



**MACEDONIAN ENERGY  
FORUM**

The New Energy Landscape:  
Recovered, Repowered, Repurposed

## **MEF Energy Forum 2024**

**Organizers: ZIP Institute and EU Delegation to North Macedonia**

**Main partner: Open Society Foundations – Western Balkans**

**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 ideas for repowering the energy sector 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:

**Masters of Ceremony: Katerina Sinadinovska and Ognjen Janeski**, TV Personality & International Media and Communications Consultant

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

- Arrival of international guests

### **Invitation-only Panel**



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**18:00 – 19:30 (*Platinum Room*) Berlin Process Insights Session “Decoding a Decade: The Berlin Process and its Impact on the Green 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 the green energy transition? 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?

**Moderator: Agim Selami**, Executive Director, ZIP Institute

### Speakers:

- **HE Petra Drexler**, Ambassador, Embassy of Germany to North Macedonia
- **Bojan Marichikj**, First Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs, Republic of North Macedonia
- **Dr. Vancho Uzunov**, Professor, Faculty of Law "Justinian I", University "St. Cyril and Methodius" Skopje
- **Timcho Mucunski**, Vice President, VMRO-DPMNE
- **Nikola Dimitrov**, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs/President, Balkan Centre for Constructive Policies - Solution
- **Aleksandar Macura**, Co-founder and Programme Director, RES Foundation

*(English only. All panellists and moderators will have their name tags and seating in the roundtable.)*

**19:30 – 22:00** (invite-only) **MEF2024 Official Welcome Dinner** featuring curated music by **Ognen Janeski**. (Venue: Rooftop Bar No. 55 – DoubleTree by Hilton).

### DAY 1: JUNE 11

**09:00 – 09:20 (*Diamond Room*) OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE MEF ENERGY FORUM 2024**

#### Opening and Welcome Remarks:

- **Agim Selami** – Executive Director, ZIP Institute
- **David Geer**, Ambassador, EU Delegation to North Macedonia
- **Andi Dobrushki**, Director, Open Society Foundations - Western Balkans
- **Hristijan Mickoski**, Prime Minister – designate, Government of the Republic of North Macedonia

**09:20 – 09:25 (*Diamond Room*) MEF Family Photo**

**09:25 – 09:40 Press Statements**



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**9:25 - 09:40 (*Diamond Room*) Special Session on Skopje Climate Assembly Recommendations**

**Host: Ivan Mucunski**, International Technical Expert Advisor to the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of North Macedonia, Expertise France

**Speakers:**

- **Prof. Dr. Hans-Liudger Diemel**, Director, the nexus Institute, Berlin
- **Eleonora Jovanovikj**, Skopje Climate Assembly Participant

**09:40 - 10:00 (*Diamond Room*) Fireside Chat “Between Energy Security and Energy Transition: How to Support the Green Energy Transition While Taking Care of Energy Security”**

**Host: Katarina Sinadinovska**, Journalist

**Distinguished guests:**

- **Hristijan Mickoski**, Prime Minister – designate, Government of the Republic of North Macedonia
- **Giles Dicskon**, CEO, WindEurope

**10:00 – 11:00 (*Diamond Room*) The Importance of Critical Infrastructure for Energy Security: Navigating the Path Forward (*jointly organised with the Atlantic Council*)**

Many countries in the world, including the Western Balkans, are committed to decarbonisation and repowering the energy sector with renewable energy sources. These energy transition discussions are set against a backdrop of rapidly developing challenges and vulnerabilities that adversaries can exploit with devastating speed and potential massive impact on regions and countries’ energy security.

To that end, securing our critical infrastructure is crucial due to the combination of ageing legacy systems, increased digitization with a mix of copper, fibre, and wireless, making our infrastructure more vulnerable than ever. Recognizing that energy transition offers the chance to build a safer and more sustainable energy system, traditional security threats remain as new potential vulnerabilities emerge. This panel will discuss the importance of critical infrastructure for the purpose of securing uninterrupted access to energy as energy transition initiatives continue to develop and unfold.

**Moderator: Lidija L. Franklin, Senior Director, Jones Group International**



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- **Steven De Bruyn**, Partner, PwC Advisory, Belgium
- **Scott A. Kindsvater**, Jones Group International, Europe Lead and former Deputy Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, Advisor on Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Matters, Washington DC
- **Olga Khakova**, Deputy Director, European Energy Security Global Energy Center, the Atlantic Council, Washington DC
- **Caner Can**, Energy Advisor, Permanent Delegation of Türkiye to the EU

**11:00 – 11:10 (*Diamond Room*) Announcement of the MEF Scholarship Program for Women in Energy** (made possible by YEO Technology); presented by **Ivana Simjanoska**, Project Coordinator, ZIP Institute; and **Muhammed Topal**, YEO Technology, Country Manager for North Macedonia and the Balkans.

**11:10 - 11:30 Coffee Break** (powered by **Sparkasse Bank**)

**11:30 - 12:30 (*Diamond Room*) Panel 1: Ministerial Panel: Bold Strategies for Repowering and Repurposing the Energy Sector in the Western Balkans**

Continuing the conversation on countries' energy transition, in this panel, we invite ministers and high level officials from the Western Balkan regions to present their current critical investments in green transition and their ten-year plans for decarbonisation. What are the key challenges?

**Keynote address:**

- **Sanja Bozhinovska**, Prospects of a New Ministry of Energy and Mining in North Macedonia
- **Francesco La Camera**, Director-general, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)

**Moderator: Valbona Zeneli**, Non-resident Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council's Europe Centre

- **Sasa Mujovic**, Minister for Energy and Mining, Montenegro
- **Ami Kozeli**, Deputy Minister of Infrastructure and Energy, Albania
- **Jovana Joksimović**, Acting Assistant Minister for International Cooperation and European Integration, Serbia
- **Getoar Mjeku**, Deputy Minister of Economy, Kosovo

**12:30 - 14:00 (*Winter Garden*) Energy Investment Opportunities in the Context of the EUETS and the Green Agenda for Western Balkans (invite-only Ministerial seminar)**

**Moderator: Aleksandar Kovacevic**, Senior Visiting Research Fellow, Oxford Institute for Energy Studies



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### **12:30 - 14:00** (*Platinum Room*) **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.

#### **Keynote address:**

- **HE Cyrille Baumgartner**, Ambassador, Embassy of France to North Macedonia
- **Giles Dicskon**, CEO, WindEurope

#### **Moderator: Sonja Risteska**, Green Enesys

- **Ryan Duncan**, Director, Government Relations, Last Energy
- **Frédéric Mazallon**, Project Manager Engineering and New Nuclear Projects Department, EDF (virtual)
- **Mehmet Levent Yilmaz**, Independent Member of The Board, Girişim Elektrik A.Ş
- **Andrija Oros**, Manager for Energy Storage and Grid Connection, CWP Europe
- **Mert Uygun**, YEO – REAP Battery, Product Director
- **Rhedon Begolli**, Deputy Country Manager for North Macedonia/Senior Energy Specialist, The World Bank

### **12:30 - 14:00** (*Diamond Room*) **Panel 3: Financing the Green Energy Transition** (*championed by NLB Bank*)

MEF traditionally devotes time to green finance and financing the green 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 green energy investments. This panel will discuss the critical challenges for accessing finance for green energy projects and what trends we expect.

#### **Moderator: Olimpija Zaevska**, CEO, Elson Solutions

- **Branko Greganovic**, Chief Executive Officer, NLB Banka Skopje
- **Stefan Kostovski**, Regional Banker, Energy Europe, EBRD
- **Marjan Stojiljkovic**, Partner and Senior Sustainable Finance Specialist, Climate Lens Advisors, Germany
- **Bjorn Gabriel**, Head of EIB Representation in North Macedonia, European Investment Bank



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- **Rinor Gjonbalaj**, Resident Country Director, Millennium Challenge Corporation, Kosovo
- **Nina Nedanoska**, Deputy President of Management Board of Sparkasse Bank AD Skopje

### 14:00 - 15:00 Lunch Break

### 15:00 - 16:15 (*Diamond Room*) **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?

#### Keynote speaker:

- **Can Keles**, Business Development Director, Europower Solar, Turkiye

**Moderator: Simon Shutinoski**, CEO, National Electricity Market Operator of North Macedonia - MEMO

- **Arben Kllokoqi**, Senior Energy Expert, Energy Community Regulatory Board (ECRB), Energy Community Secretariat
- **Sasho Saltirovski**, Manager, Elektrodistribucija
- **Merita Dema**, Commissioner, Energy and Water Regulatory Commission of the Republic of North Macedonia
- **Nick Frydas**, Vice President, Grant Thornton Business Advisory, Greece
- **Dejan Draskovic**, Chief Operating Officer at BELEN - Montenegrin Power Exchange

### 15:00 - 16:15 (*Platinum Room*) **Panel 5: Innovative Approaches to Critical Raw Material Management in the Western Balkans: Opportunities for Economic Growth and Environmental Sustainability**

The increasing demand for critical raw materials due to the green and digital transition has created a need for regulatory cooperation. This is offering an opportunity for EU and Western Balkan co-operation to integrate into the EU critical raw material supply chain. For this, the Western Balkans should adapt the regulatory framework, its infrastructure and actively engage with partner countries. EU-WB critical raw materials co-operation could develop into a strategic framework toward a more sustainable development model



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– in the Western Balkan – and a more integrated, resilient, and market-based supply chain.

**Moderator: Caner Can**, Energy Advisor, Permanent Delegation of Türkiye to the EU/PhD Candidate, the University of Groningen

### Keynote speakers:

- **Peter Tom Jones**, Director, KU Leuven Institute for Sustainable Metals and Minerals
- **Robert Tomas**, Policy Officer, DG GROW, European Commission

### Panellists:

- **Azra Becirovic** Lecturer, University Sarajevo School of Science and Technology, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Daniel Pop**, Director, Centre for Political Economy, UBB
- **Marija Dukovska - Pavlovska**, Executive Member BoD, General Manager, Makstil
- **Haris Abaspahic**, Policy Lead, Centre for Policy and Governance, BiH
- **Sait Uysal**, Founder, Türkiye Critical Minerals Initiative

### 16:30 - 17:45 (*Platinum Room*) **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? What jobs and training programs do we need to support the energy transition?

**Moderator: Viktor Mitevski**, Executive Director, Association for Research and Analysis – ZMAI

- **Viktor Mizo**, Executive Director, Kostal
- **Tatjana Shterjova Dushkovska**, Secretary General, Western Balkans 6 Chamber Investment Forum - WB6 CIF
- **Entela Ruci**, Business Development/ Government Affairs Manager, Bechtel Infrastructure
- **Nikica Mojsovska Blazevska**, Chief Executive Officer, Macedonia 2025
- **Agon Nixha**, Senior Expert on Competitiveness, Regional Cooperation Council
- **Wolfgang Maier**, Chairman of the Management Board of EVN Macedonia
- **Katerina Kostovska**, Consultant, Sustainability in the Wine Industry





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### **16:30 - 17:45 (*Diamond Room*) 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 will 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.

**Moderator: Iva Petrunova**, Architect, Urban Sociologist, and Researcher

- **Klaus Mindrup**, Member of the German Bundestag (2013 – 2021) & Chairperson of Energy Dialogue 2050 e.V.
- **Vanja Djinlev**, Researcher & Doctoral Candidate, USYS Transdisciplinary Lab (TdLab), ETH Zürich
- **Aco Ristov**, Mayor, Municipality of Radovish
- **Gledian Llatja**, Mayor of Elbasan, Albania
- **Biljana Dukovska**, President, Macedonian Platform Against Poverty
- **Murat Mörel**, Project Manager, Climate Change and Environment Portfolio, UNDP Türkiye
- **Mariana Angelova**, Secretary General, National Youth Council of Macedonia

**17:45 - 18:00 (*Diamond Room*) Closing remarks and conclusions.**

**18:00 - 20:00 Networking Reception for all Participants**