Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU")

Between

The Energy Community Secretariat

and

The Open Society Foundation – Western Balkans

This Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") is entered into and between the following Parties: Energy Community Secretariat ("Secretariat"), Am Hof 4, Level 5-6, 1010 Vienna, Austria and the Open Society Foundations – Western Balkans ("OSF-WB"), Rr. "Qemal Stafa", Pallati 120/2, Tirana, Albania

WHEREAS the Energy Community (EnC) is an international organisation dealing with energy policy, established by an international treaty in October 2005 in Athens, Greece, bringing together the European Union, on the one hand, and Contracting Parties from the Southeast Europe and Black Sea Region on the other hand.

WHEREAS Energy Community law requires the Contracting Parties to establish a framework for safeguarding sustainability principles when developing energy projects, plans and programmes, including the utilisation of renewable energy sources.

WHEREAS the Secretariat has the mandate to monitor, to assist and to enforce the implementation of the Energy Community Treaty, create an integrated pan-European energy market, support investments, integrate climate and energy actions, pursue sustainability of energy systems and improve the environmental situation and foster the use of renewable energy in its Contracting Parties.

WHEREAS the XXV meeting of the Energy Community Task Force on Environment supported the idea of establishing a centre that will focus on the development of legal mechanisms and the institutional setup for streamlining the permit-granting process of energy projects that should be linked and working closely with the Environmental Task Force Group, and collaborate with further groups and committees of the Secretariat, such as the Renewable Energy Coordination Group, Energy and Climate Committee and other relevant experts and expert groups.

WHEREAS, at its XXII meeting, the Ministerial Council of the Energy Community, acting upon the proposal of the European Commission, adopted Recommendation 2024/1/MC-EnC on accelerating the deployment of renewable energy projects and implementing the energy

efficiency first principle, calling on the Contracting Parties to establish the necessary legal and institutional preconditions for the implementation of provisions related to Renewables Acceleration Areas and the streamlining of permitting procedures for renewable projects, and mandating the Secretariat to assist their efforts and report annually on the progress achieved.

WHEREAS Open Society Foundations Western Balkans is a private foundation advancing prosperous Western Balkans with democratic governments and open societies successfully integrated into the EU. OSF-WB mission is to enable open societies in the region through strategic presence and interventions in key European and regional spaces and priorities. In this regard, OSF-WB has developed strategic programs aimed at advancing regional cooperation and EU accession, climate justice, digital transformation and civic engagement across the region, including initiatives that support transparent and inclusive energy transition processes, promote public participation in environmental decision-making, and strengthen institutional capacities for implementing sustainability and climate-related policies.

CONSIDERING THAT the Parties desire to sign this MOU to confirm their readiness to cooperate, the Parties have come to the following understanding:

§1 OBJECTIVES

This MOU is intended to facilitate cooperation between the Parties to improve the environmental situation and foster the deployment of renewable energy in the Western Balkans Contracting Parties. This MOU and the cooperation established by it cannot affect the Secretariat's role as an independent institution established under the Treaty establishing the Energy Community.

§ 2 AREAS OF COOPERATION

The Parties intend to establish a partnership and cooperation in the following initial areas:

- Supporting the establishment and operation of the Secretariat’s Centre for Permitting and Planning (“Centre”), which will serve as a dedicated hub to assist Contracting Parties as indicated in the objectives section, in establishing the necessary legal and institutional preconditions for the implementation of provisions related to Renewables Acceleration Areas and the streamlining of permitting procedures for renewable energy projects. The Centre aims to accelerate the energy transition, enhance environmental protection, and promote the use of renewable energy.
- Providing targeted support to Contracting Parties in the Western Balkans through pilot projects and in the future more mature interventions, focused on the development of

Renewables Acceleration Areas and the implementation of streamlined permitting procedures.

- Organising and supporting workshops, events and expert dialogues to promote knowledge exchange, build capacity, and raise awareness on permitting and planning frameworks for renewable energy deployment in the Western Balkans.

§3 MODES OF COOPERATION

The cooperation between the Parties shall be guided by the common interest to implement the cooperation in the most efficient and successful way. Mutual trust, frequent communication and comprehensive information sharing on all matters of common interest will guide this cooperation.

OSF-WB is willing to provide a financial contribution and support the Secretariat, subject to the approval of the project proposal and the successful completion of its grant-making process, in accordance with OSF-WB rules. Following approval, both parties will sign a grant agreement specifying their respective roles, responsibilities, and tasks. The intended grant will support the implementation of initial activities, with the possibility of scaling up regionally, based on the successful implementation of this first phase (the pilot). OSF-WB will also explore options for providing additional support, particularly for regional events and workshops organised under its programmatic umbrella and targeted assistance to Contracting Parties at the local level in line with the foundation's support programmes.

The Parties will regularly exchange in order to coordinate activities to ensure complementarity and avoid overlap in implementation of their strategies, programmes and projects. For this purpose, the Parties will designate principal contacts.

§4 OBLIGATIONS AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Parties agree that all details concerning the clarity and precision of mutual obligations, the amount and disbursement schedule of financial support, procedures and controls, as well as mechanisms for resolving any potential disputes, shall be governed by a separate annual grant agreement to be concluded between the Parties in accordance with the provisions of this MOU and approved project proposal.

Finally, in the future contract can be stated that "project is considered an integral part of this agreement", in the case that it covers some of the mentioned issues. Everything else should be regulated in grant agreement (contract).

§4 PRINCIPAL CONTACTS

The principal contact for each Party will be:
For the Secretariat:
Svitlana Karpyshyna
Head of Project Management Unit
Svitlana.Karpyshyna@energy-community.org

CC:
Aleksandra Bujaroska
Senior Expert in Environmental Governance, Permitting and Planning
aleksandra.bujaroska@energy-community.org

For OSF-WB:
Dritan Nelaj
Team Leader - Just Green Transition Program
dritan.nelaj@osfwb.org

Each Party may change its principal contact at any time by a simple written notice to the other Party.

§5 EFFECTIVENESS, TERMINATION AND OTHER MATTERS

This MOU becomes effective upon signature by both Parties and will remain in effect for an unlimited period unless terminated as provided herein.

Either Party may terminate this MOU by giving thirty (30) days written notice to the other Party.

This MOU does not preclude the Parties from establishing similar agreements or contracts with other individuals, entities, agencies, and public or private organizations. The Parties recognize the importance of continuing to cooperate and work with other partners in programs of mutual interest and to be able to, by means of a written document signed by both Parties, invite other partners to participate in the activities implemented under this MOU.

The Parties enter into this MOU with mutual respect in a spirit of cooperation. The Parties hereby agree that, in the event of any dispute relating to this MOU, they shall first seek to resolve the dispute through informal discussions. If a dispute cannot be resolved informally within thirty (30) working days, the Parties agree to terminate this Memorandum.

Each Party shall be solely responsible and liable for the actions or omissions of its own employees, agents, and representatives involved with the activities contemplated under this MOU, including any related damages, losses and claims to or by third parties. Nothing herein shall be construed as creating joint or several liability between the Parties.

This MOU may only be modified by a written amendment signed by both Parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties have signed this Memorandum of Understanding, effective as of the last date written below.

DONE in Vienna on 25 November 2025

For the Energy Community Secretariat:

Artur Lorkowski

Director

Artur Lorkowski

Artur Lorkowski (Nov 25, 2025 13:44:01 GMT+1)

On behalf of Open Society Foundations – Western Balkans,

Andi Dobrushi

Executive Director of Open Society Foundation for Albania

Regional Director OSF Western Balkans

Andi Dobrushi

Andi Dobrushi (Nov 25, 2025 14:11:04 GMT+1)

Memorandum of Understanding_EC-OSF

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