Joint Statement of the Ministers of Energy

As a follow up to the Conference of the Western Balkans Summit held in Paris on 4th of July 2016, we the Ministers of Energy of Western Balkans 6 met in Skopje on 9th of February 2017 in order to reaffirm our commitment to regional cooperation, interconnectivity and integration and have agreed the following joint statement:

- We reconfirm our strong commitment to the Berlin Process and to the regional connectivity agenda as a key factor for growth in our Region; undertake to ensure continuous commitment to deliver on the measures agreed at the Paris Conference and to produce further results which are to be delivered until the Trieste Summit;

- We noted that important activities have been undertaken in the area of energy connectivity under Connectivity agenda, which aim not only to achieve physical connectivity between energy systems, but also between energy markets;

- Emphasizing the serious commitment to continue the efforts to successfully implement the Roadmap on Regional Market on Electricity, as well as Sustainability Charter, we look forward to detailed discussion in their implementation on the Trieste Summit;

- We noted the current state of implementation of the “energy soft measures” with a view to implement Regional Electricity Market aimed at removing existing legislative and regulatory barriers and enhancing the institutional structures necessary for the functioning of this market in line with the Energy Community Treaty and relevant EU acquis, while recognizing the actual status of implementation of market opening towards future integration in the regional electricity market and the common EU electricity market;

- We reiterate our commitment towards implementation of the Sustainability Charter, which will result in cleaner environment through implementation of energy efficiency measures and utilization of renewable energy;

- We note the importance of hydropower uptake for meeting the renewable energy targets and investment in new hydropower projects, recognizing the importance of the analysis of the hydro power potential in the region, emphasizing the significance of the water resources for the broader socio-economic aspects. We agree that the preparation of the Regional Hydro Master Plan should grow into a “Hydropower Development Study in the Western Balkans” focusing on identification of new hydropower projects while taking into account the wider national interests; We recommend that the WB6 countries have active involvement during the preparation
of the study and outcomes of the study be consensually adopted by the WB6 countries;

- We welcome today’s signature of two green energy market facilities REEP Plus - Regional Energy Efficiency Programme and GGF - Green for Growth Fund, which represent sound investment in a sustainable development, as well as clear support to the Region by the European Commission and International Financial Institutions.

*We express our appreciation to Commissioner Johannes Hahn for the continued support and guidance on behalf of the European Commission.*

*We welcome the work done by the Secretariat of the Energy Community in helping coordinating and implementing the commitments under this statement, and monitoring the implementation.*