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Status of implementation of renewable energy action plans across 17 ECE countries

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Group of Experts on Renewable Energy (GERE) is requested to identify ways to strengthen national action plans regarding renewable energy, drawing on experience of best practices on framework conditions and instruments that help significantly increase the uptake of renewable energy in the region.

Despite the great potential for renewable energy deployment in the ECE region, many countries face several challenges to uptake renewable energy through national policies.

This paper is an abstract of a report prepared by ECE on the status of implementation of renewable energy action plans across 17 ECE countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, North Macedonia, Moldova Republic, Montenegro, Russian Federation, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Its recent update provides an overview of renewable energy targets and policymaking in the ECE region. It points out recent trends and developments in both the deployment of different renewable energy technologies as well as supporting policies of ECE member States. This is a basis for discussion and exchange of experiences on renewable energy in the transition to a more sustainable energy supply. In turn, this will help to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



I. Overview

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region comprises of 56 countries in Europe, North America and Asia with a total population of 1.3 billion. It accounts for 42% of global GDP¹ and 35% of global carbon emissions from fossil fuel use. The region is geographically, economically and culturally highly diverse. This is also true for the energy systems in the ECE region, which are characterised by differences in resource availability, market design, regulatory and policy framework, as well as infrastructures.

2. Renewable energy technologies can be utilised for various applications including electricity generation, heating/cooling, as well as mobility. Renewable electricity generation plays a particularly prominent role as it provides the basis for the dissemination of renewable energy in the other sectors of energy use (sector coupling). The presented analysis, therefore, emphasises the status quo of electricity generation from renewable energy sources across GERE member States. Within this context, the report focuses on the status of implementation of specific action plans related to renewable energy across the 17 United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Group of Experts on Renewable Energy (GERE) members State: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, North Macedonia, Moldova Republic, Montenegro, Russian Federation, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

II. Status of implementation of renewable energy action plans

3. Various drivers lead to countries' decisions to take up renewable energy. In their efforts to combat climate change, countries, regions, and institutions in the ECE region came forward with pledges to reach climate neutrality or at least substantially reduce their carbon emissions in the years leading up to 2030, 2040 and 2050. Consequently, the interest in renewable energy sources is stronger than ever. In addition to climate change mitigation, National Renewable Energy Actional Plans also hold other benefits, such as the national energy independency, energy security, and energy efficiency that have been important drivers as well.

4. In order to meet the European Union (EU)'s energy and climate targets for 2030, EU countries have established a 10-year integrated **National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP)** for the period from 2021 to 2030. NECP outlines how the Energy Community's member States (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine) intend to address energy efficiency, renewable, greenhouse gas emission reduction, interconnections, and research and innovation. EU member States have planned to submit to the European Commission the first draft of their NECPs by June 2023 and then finalize them by 2024. In addition, each country must submit a progress report every 2 years, according to the structure, format, technical details, and process set out in the Implementing Regulation². The Commission will, as part of the state of the energy union report, monitor the EU's progress towards achieving these targets.

5. Among the Energy Community's member States, Albania and North Macedonia already submitted the final version of the first NECP's draft to the Secretariat. Annex II gives an overview on the progress status that countries made for the redaction of the first NECP's draft.

6. The following paragraphs will mainly focus on National Renewable Energy Action Plans adopted by Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, North Macedonia, Moldova Republic, Montenegro, Russian Federation, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, and the progress they are making to achieve them.

7. **Albania**'s National Action Plan on Renewable Energy Sources 2018-2020 was a sectoral plan prepared with the goal of achieving the production from renewable energy

¹ Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) (constant 2017 international USD).

² Commission Implementing Regulation 2022

sources of up to 38 percent of the total gross energy consumption by 2020. The Plan of strategic objectives aimed to promote security in the energy supply sector in the country and integrate renewable energy technologies in the domestic, regional, and European markets. Throughout economic diversification and promoting renewable energy, the Action Plan contributed to decrease poverty and social development by creating new employment opportunities, especially in rural areas, and at the same time stimulating businesses competition by providing stability in the domestic energy supplies that resulted in lower consumer prices. The country supported the diversification of renewable energy sources, especially on solar PV and wind technologies. The country aimed to increase the energy generation from hydropower up to 7 Megawatts (MW), solar PV to 490MW, wind to 50MW and waste-to-power to 41MW by 2020.

8. Albania has already achieved the long-term target set to 42% of renewables in total primary energy supply set into the National Energy Strategy for the period 2018-2030, which was adopted in 2018. The recent additional measures adopted in the NECP aim to increase the share of renewables in final energy demand up to 54.4% by 2030. The target is to increase the national generation to 178.1% on electricity (where 78.1% will be due to electricity export), 34.6% on transport and 16.6% on heating and cooling. The NECP also focuses to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 18.7% while increasing energy efficiency by 8.4% by 2030.

9. Armenia's government approved the Energy Sector Development Strategic Programme ("Energy Strategy") in January 2021, setting the path for the sector's transition through 2040. The publication and approval of this strategic document will form a useful basis for Armenia's future energy legislation. The 2021 Strategy replaces the previous energy policy document, adopted in 2015, which did not fully reflect the current policy in the energy sector and the ongoing situation of the field as well as its development prospects. The Energy Strategy aims to extend the life of the Armenian Nuclear Power Plant (ANPP) beyond 2026 and set a new nuclear power plant to replace it. The construction of a "North-South Corridor" will increase power transmission links between Armenia-Georgia and Armenia-Iran. The country aims to liberalize gradually the domestic electricity market while maximizing the national generation of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency. Indeed, the Energy Sector Development Strategic Programme to 2040 intends to increase the share of solar power generation to at least 15% (1.8 billion-kilowatt hour (kWh)) by 2030, it also plans to set utility-scale wind farms with total installed capacity of 500 MW, between the year 2025-2040.

10. The current energy situation in Armenia shows that 39% of electricity is generated by the nuclear power plants while the remaining 60% is almost generated equally by hydro and thermal power plants. The Armenian Government developed and adopted in March 2022 a new Program on Energy Saving and Renewable Energy for 2022-2030. The new Program, in line with Armenia's Energy Sector Development Strategic Program to 2040, aims to improve energy efficiency in the economic sector in the next ten years, promote energy saving, and increase the use of renewable energy sources to enhance energy security and reduce the negative environmental impacts. Armenia considers the further development of renewable energy (solar, wind, geothermal) as a vital direction of its energy policy and an essential guarantee for its energy independence and security. The aim is to increase the share of solar energy production to at least 15% by 2030. To achieve this goal, the utilisation of the battery energy storage systems will be essential. The new Program also emphasizes three main areas/sectors regarding energy saving and energy efficiency, namely (1) households, (2) transport and (3) public schools. In addition, specific reference is made to industry and agriculture. The energy-saving and energy-efficiency improvement policy will be aimed at increasing the level of 'electrification' (replacing gas with electric energy) of the economy (particularly in the residential buildings sector).

11. **Azerbaijan**'s Action Plan of the Strategic Road Map on Public Utilities Development called for installing 420 MW of renewable power capacity by 2020 through wind plants, solar PV and biopower. Nevertheless, it was not achieved as of October 2021. It still aims to increase to 30% of renewables power capacity by 2030, which will double the current capacity.

12. Relevant laws and normative legal acts have been adopted to develop the renewable energy sector across the country, while improving the legislative and institutional environment in the area. In recent years, the work carried out in the field has been continued and the law (as No 339-VIQ, dated 31 May 2021) makes a special contribution on the development of renewable energy technologies in the national production of electricity. The implementation of relevant measures in the direction of development of sub-legislative documents keeps ensuring the correct application and implementation of the national law.

13. In recent months, Azerbaijan also adopted the Plan of Action for the Establishment of a Green Energy Zone during the period 2022-2026, which aims to diversify the production of renewable energy sources by building wind farms with a combined capacity of 400 MW and a solar power plant up to 240-MW in the Jabrayil region. This action plan emphasizes the need to measure the potential of renewable at the national scale, to build hydroelectric power plants, to adopt requirements for installing rooftop solar systems, to use energy-efficient green technologies in street lighting, and to deploy electric vehicle (EV) charging stations.

14. **Belarus** energy production has a heavy reliance on fossil fuels. Fossil fuels accounted for 90% of the energy mix while renewable energies accounted for 7.1% of the country's final energy consumption in the year 2019. Today, there is a limited role of renewables due to the country policy in favour of nuclear energy generation. Belarus is import-dependent with 84.8% of the total primary energy supply. Despite the untapped potential, renewable energy is at an early stage of development in Belarus.

15. State policy and regulation framework within the energy sector (including nuclear energy, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources) is implemented through laws, decrees and directives adopted by the President of the Republic of Belarus. The Council of Ministers adopts resolutions to guide energy sector development strategies while ensuring the right implementation of policies and regulate residential end user energy tariffs upon the President's approval. Legislative measures within the energy sector are prepared by the Ministry of Energy and experts in the sector, before they are submitted for approval through the National Assembly.

16. In 2020, the total energy production in Belarus amounted to 38'698 GWh where energy generated from coal, lignite, and peat accounted for 31 GWh, oil for 532 GWh, natural gas for 36'593 GWh, bioenergy and waste for 435 GWh, hydro for 399 GWh, nuclear for 388 GWh, wind for 198 GWh and solar 172 GWh.

17. **Bosnia and Herzegovina** intended to reach 40% renewable share in total final energy consumption by 2020, which was translated into a 56.9% renewable share in electricity, 52.4% in heating and cooling, and 10% in transport. The past NREAP set technology-specific targets by 2020 to 162 MW for small hydropower and 20 MW for solar PV, that were achieved, as well as 143 MW of wind power and 19 MW of centralised biopower.

18. Electric power generation is a key sector of economic activity in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The country is a net exporter of electrical energy that is mainly generated by coal-fired, thermal and hydro power plants. The generating capacity is about 17,000 GWh. As a member of the Energy Community, the country is in the process of developing a National Energy Climate Plan (NECP) in line with EU regulations to address energy efficiency, renewables, greenhouse gas emissions reductions, interconnections, and research and innovation. Through this decarbonization strategy, Bosnia and Herzegovina will be able to increase the investment in the energy sector by accessing EU financing.

19. In 2021, data showed that hydropower provided 37% of the country's total electricity production and there is still room for additional growth. Recently, solar and wind power plants have emerged but currently remain a small percentage of the overall energy mix (account for about 5 percent).

20. **Georgia**, the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture (MEPA) with technical assistance of German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) developed Georgia's 2030 Climate Change Strategy and 2021-2023 Action Plan (CAP). It serves as an action plan for the implementation of Georgia's existing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), but also as an important orientation to inform the determination of an

appropriate and realistic level of ambition when updating the NDC in future revision cycles. The action plan CAP will be updated on a 2–3 year basis, to be aligned with future revisions of the NDC and the NECP. It will ensure coherence between sectoral policies, the NDC, and the NECP. In addition, the Climate Strategy and Action Plan identifies a long-term vision for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions for 2030 and specific activities for the near future, 2021-2023.

21. By 2030, the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (CAP) intends to meet national electricity demand by 89% generated by renewables, what it currently represents 66% (mainly generated from hydro).

22. Today, the total installed power generation capacity in Georgia amounts to 4525 MW, with 105 operating hydro power plants accounting for the largest share of 3350 MW (74%). 20.7 MW is generated from wind technology (accounts for 0.5%) and the remaining 1154.4 MW (25.5%) is fossil-based. There are currently more than 150 ongoing hydro power projects at various stages of development, as well as further RE projects across the country.

23. In 2020, **Kazakhstan**'s electricity is mainly generated from fossil fuels (84%), along with hydropower (12%) and solar/wind installation (less than 2%). Kazakhstan's Law on Supporting the Use of Renewables and the Concept of Transition to Green Economy (2013) aims to increase renewable energy generation to 30% by 2030 and 50% by 2050.

24. In 2021, the share of energy consumption by sources was composed by coal (54.74%), oil (22.14%), gas (19.13%) hydropower (3.01%), wind (0.55%) and solar (0.43%). Renewable energy has a great potential across the country. Hydropower can generate up to 13% of the country's total generating capacity with the 15 large hydropower stations (<50 MWh). In addition, with a program of wind energy development through 2030, Kazakhstan intends to implement wind farm construction with the introduction of 2,000 MW by 2030. The country also aims to increase the solar power plants capacity in the near future.

25. In **Kyrgyzstan**, several renewable energy targets are mentioned in various documents, with the latest being a 10% share in total final energy supply in the National Development Strategy for 2018-2040 (the target year was unspecified). The targets are not consistent across the documents and are not supported with related action plans.

26. The renewable energy production is mainly generated by large hydropower, which accounts for 30% of total energy supply and for 90% of total electricity generation. Although, Kyrgyzstan has one of the highest shares of renewable electricity in the world, only 10% of the total hydropower potential is currently used. The National Energy Program and the Strategy for Fuel and Energy Sector Development (2010-2025) outlines the priority of developing renewables through hydropower. The strategy supports the construction of approximately 100 small hydroelectric plants with total capacity of 180 MW. In addition, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development for 2018-2040 requires energy efficiency technologies to be applied in all new construction and the government plans to implement large-scale programmes on energy-efficient reconstruction of old residential and non-residential buildings, and to introduce energy efficiency passports for all buildings.

27. The **Republic of Moldova** is drafting the National Energy and Climate Plans and updating the National Energy Strategy 2030 which intends to reach 20% of renewables in the total final energy consumption but it has already been achieved with 25% in 2020. In addition, it aims to produce 10% of energy from biofuels for the transportation sector (accounted for 0.18% in 2020), 10% renewable energy share in electricity generation (accounted for 3.12% in 2020), and 27% renewable energy share in heat consumption (accounted for 41.2% in 2020). The second phase of this strategy, covering the period between 2021-2030, is about to be updated to ensure a smooth continuation.

28. The energy system of the Republic of Moldova is characterised by low levels of domestic natural resources and production and thus has a heavy reliance on energy imports; more than 70% of primary energy supply, including natural gas, petroleum and electricity is imported. In 2020, the share of renewable sources in the gross final energy consumption amounted to 25% with biomass being the dominant renewable energy resource. While the heating and cooling sector reports a renewable energy share of 41%, transportation and electricity generation have shares of only 0.2% and 3%, respectively. The share of electricity

in the final energy consumption is also low at approximately 15% as of 2019, illustrating the low level of electrification and heavy reliance on gas imports and generation. The country requires a modern and flexible electricity system to accommodate an increased share of variable and local renewables. In addition, renewable energy targets and specific support mechanisms need to be strengthened if any significant expansion and use of local energy production from local, renewable resources such as wind is to be realised. Despite the high potential, deployment of wind and solar energy has been very slow. As of 2022, only 97.9 MW of renewable capacity for electricity generation was installed.

29. **Montenegro**'s total actual contribution from each renewable energy technology in Montenegro achieved the 2020 targets (total share of renewable energy at 43.8%, electricity at 61.5% and heating and cooling at 64.8%) except for renewable energy share in fuels used in the transportation sector.

30. Montenegro has adopted the strategical documents to increase the share of renewable energy at the national scale such as Energy Policy, Energy Development Strategy of Montenegro until 2030, the Law on Energy, the Law on Strategic Environmental Assessment, and the National Action Plan for the Use of Energy from Renewable Sources until 2020. The government has recently adopted the Action Plan for the implementation of the Energy Development Strategy until 2030. The Action Plan is a complement to the Energy Strategy as both documents have the same goal; to concretize the vision of energy development Strategy until 2030 set at least 27% of renewable energy as target for 2030 and emphasizes the priority to increase the share of renewable energy in the transportation sector.

31. **North Macedonia** adopted the Renewable Energy Action Plan for the Republic of Macedonia until 2025 with vision until 2030 that aims to increase constantly the production of energy from large hydro at 2,025 GW by 2025 and 2,650 GW by 2030, from small hydro at 628 GW by 2025 and 702 GW by 2030, from wind at 308 GW by 2025 and 616 GW by 2030, from solar photovoltaic (PV) at 50 GW by 2025 and 130 GW by 2030, from biomass at 40 GW by 2025 and 50 GW by 2030, from biogas at 84 GW by 2025-2030 and from geothermal at 74 GW by 2030.

32. The country is driving renewable energy actions, replacing coal with solar power and gas, and is signing strategic investment deals for large wind parks and photovoltaic plants. The electricity produced by renewable energy power plants increased by 15% last year compared to 2020, while the output of coal-fired power plants decreased by 17%. The share of renewable energy in the country's total electricity production also increased from 29% to 31%. The first phase of the large wind park construction in Bogdanci has been completed with the installation of 16 wind turbines and the construction of 11 km of 110 kV transmission line and a new substation, which connects the wind park with the energy network, as well as access roads. Phase 2 is ongoing and will add 14 MW to the electricity generation capacity of existing facilities, bringing the park's total capacity to 50 MW as planned. The EU co-finances Phase 2 with a €9.2 million grant through the WBIF under the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans.

33. The **Russian Federation**'s share of electricity production in 2021 was mainly composed by gas sources (42%), followed by nuclear (20%), hydropower (19%) and coal (17%). The other renewable energy sources (as wind, solar and bioenergy) accounted for less than 1% of the total electricity production.

34. Energy Strategy 2035, adopted in 2020, acknowledges hydropower as the major renewable energy source. The strategy is divided on several phases, where the first one covers 2014-2024, second one 2025-2035 and the third one 2036-2050. It intends to increase the renewable share in electricity generation to 4.5% by 2024 and at least 6% by 2035. This translates to new capacities of solar PV at 1.8 GW, wind at 3.4 GW and small hydropower at 210 GW, installed between 2014 and 2024. Russian Federation intents to become a major player in the global hydrogen energy market on a large scale by exporting 15–50 million metric tons to the global market by 2050.

35. **Serbia** adopted in 2013 a National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP), the document that set the targets of renewable energy sources until 2020, as well as the methodology that will be used to achieve them. Serbia's renewable energy 2020 targets aimed

to reach 27% of share of energy generated from renewable sources in gross final energy consumption by meeting 30% of demand through renewable energy sources in the Heating and Cooling sector, 36.6% of electricity demand and 10% of energy demand in the transport sector. However, only the heating and cooling target was met at the end of the year 2020.

36. Despite this trend, the country is currently drafting the National Energy and Climate Plans for the period from 2021 up to 2030 and the Energy Strategy 2040 with projections up to 2050. These new strategies will define new targets for renewable energy, energy efficiency for 2030, with projections for 2040 and 2050. In 2016, the Serbian government adopted the Energy Sector Development Strategy for the period by 2025 with projections up to 2030. This strategy aims to increase plants for electricity generation using renewable energy as follow: wind farms at 500 MW in 2025 and 600 MW in 2030, small hydro power plants (<10 MW) at 300 MW in 2025 and 400 MW in 2030, large hydro power plan (>10 MW) at 300 MW in 2025 and 5 MW in 2030, solar plants at 100 MW in 2025 and 200 MW in 2030, geothermal plants at 3 MW in 2025 and 5 MW in 2030, biogas-fired plants at 60 MW in 2030.

37. **Tajikistan** adopted the National Development Strategy for 2030 (in 2016) and aims to have 10% of electricity generation from renewables, excluding large hydro, and become energy independent. This strategy is summarized as "10-10-10-10-500" which shorthand for an increase on the installed renewable energy capacity by 10 GW, for a reduction of technical grid losses by 10%, a constant increase on electricity exports to 10 TW per year, a diversification of generation sources by increasing non-hydro generation capacity to at least 10% of the total share and finally to achieve energy savings of 500 GW from energy efficiency measures. Today, the status of renewable energy in Tajikistan is not updated which makes difficult to analyse the progress made by the government on the development of renewable energy sources.

38. Tajikistan's primary energy legislation is the Law on Energy (adopted in 2000) grants the government the authority to develop the energy sector including investment and concessions, pricing and tariff structures, and to control the use of fuels and renewable energy resources. According to several studies from IEA, Central Asian neighbours (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) lack cross-border electricity trading opportunities. It is considered as a major factor that prevents the government of Tajikistan from maximising the revenue potential from surplus water flow during the summer and limits options for imports during periods of shortages during the winter.

39. **Turkmenistan**'s government is continuously investing in oil and gas, to modernise and expand the electricity and heat sector by 2020. Moreover, the energy sector is almost fully subsidised, with citizens receiving free electricity, heat and gas up to a certain level of consumption, until 2030, but the government is taking steps to reduce subsidies to curb domestic demand and increase exports. Turkmenistan is part of the EU4Energy Programme, an initiative focused on evidence-based policymaking for the energy sector.

40. Today, Turkmenistan's energy sector is governed by the executive branch of the government and the Cabinet of Ministers, with several ministries responsible for policy implementation and sector management. The country does not have renewable energy targets.

41. In **Ukraine**, the National Renewable Energy Action Plan Up to 2020, which was adopted in 2014, aimed to generate renewable energy at 12.4% in heating and cooling, 11% in electricity, 10% in transportation, and 11% share in gross final energy consumption. However, in 2019, the share of renewable energy on actual consumption accounted for 9% in heating and cooling system, 10.86% in electricity, 3.07% in transport and 8.06% as share of gross final energy consumption.

42. In 2017, Ukraine adopted the Energy Strategy of Ukraine until 2035 that aims to continuously increase share of renewables in the primary energy supply to 25% in 2035. The country also published the draft of the NREAP where higher targets; 27% of renewables to total final energy consumption, 25% in electricity generation, 35% in heating and cooling, and 14% in transport by 2030. The renewable energy target becomes even more relevant as consequence of the war with the Russian Federation and the intention of Ukraine to have a more resilient energy system in the future.

43. During the years of 2018-2019, many regulatory acts were adopted to promote growth of renewable energy share while improving administrative procedures such as the Law of Ukraine (dated September 04, 2018) No. 2517-VIII «On amendments to certain laws of Ukraine regarding the investment attractiveness of renewable energy facilities construction», which has relaxed regulatory requirements for the construction of electric power facilities that produce electricity from alternative energy sources, in particular, for wind farms. In addition of the Law of Ukraine (dated November 23, 2018) No. 2628-VIII «On amendments to the Tax Code of Ukraine and certain other legislative acts of Ukraine on improving the administration and revision of rates of some taxes and duties», which, among other things, simplifies the construction of renewable energy facilities and provides tax incentives for importing renewable energy equipment to Ukraine.

44. **Uzbekistan**'s strategy for the transition to a green economy, covering the period 2019-2030, aims to build new renewable generation facilities (solar, wind, and hydropower plants) with a total capacity of over 8 400 MW are planned for construction to increase the share of renewable energy in total electricity generation to 25%. Uzbekistan generating capacity targets to 2030 aims to increase the capacity through hydropower power at 1'486 MW, solar at 4'300 MW and wind at 1'600 MW.

III. Conclusions

45. Renewable technologies are highly developing in most of the 17 ECE focus countries. Most of the 17 ECE focus countries have recently adopted renewable energy targets by 2030, except for Belarus and Turkmenistan.

46. National strategies differ from country to country, focusing on national needs and potential. These strategies give also a clearer vision of the national energy sector by country, enabling a suitable environment which attracts new national and international investors who, through an increase of viable commercial projects, will contribute to substantially increase the uptake of RE.