



Head Office / Secretariat of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South-Eastern Europe (SWG) – Skopje

Statement

On the EU Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans and Green Agenda for the Western Balkans

On the occasion of the Agricultural Policy Forum 2020 organized by SWG and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development of Kosovo* (12 – 16 October 2020), EU Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans and Green Agenda for the Western Balkans were announced by and discussed with EU Commission representatives.

SWG along with the Ministries of Agriculture from the WB countries/territories as well as the Forum, comprised by relevant representatives of the public, private, civil sectors and academia from the Western Balkans and beyond, expressed their satisfaction and appreciation for the adoption of these two documents. They are recognized as historical documents that arise from the intention of the EU Commission for accelerating the integration of the Western Balkan countries into EU and that are in line with the EU most important mainstream strategies: “Green Deal”, “From Farm to Fork”, and “Biodiversity Strategy”.

SWG and its member institutions – Ministries for Agriculture of Western Balkans - are pleased that topics such as climate action, circular economy, depollution, digitalization, and particularly biodiversity, sustainable food systems and future of rural areas, are in the core foundation of the future policy. That is even more significant in these difficult times of pandemic and economic crisis, showing that both, the EU Commission and the Western Balkans, are addressing the basic pre-conditions for long-term and sustainable economic recovery of the region, successful regional integration and accelerated convergence with the EU towards modern, greener and more prosperous Western Balkans.

SWG stands ready to support the EC in the implementation of the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans and Green Agenda for the Western Balkans and remains at EC disposal for joint future actions in that respect. Some of the immediate interventions which SWG could undertake relate to coordinating regional efforts in the area of solid waste management in rural areas, circular economy in the agricultural sector, sustainable food systems, agrobiodiversity, diversification of economic activities in rural areas, sustainable rural tourism.

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence