

PRESS RELEASE (non-official translation)

Budapest, July 20, 2020

Incentivizing regional climate protection efforts is Hungary's strategic interest

Olivér Várhelyi, Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement/Member of the European Commission and Péter Kaderják, State Secretary for Energy and Climate Policy of the Ministry for Innovation and Technology (MIT) discussed European integration of the Western Balkans and investment plans into green transition. During the virtual meeting the parties reviewed the proposed economic and investment plan announced by the EC, as well as the possible means of cooperation.

Commissioner Várhelyi introduced the Western Balkans development package, which aims at fostering long-term economic growth and European integration processes, besides tackling recent challenges. The ambitious initiative will include development proposals for strengthening, among others, green transition, digital transformation, links between the transportation and energy sectors. Commissioner Várhelyi emphasized that between 2021-2027, compared to the previous period, significantly increased resources will be available for the development of the Western Balkans region.

Mr. Kaderják introduced the experiences and future goals of the climate protection investment preparation and capacity building program managed by the Western Balkans Green Center. He said that the program offers HUF 1.5 billion in a period of 2 years for reaching measurable and ambitious climate protection goals, which support the development of the Western Balkans region and increase the international competitiveness of Hungarian enterprises active in green economy. According to the mid-term plans, a donor fund, mobilizing resources including international ones, will be established for financing the investments prepared in the framework of the program. The aim of the fund is to finance the implementation of innovative technologies complementary to EU and other climate protection resources. Hungary's climate protection goals remain unchanged: by 2030, 90% of the local energy production will be carbon-free, by 2050 Hungary can be turned into a climate-neutral country without risking economic growth or resulting in an extra burden for Hungarian families.

Parties identified a solid number of links between the European Commission's economic and investment plan and the climate protection program coordinated by the Western Balkans Green Center. The Center, through its project preparation activities could contribute to increasing the volume of bankable investments ready for implementation, thus supporting the region's climate protection efforts and EU integration, which is in line with the Commission's agenda, as well as Hungary's strategic interests.

The original press release in Hungarian is available at:

<https://www.kormany.hu/hu/innovacios-es-technologiai-miniszterium/energiaugyekert-es-klimapolitikaert-felelos-allamtitkar/hirek/magyarorszag-strategiai-erdeke-a-regio-klimavedelmi-torekveseinek-osztonzese>

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