



# MACEDONIAN ENERGY FORUM

The New Energy Landscape:  
Recovered, Repowered, Repurposed

## MEF Energy Forum 2024

Edition 7

June 10-11, 2024

Hotel DoubleTree by Hilton, Skopje

### **The New Energy Landscape: *Recovered, Repowered, Repurposed***

MEF 2024 takes place in a more stable energy environment this year. Most actors **recovered** from the energy crisis or built greater resilience toward energy volatility and energy challenges.

However, there is still much open discussion about the repowering trajectory and its pace. How can states, the private sector, and citizens repower and repurpose energy capacities for an era of constant geopolitical challenges? At the same time, technological innovation still needs to be sufficiently deployed.

Many countries, including Western Balkan ones, embark on ambitious plans to replace coal capacities with renewable energy sources and **repurpose** their assets and human capital for the new RES-powered world. But what has to occur for timely, just, and innovative energy repowering and repurposing?

At the point of the **seventh edition** of MEF, we can proudly say that the energy discussions have evolved and matured to make us the prime and most relevant platform to share and discuss ideas for energy repowering across the public, private, civil society and academic sectors.

This year, we embark on another venture to address the above-stated questions and provide direction and fresh views on how we all need to build a renewable energy landscape while taking care of energy security.

We invite you for a day full of challenging and inciting energy discussions, including:

#### **DRAFT AGENDA**

##### **DAY 0: JUNE 10**

##### **Arrival of international guests**

##### **Energy Insights Session “Decoding a Decade: The Berlin Process and its Impact on Energy Transition in the Western Balkans”** *(in partnership with the Embassy of Germany to North Macedonia).*

The Berlin process presents a pivotal forum for Western Balkan countries' joint initiatives to get close to EU membership. This process has fostered intra-country dialogue, dialogue with the EU, and investments in digitalization, skills and energy. How did the Berlin process support energy transformation? How can the Berlin process further invigorate the Western Balkans' energy agenda, and how can it support Western Balkan countries in contributing and benefiting from the European Green Deal?

##### **MEF2024 Official Welcome Dinner (invite-only)**

##### **DAY 1: JUNE 11**

##### **OFFICIAL OPENING OF MEF ENERGY FORUM 2024**

##### **Special Session on Skopje Climate Assembly Recommendations**

##### **Fireside Chat on Energy Security: Navigating the Path Forward**

Many countries, including the Western Balkans, are discussing repurposing their coal assets and repowering the energy sector with renewable energy sources. How can this be achieved while taking care of energy security?



## **Panel 1: Ministerial Panel: Bold Strategies for Repowering and Repurposing the Energy Sector in the Western Balkans**

Continuing the conversation on countries' energy transformation, in this panel, we invite ministers from the Western Balkan regions to present their current critical investment in energy transformation and their ten-year plans for repurposing coal assets. What are the key challenges? How do we sequence the energy transition to achieve the repurposing of fossil fuel assets into clean energy? What are the preconditions to do so? What bold visions do WB countries have for repurposing and repowering coal energy assets?

## **Panel 2: Technological Innovations for Repowering and Repurposing** *(Powered by the Embassy of France to North Macedonia)*

Technology is critical to repowering economies with clean, stable, and accessible energy. What are the essential technologies for repowering and repurposing the energy sector? How fast can these technologies be deployed, and how can they achieve their effects? This panel will discuss a mix of technologies, their complementarity, technological innovation, and technological availability and access.

## **Panel 3: Financing the Energy Transition**

MEF traditionally devotes time to green finance and financing the energy transition. Over the years, we have seen leapfrogging in this sector: central, commercial and investment banks have actively worked in the past few years on designing instruments to support energy investments. Yet, there are still doubts about what transitional fuels and repurposing options are good or viable investments. This panel will discuss the critical challenges for accessing finance for energy projects and what trends we expect.

## **Panel 4: Grid Enhancement - Trends and Challenges**

As investments in renewable energy sources (RES) accelerate, so does the need for grid enhancement. RES are unstable and require advanced management systems. Thus, transmission (TSO) and distribution systems operators (DSO) play a crucial role in supporting and balancing these needs. How far along are we with storage systems, smart grids, grid modernization, and grid cybersecurity to ensure fewer transmission losses, preparedness during outages, resilience, and response to cyber-attacks? How can governments and the private sector invest in grid modernization?

## **Panel 5: Innovative Approaches to Critical Raw Material Management in the Western Balkans: Opportunities for Economic Growth and Environmental Sustainability**

How can the Western Balkans harness innovative approaches to manage critical raw materials, paving the way for economic growth and environmental sustainability? What strategies can be employed to balance the region's economic interests with the imperative of environmental conservation? In what ways can sustainable extraction methods and circular economy practices be integrated into the management of critical raw materials? How can stakeholders collaborate to maximize the potential for economic prosperity while minimizing environmental impact? These questions will guide a dynamic discussion aimed at exploring opportunities for transformative change in the Western Balkans' resource management landscape.



## **Panel 6: Reskilling and Upskilling for a Repowered World: Green Jobs Challenges and Opportunities**

For some, the energy transition brings fear of job redundancy (e.g., coal mining). At the same time, differently qualified personnel, such as engineers for renewable energy sources and energy efficiency, EE installers and maintenance jobs, are needed to manage sophisticated energy systems. How specifically should governments and the private sector prepare and invest in green jobs? How can we still support operational fossil fuel capacities while preparing for new and clean technologies? What jobs and training programs do we need to support the energy transition?

## **Panel 7: Energy communities: models and success stories for energy democracy** *(in partnership with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Skopje)*

Against the backdrop of evolving energy landscapes and the imperative of sustainable development, this session shall delve into the concept of energy communities and their role in fostering democratic participation and local empowerment. Through an examination of diverse models and real-world success stories, participants will have the opportunity to gain insights into the transformative potential of community-led approaches to energy production, distribution, and governance. How can energy communities serve as vehicles for promoting social, economic, and environmental justice? What are the key ingredients for building successful energy community initiatives, and how can these models be replicated and scaled? These questions will frame a dynamic discussion aimed at inspiring collaborative action and advancing the agenda of energy democracy for a more sustainable and equitable future.

## **Closing Remarks and Conclusions**

