-first-electric-buses.html>

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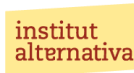
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			<p>scoring the highest rate of coverage in Europe.<sup>127</sup></p> <p>On the regional level, Kosovo and Albania have signed the memorandum for the creation of the digital corridor of the 5G. This network promises much faster data transmission over the Internet, about 100 times faster than current 4G technology. This memorandum is harmonized with the agreement reached in Washington.<sup>128</sup></p>	
<b>18. Implement the Regional Action Plan for Rail Reforms.</b>		Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Institutional framework is completed.</li> <li>-Railway Regulatory Agency has a role of National Safety Authorities (NSA), regulatory and licencing body.</li> <li>-In reported period RRA has published few bylaws regarding safety issues.</li> <li>-Ministry of the infrastructure included in the legislative plan changes of the Railway Law as well as preparation of new Rail Safety and Interoperability</li> </ul>	Kosovo Government should incorporate amendments to the Railway Law and initiate the development of new legislation for Rail Safety and Interoperability Law.

<sup>127</sup> KDI Interview with representative of Ministry of Economy, 27 Novemeber 2023, Prishtina.

<sup>128</sup> Magazine-Union Government-Albania-Kosovo, Agreement Albania-Kosovo, <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Revista-Bashkeqeveritare-Shqiperi-Kosove-compressed-compressed-compressed-compressed-1.pdf> pg.35.

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			<p>Law.<sup>129</sup></p> <p>Kosovo has drawn up a multi-year rail maintenance contract and submitted it to the relevant authorities of Transport Community for approval.<sup>130</sup></p> <p>Negotiations between Kosovo and North Macedonia, for establishing one-stop control in road and rail transport, are advancing well, although the agreements have not yet been defined. Joint rail Border Crossing Points (BCP) Hani i Elezit are yet to start operating as functional one BCP stops.<sup>131</sup></p> <p>On November 2023, two renovated tunnels have become operational on the railway line from the North Macedonia-Kosovo border to City of Fushë Kosova, as part of the rehabilitation of Line 10 of</p>	
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<sup>129</sup> EU Transport Community, Annual Monitoring Report of the Rail Action Plan 2021, pg.15 at, <https://www.transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Annual-Monitoring-Report-of-the-Rail-Action-Plan-09-2021.pdf>

<sup>130</sup> RCC, Green Agenda for the WB Action Plan Implementation Report 2022, pg.37.

<sup>131</sup> Transport Community, Action Plan Progress Report 2022, pg.12.

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			<p>the Railway.<sup>132</sup></p> <p>Regarding the Road Asset Management System (RAMS), Kosovo has planned a budget for RAMS in its 2022-2024 budget.<sup>133</sup></p> <p>Kosovo is progressing with the finalisation of Administrative Instruction of the ITS (Intelligent Transport Systems Directive ).<sup>134</sup></p>	
<b>19. Define rail freight and inland waterway transport corridors.</b>		Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure	<p>The Proposal for Revision of Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) Regulation which includes a Rail Freight Corridor for the Western Balkans is under the revision by the European Commission.</p> <p>Once adopted, the new RFC will become an essential tool for coordinated cooperation to improve international freight traffic.<sup>135</sup></p>	<p>Kosovo should participate actively in the Rail Corridor Initiative with the aim to enhance Kosovo's rail transport. Additionally, it should prioritize the development of maritime legislation to facilitate connectivity and progress. This dual effort will advance transportation networks and boost Kosovo's economy.</p>

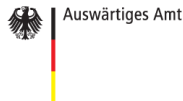
<sup>132</sup> Government official website, Tunnels 6 and 7 of the railway line Hani i Elezit – Fushë Kosovë are inaugurated at <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/en/blog/tunnels-6-and-7-of-the-railway-line-hani-i-elezit-fushe-kosove-are-inaugurated/>

<sup>133</sup> Transport Community, Action Plan Progress Report 2022, pg.13.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> RCC, Green Agenda for the WB Action Plan Implementation Report 2022, pg.38.

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			<p>As a component of the Rail Corridor Initiative, Kosovo and other Western Balkan nations will participate in the Rail Freight Corridors (RFCs), a significant European Commission initiative aimed at revitalizing rail freight transport in Europe.<sup>136</sup></p> <p>On the other hand, as landlocked economies, Kosovo, Bosnia Herzegovina and North Macedonia have not prioritized the regulation of maritime legislation and are making slow progress in this area.<sup>137</sup></p>	
<p><b>20. Define an overall strategy to shift traffic from road to more environmentally friendly modes.</b></p>		<p>Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure</p>	<p>A Sustainable and <b>Smart Mobility Strategy for the Western Balkans</b> was prepared by the Transport Community Secretariat and adopted in July 2021. The purpose of this document is to present the EU's Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy and to modify goals, significant moments, and actions of the EU to the realities in the Western Balkan region.<sup>138</sup></p>	<p>Ensure thorough review of the Transport Strategy, aligning it with the upcoming Intelligent Transport System Strategy for 2024-2030. Actively engage in ongoing public consultation for diverse inputs. Utilize the recently adopted "Multimodal Transport Strategy" to promote sustainable transportation and</p>

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, pg.38.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, pg.38.

<sup>138</sup> EU Transport Community Report 2021, Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy in the Western Balkans, pg. 7.

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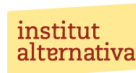


			<p>Kosovo institutions are currently reviewing the Transport Strategy, intended to evolve into the Intelligent Transport System Strategy 2024-2030. This strategy's drafting process is currently undergoing public consultation.<sup>139</sup></p> <p>In May 2023, Kosovo has adopted the "<b>Multimodal Transport Strategy</b>" for the years 2023-2030. The aim of this strategy is to move towards a sustainable transport system and to develop sustainable mobility to increase transport planning within the Green Agenda.<sup>140</sup></p>	<p>mobility, integrating these approaches with the Green Agenda's objectives for an eco-friendly transport system in Kosovo.</p>
<p><b>21. Identify the EU technical standards and ensure their implementation and digitalisation of all transport modes</b></p>		<p>Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure</p>	<p>As per the monitoring report by the Secretariat of the Transport Community Treaty and the EU Acquis Progress Report on Kosovo's measures' implementation, there's been moderate progress overall. However, there's been no progress in actions related to infrastructure, digital aspects, and environmental elements of seaports,</p>	<p>Kosovo should prioritize and intensify efforts to address areas showing no progress, especially digital aspects, environmental elements of seaports, and inland waterway legislation. Additionally, concentrate on boosting Rail Interoperability, ITS Deployment on the Road</p>

<sup>139</sup> Republic of Kosovo, Prime minister Office, Official website at, <https://konsultimet.rks-gov.net/consultations.php?InstitutionID=20005&OpenPage=0&ClosedPage=0>

<sup>140</sup> Kosovo Multimodal Transport Strategy 2030, pg.4.

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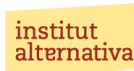


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			<p>along with legislation for inland waterways, all showing zero progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation for <u>Rail Interoperability</u> was carried out to the extent of 53%.</li> <li>• Implementation for <u>Road border/boundary crossing/ common crossing measures</u> was carried out to the extent of 58%.</li> <li>• Implementation for <u>Rail border/boundary crossing/ common crossing measures</u> was carried out to the extent of 67%.</li> <li>• Implementation for <u>ITS Deployment on Core/ Comprehensive Road Network</u> was carried out to the extent of 28%.</li> <li>• Implementation for <u>Introduction of digital solutions to improve multimodality</u> was carried out to the extent of 28%.<sup>141</sup></li> </ul>	<p>Network, and digital solutions for multimodality to elevate their implementation rates and enhance Kosovo's overall transport infrastructure.</p>
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<sup>141</sup> RCC, Green Agenda for the WB Action Plan Implementation Report 2022, pg. 39.

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<p><b>22. Implement the Regional Transport Facilitation Action Plan</b></p>		<p>Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure</p>	<p>The progress on implementing the Action Plans and the EU Acquis Progress Report for Transport Facilitation is moderate.</p> <p>The process for establishing <b>one-stop control</b> in road transport between Kosovo and North Macedonia is advancing well, although the agreement has not yet been defined.<sup>142</sup></p>	<p>Kosovo should ensure the implementation of the Action Plan for the Facilitation of Regional Transport, and approve the agreements for one-stop control with the neighboring countries.</p>
<p><b>23. Implement the Regional Road Safety Action Plan.</b></p>		<p>Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure</p>	<p>The Road Safety Action Plan supports the objective to reduce the number of deaths and encourages the exchange of regional best practices for road safety.</p> <p>Kosovo recently endorsed the "<b>Multimodal Transport Strategy</b>" in the legislative domain. The strategy encompasses goals directly linked to enhancing road safety, aiming to improve stability in this area by tackling prevailing issues within the country.<sup>143</sup></p>	<p>Kosovo should establish the Agency for Road Safety, enabling the development of a national system for consistent collection of road accident data. This will provide comprehensive insights to aid in implementing effective measures for reducing accidents and fatalities. Furthermore, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange on road safety</p>

<sup>142</sup>Ibid, pg. 40.

<sup>143</sup> Kosovo Multimodal Transport Strategy 2030, pg. 5.

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			<p>Despite this, in practice, Kosovo faces many fatalities in traffic accidents. In 2022, there were 20,792 reported accidents, leading to the tragic loss of 106 lives.<sup>144</sup></p> <p>Kosovo has not established the <b>Agency for Road Safety</b>, which includes the development of the national system for the continuous collection of road accident data.<sup>145</sup></p>	<p>practices within the region can significantly contribute to achieving Kosovo's objective of curbing traffic-related deaths.</p>
<b>24. Implement the Road Action Plan.</b>		Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure	<p>The <b>Road Asset Management System (SMAR)</b> is planned and budgeted for the first time in the Kosovo's state budget for 2022-2024.<sup>146</sup></p> <p>Kosovo is progressing with the finalization of the Administrative Instruction of the Intelligent Transport System Directive.<sup>147</sup></p> <p>Kosovo has yet to put into effect the</p>	<p>Kosovo should implement SMAR from the state budget for better road management. Also, it should finalize the Intelligent Transport System Directive and address pending CONNECTA recommendations for improved roads.</p> <p>Lastly, complete bylaws on road safety management and</p>

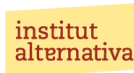
<sup>144</sup> Kosovo Police, Annual Report 2022, pg. 8.

<sup>145</sup> EC, Country Report for Kosovo 2023, pg.109.

<sup>146</sup> RCC, Green Agenda Implementation Report 2022, pg. 41.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, pg. 41.

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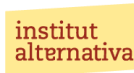
			<p>recommendations outlined in the Technical Assistance for Connectivity in the Western Balkans (CONNECTA) project report aimed at enhancing the road network's quality.<sup>148</sup></p> <p>The draft bylaw on aligning the Directive 2008/69/EC on road infrastructure safety management and the bylaw on periodic technical inspections on roads should it has not been finalised yet. Also, a system/model to increase the capacity of road safety inspectors and auditors should is yet to be established.<sup>149</sup></p>	<p>inspections and establish a robust system for safety inspectors and auditors.</p>
<p><b>25. Develop and implement climate resilience plans for Western Balkan economies' transport network.</b></p>		<p>Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure</p>	<p>Similar to other Western Balkan countries, Kosovo neither has prepared nor approved any targeted climate change adaptation strategy for transport sector.</p> <p>Climate resilience has been a focus of regional ClimaProof project, on the results of which TCT Secretariat will prepare a Road and Rail Resilience Action Plan.<sup>150</sup></p>	<p>Kosovo should start drafting the National Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation as soon as possible.</p>

<sup>148</sup> EC, Country Report for Kosovo 2023, pg. 110.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid, pg. 109.

<sup>150</sup> RCC, Green Agenda Implementation Report 2022, pg. 42.

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			So far, Kosovo has only established a working group for the drafting of the <b>National Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation</b> , aiming to incorporate climate resilience plans into the transport network. <sup>151</sup>	
<b>26. Promote preparation and implementation of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans for urban areas in the Western Balkans.</b>		Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure	Kosovo approved the <b>Strategy for Multimodal Transport</b> , in March 2023 that aims to regulate the multimodality of transport, including all types of transport and urban mobility. <sup>152</sup>  The capital of Prishtina has drawn up the <b>Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan</b> , but such a plan is missing in other municipalities. <sup>153</sup>	Kosovo should ensure the prompt implementation of the Strategy for Multimodal Transport in urban areas.
<b>27. Define sustainable mobility solutions at the regional level including plans for the deployment of alternative fuels</b>		Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure	In Kosovo, <b>Renewable energy share</b> in the transportation sector is currently near zero, similar to other Western Balkan countries as none of them have adopted the Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Directive. <sup>154</sup>	Kosovo should promote sustainable mobility solutions regionally and devise specific plans for implementing alternative fuel options. This approach will enhance

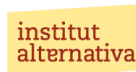
<sup>151</sup> KDI Interview with representative of Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure, 24 November 2023, Prishtina.

<sup>152</sup> Kosovo Multimodal Transport Strategy 2030, pg. 21.

<sup>153</sup> Prishtina Municipality Mobility Plan, at [https://prishtinaonline.com/uploads/sump\\_pristina\\_final\\_report\\_alb.pdf](https://prishtinaonline.com/uploads/sump_pristina_final_report_alb.pdf)

<sup>154</sup> RCC Green Agenda Implementation Report 2022, pg.42.

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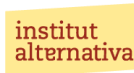


			<p>An exemplary initiative in local-level adoption of alternative fuels is demonstrated by "Trafiku Urban," a public transport company under the Municipality of Pristina. They have entered into a Loan Agreement of 10 million euros with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) for the procurement of 6 electric buses. Additionally, as part of another Loan Agreement of 10 million euros with EBRD, they are acquiring 24 efficient buses.<sup>155</sup></p>	<p>environmentally friendly transportation practices and align Kosovo's mobility strategies with sustainability goals.</p>
<p><b>27a. Define a plan for deployment and building of charging stations for electric vehicles.</b></p>		<p>Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure and Ministry of Economy</p>	<p>Kosovo has not defined yet a plan for the deployment and building of charging stations for electric vehicles. Electric vehicles are supplied only by private fuel operators who offer this service.<sup>156</sup></p> <p>Kosovo does not have legislation for electric vehicles, as a result the aspect of supply stations for electric vehicles has</p>	<p>Kosovo should establish regulations and a plan for constructing electric vehicle charging stations, as the current lack of legislation and infrastructure hampers the provision of such facilities, currently managed only by private fuel operators.</p>

<sup>155</sup> Kosovo Energy Platform, official website at, <https://kosovo.energy/trafikut-urban-ne-prishtine-se-shpejti-do-te-kete-dhe-autobus-elektrik/>

<sup>156</sup> KDI Interview with representative of Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure, 24 November 2023, Prishtina.

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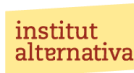
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			<p>not yet been regulated.</p> <p>However, within CONNECTA's project, a facet dedicated to Technical Assistance for Connectivity in the Western Balkans focuses on formulating a strategic framework for the placement of e-charging stations in the region. This strategy aims to facilitate the commencement of e-charging station deployments, benefitting the economies involved.<sup>157</sup></p> <p>The drafting of this strategy concluded in March 2023 and was shared with Kosovo and other Balkan countries.<sup>158</sup></p>	
<p><b>28. Increase regional cooperation in the area of alternative fuels infrastructure development.</b></p>		<p>Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure</p>	<p>The overall progress in regional cooperation in the area of alternative fuels infrastructure development has been limited.</p> <p>Overall assessment of improvement in the field of climate resilience and alternative fuels rates Kosovo 8% in 2020 and 2021 and 0% 2021 and 2022.</p>	<p>Kosovo should enhance efforts for regional cooperation in developing alternative fuels infrastructure. Given Kosovo's low rates of improvement in climate resilience and alternative fuels, focus on collaborative initiatives with neighboring regions to bolster progress in these areas.</p>

<sup>157</sup> CONNECTA, Technical Assistance for the Deployment of Smart and Sustainable Mobility in the Western Balkans, pg. 8.

<sup>158</sup> RCC Action Plan Implementation Report 2022, pg.42

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