



5 June 2026

Re: Priorities for Western Balkans engagement at the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies (SB64), Bonn, 8–18 June 2026

To: Ministers of Environment and/or Climate and Energy, Western Balkans Six
(Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia)

Copy: Energy Community Secretariat

Directorate-General CLIMA

Directorate-General Energy

Directorate-General ENEST

Regional Cooperation Council

Regional Climate Partnership Germany - Western Balkans

Dear Ministers,

The **First International Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels**, held in Santa Marta, Colombia (24–29 April 2026), marked a turning point in global climate diplomacy. For the first time, 57 countries, spanning major producers, large importers, and climate-vulnerable economies, gathered not to debate whether fossil fuels must end, but how to manage that transition in a just, financed and equitable way. The Co-Chair's Statement and the related outputs from the Santa Marta conference contribute significantly to the broader international discussion on implementing the transition away from fossil fuels and may feed into the **UNFCCC June Climate Meetings** (SB64), representing a concrete political leadership for implementation-focused action. The Brazilian COP30 Presidency is expected to draw on these outcomes to advance its voluntary **Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels (TAFF) Roadmap**, with the Bonn intersessional serving as the critical next step before COP31 in Antalya.

The **Western Balkans** were not visibly present at Santa Marta. One of the three new workstreams established there which offers a direct point of contact with the Brazilian COP 30 Presidency process, is the design of national and regional fossil fuel transition roadmaps. With **SB64 now days away**, we urge your governments to seize the moment and show up **politically** and **technically**, and to avoid being shaped by decisions made without you.

Why SB64 matters for the Western Balkans

COP30 in Belém marked the shift from target-setting to implementation credibility. SB64 is where that credibility is tested. Key items on the Bonn agenda, including the Article 9.1 work programme on public climate finance, the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) implementation dialogue, the Just Transition mechanism process, Global Goal on Adaptation indicators, and the Belém Mission to 1.5, will directly shape the framework within which Western

Balkans economies must accelerate their transitions. The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) is already operational; trade-linked climate obligations are no longer hypothetical.

Simultaneously, the broader post-Santa Marta momentum, including the TAFF Roadmap process, the forthcoming second Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels conference (co-hosted by Ireland and Tuvalu in 2027), and growing pressure on developed country finance obligations, will define what is politically possible at COP31. Countries that engage early shape these processes; those that do not inherit their outcomes.

Our calls ahead of SB64

We call on Western Balkans governments and the coordination efforts under Energy Community Secretariat to take the following steps ahead of and during SB64:

1. Align NDCs under preparation with a fossil fuel transition pathway and EU targets

- Countries yet to submit NDC 3.0 must present credible, absolute economy-wide 2035 targets consistent with the 1.5°C trajectory and the Global Stocktake signal. NDCs must include explicit, time-bound coal phase-out and sectoral decarbonisation roadmaps, not conditional targets that defer the burden and new gas investments (such as the Southern Gas Interconnection in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which aims to increase gas capacities/consumption by six times). Reliance on imports of fossil fuels is no longer a viable pathway to security, prosperity or just transition.
- The Santa Marta process and the TAFF Roadmap offer a framework to anchor national fossil transition plans within a wider coalition of the willing. Western Balkans governments should engage with this process ahead of COP31, building on earlier Powering Past Coal Alliance commitments.

2. Align domestic and international policy with a fossil fuel phase-out trajectory

- CBAM exposure is real and growing. Governments must embed carbon pricing roadmaps and industrial decarbonisation strategies within national economic plans without further delay, in line with Energy Community Treaty obligations and Reform Agenda commitments.
- Public investment, state aid, and energy subsidies must be screened for alignment with low-carbon pathways. The Article 2.1(c) dialogue in Bonn reinforces this as an international expectation, not merely an EU accession condition.

3. Address structural financial and governance barriers to climate finance access

- The Article 9.1 work programme and NCQG ministerial dialogue create political leverage to argue for fair, grant-based and concessional finance flows, especially for adaptation and just transition in economies that fall between traditional aid categories and full EU membership. Western Balkans parties should engage actively in shaping these discussions at SB64.
- A coordinated regional position would substantially increase negotiating weight. Individually, each economy carries limited influence; collectively, the WB6 represents a region undergoing synchronised transformation with a distinct UNFCCC status.

4. Embed just transition, adaptation and civil society participation

- COP31 is expected to adopt a decision on the operationalisation of the Just Transition (Belém Action) Mechanism. Countries that have not begun integrating just transition principles into their NDC revisions now risk being passive recipients of externally shaped standards. The region's coal-dependent economies have most to gain, and most to lose, from delayed engagement.
- The Western Balkans are among Europe's most climate-vulnerable regions. Strengthened adaptation frameworks, integration of the Global Goal on Adaptation indicators into national systems, and bankable resilience project pipelines must be prioritised both for Bonn discussions and for incoming NDCs.
- Meaningful engagement of workers, communities, civil society organisations and youth in transition planning is not optional, it is a prerequisite for social legitimacy and a condition increasingly scrutinised under the Belém Action Mechanism. We welcome steps toward expanding Local Conferences of Youth across the region ahead of COP31.

COP31 in Antalya will be a structural checkpoint for the Western Balkans' climate and accession trajectories. The decisions and processes being shaped at SB64 next month will determine the room for manoeuvre in Antalya. The time to engage is now, not after the text is drafted.

We stand ready to support your delegations ahead of and during SB64 and welcome dialogue on any of the points raised in this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Climate Action Network Europe

This Letter is endorsed by:

Aarhus Center in Bosnia and Herzegovina



Belgrade Open School, Serbia



**Center for Climate Change, North
Macedonia**



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**Youth Ecological and Security Zone-
EcoZ, Kosovo**

