

**jOiNEd For sUsTainability - bUilding climate REsilient  
communities in WB and EU**

# Gaps between climate and sustainability action in EU and the Balkans – Draft report NOVI SAD VISIT

**UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CEPS KISELJAK**

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## STRUCTURED OUTLINE

1. Introduction
2. Short review of the climate and sustainability practices in EU and WBC with references to the Country reports and Environmental Implementation Review
3. Comparison of climate and sustainability initiatives between WBC and EU
4. Gap analysis between WBC and EU
5. Conclusion



## 1. INTORDUCTION

- Work Package 2 – gathering infroations about all practices related to sustainability actions in each HEIs in the WBC
- In the scope of the Work Package 2 of the 1FUTURE project, the information about all practices related to sustainability actions in each HEI in the WBC and EU were collected.
- Based on these reports and the experiences gained during visits to partner HEIs, the gap report was formulated.



## 2. SHORT REVIEW OF THE CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES IN EU AND WBC

- A brief overview of the achievements published by the:
- European Commission – **country reports** (WBC and associated countries)
- **Environmental Implementation Review** – a regular reporting tool designed to improve the implementation of EU environmental laws



### 3. COMPARISON OF CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES BETWEEN WBC AND EU

- A cross-analysis was done according:
  - **Legal and strategic framework** related to the development of climate and sustainability initiatives **in WBC**;
  - **Institutional framework** related to the development of climate and sustainability initiatives in EU and WBC HEIs;
  - Climate Change and Sustainability practices offered in the most relevant **Study Programs** at certain unit (Faculty or Department) per level of study program;
  - **SDGs included in study programs** per certain institution between WBC and EU;
  - **Projects** related to climate and sustainability between WBC and EU;
  - **Services** related to climate and sustainability in WBC and EU HEIs.



### 3. COMPARISON OF CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES BETWEEN WBC AND EU

- Common challenges in **legal and strategic framework** related to the development of climate and sustainability initiatives in WBC:
  - All three countries face challenges in waste management, water quality, nature protection, and alignment with EU directives.
  - Urgent measures are required for legislative enhancements, administrative capacity improvement, and coordination to comply with established regulations and standards.
  - Each country requires comprehensive strategies and plans for climate adaptation, energy, emissions reduction, and disaster risk management



### 3. COMPARISON OF CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES BETWEEN WBC AND EU

- **Institutional framework** related to the development of climate and sustainability initiatives in EU and WBC HEIs:
  - While the **University of Tirana** has showcased its commitment to environmental responsibility through a **comprehensive strategy titled "Strategy for a Friendly Environmental University,"** encompassing diverse sustainability facets, **several institutions within the Western Balkans,** such as Luarasi University, University of Tuzla, University College CEPS Kiseljak, and the University of Montenegro, **lack a tailored institutional framework for climate and sustainability initiatives.**
  - Notably, **universities like Lund University in Sweden, IUAV in Italy, HNEE in Germany, and the University of Novi Sad in Serbia have implemented dedicated sustainability policies, strategies, and action plans, integrating sustainability across teaching, research, governance, and campus activities.** However, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje-UKIM did not provide information about a sustainability strategy.



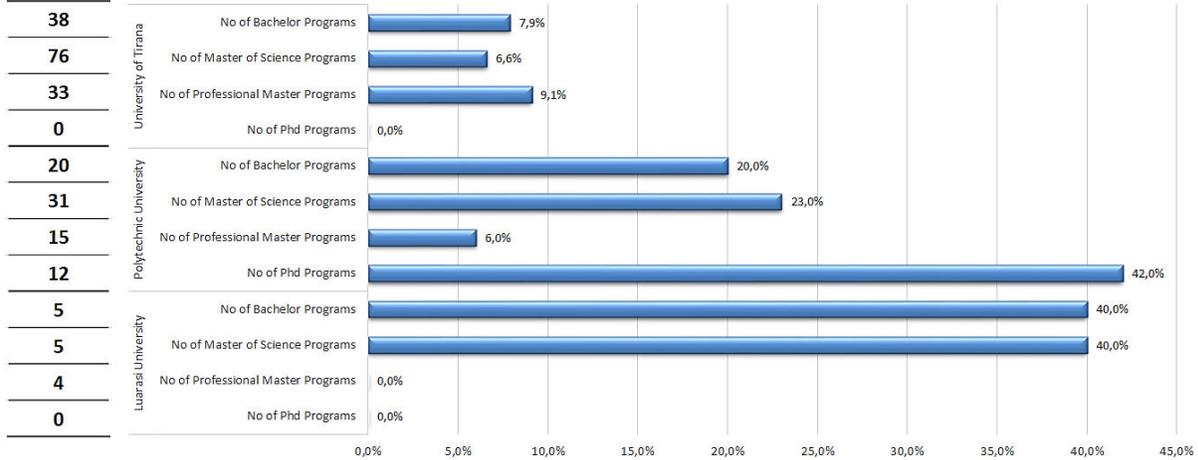
### 3. COMPARISON OF CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES BETWEEN WBC AND EU

- Climate Change and Sustainability practices offered in the most relevant **Study Programs** at certain units (Faculty or Department) per level of study program:
  - This comparison highlights **varying degrees of emphasis on climate change and sustainability practices** across universities, showcasing diversity and focus areas of sustainability across various universities, **with some offering comprehensive sustainability programs – mostly master programs (EU HEIs) while others integrate sustainability principles into specific disciplines or faculties (WBC HEIs in some measure).**



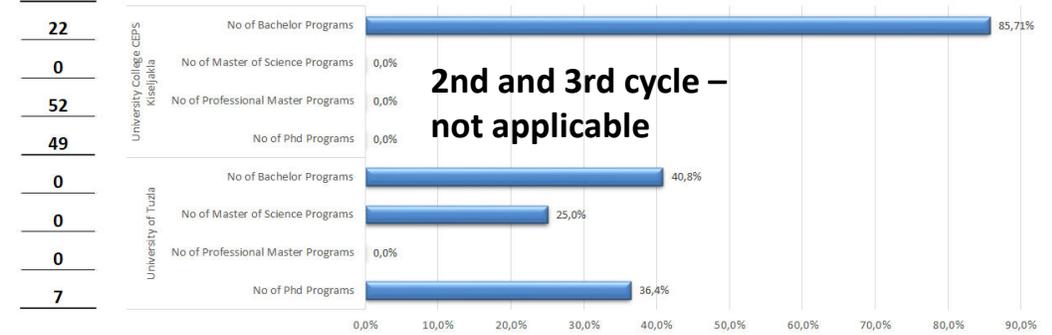
## Albania

% of Climate Change and Sustainability Practices for each program type



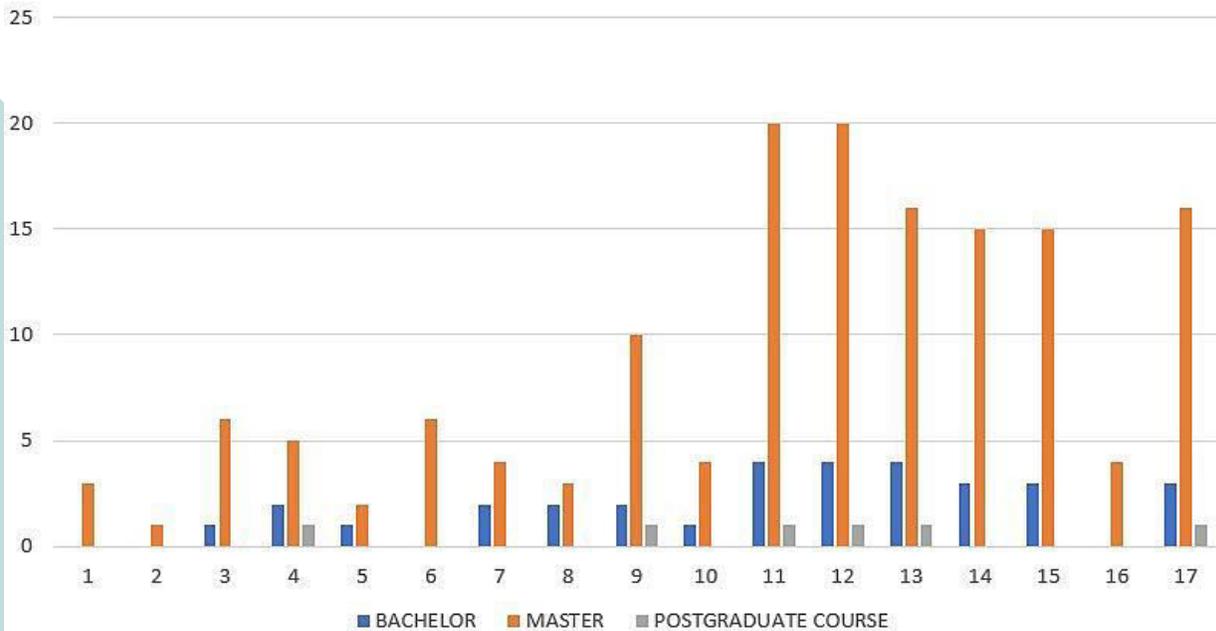
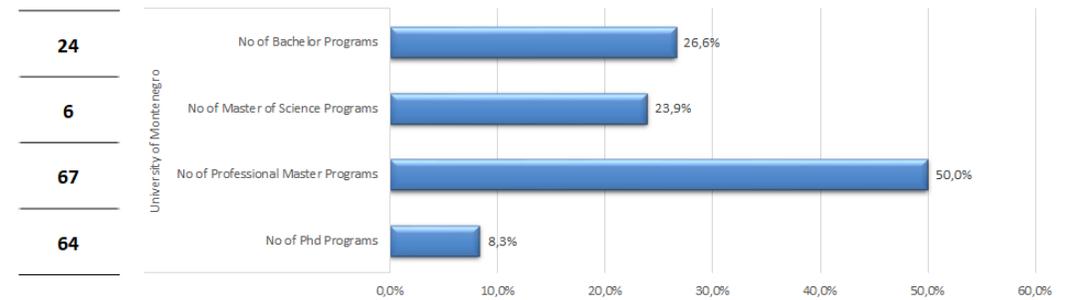
## Bosnia and Herzegovina

% of Climate Change and Sustainability Practices for each program type



## Montenegro

% of Climate Change and Sustainability Practices for each program type



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## 3. COMPARISON OF CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES BETWEEN WBC AND EU

- **SDGs included in study programs** per certain institution between WBC and EU:
  - The WBC HEIs exhibit a **notable disparity in SDG integration** across various programs compared to the EU HEIs
  - **SDGs** in study programs or courses are **not clearly indicated**
  - **predominant** presence of **SDG topics within master's studies** at WBC institutions



### 3. COMPARISON OF CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES BETWEEN WBC AND EU

- **Projects and research** related to climate and sustainability between WBC and EU
  - Distinct focuses and approaches:
    - While both groups actively contribute to sustainability, the **WBC** HEIs demonstrate a **strong focus** on addressing environmental and societal challenges **within their regions**, while the **EU HEIs** emphasize **broader research** collaboration and practical application across various sustainability domains, **focusing on interdisciplinary** research.



## 3. COMPARISON OF CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES BETWEEN WBC AND EU

- **Services** related to climate and sustainability in WBC and EU HEIs:
  - **WBC HEIs focus** on diverse climate and sustainability services, including **educational programs, seminars, workshops, conferences, and scientific projects**
  - **EU HEIs emphasize a systemic approach** to sustainability by establishing forums, organizing events, and facilitating student engagement. These institutions coordinate sustainability research, encourage innovative projects, and actively engage in various sustainability initiatives.



## 4. GAP ANALYSIS BETWEEN WBC AND EU

- **Gaps in the national legal and strategic framework:**
  - Early-stage implementation compared to the EU of laws and strategies related to climate change.
  - Challenges in the allocation of resources toward environmental protection.
  - Limited progress in aligning environmental policies with the EU. Challenges include non-harmonized legislation, insufficient alignment with EU standards, and inadequate environmental strategies.
  - The level of commitment to international agreements



## 4. GAP ANALYSIS BETWEEN WBC AND EU

- Suggestions **to engage additional stakeholders beyond project participants** to facilitate and expedite the implementation of activities related to sustainability and climate change:
  1. Harmonization of Laws and Strategies
  2. Equitable Resource Distribution
  3. Enhance Enforcement Mechanisms
  4. Alignment with International Agreements



## 4. GAP ANALYSIS BETWEEN WBC AND EU

- **Gaps in the institutional framework:**
  - level of institutionalization of sustainability practices within WBC
    - Only the University of Tirana has a developed strategy, emphasizing environmental responsibility. Other WBC institutions lack a dedicated institutional framework specifically focused on climate and sustainability initiatives within their structures.



## 4. GAP ANALYSIS BETWEEN WBC AND EU

- **Recommendation** to address the existing gaps regarding institutional framework among WBC HEIs :
  1. **Develop Dedicated Sustainability Strategies**
  2. **Integrate Sustainability into Strategic Plans**
  3. **Establish Specialized Sustainability Units** (hubs for promoting and implementing sustainability initiatives)
  4. **Regular Reporting and Evaluation** (avoid that this only becomes a ritual without actual impacts)
  5. **Engage Stakeholders** (local communities, industry partners, government agencies, and NGOs)
  6. **Raise Awareness**
  7. **Encourage Policy Advocacy** (advocate for the inclusion of sustainability criteria and policies at national and regional levels)



## 4. GAP ANALYSIS BETWEEN WBC AND EU

- **Gaps in the curricula:**
  - programs related to climate change and sustainability may not be as integrated or explicitly structured around sustainability principles compared to the EU HEIs
  - lack specific emphasis or notable doctoral programs focusing on sustainability practices
  - low percentage of dedicated programs focused on sustainability
  - lack of a more specialized and deeper focus on sustainability-related subjects, such as detailed program descriptions, thematic tracks, and specialized courses
  - lack of innovative educational strategies like teacher training in sustainable education methods, development of program portfolios, and specialized courses



## 4. GAP ANALYSIS BETWEEN WBC AND EU

- **Recommendation** to address the existing gaps regarding curricula among WBC HEIs :
  1. **Curriculum Enhancement and Specialization** (revise and update curricula to include more specialized courses)
  2. **Interdisciplinary Integration** (encouraging collaboration among faculties or departments - joint initiatives, research projects, or shared courses )
  3. **Research and Doctoral Programs** (find a way to stimulate research/doctoral projects on sustainability)
  4. **Increased Percentage of Dedicated Programs**
  5. **Depth of Focus and Innovation** (developing specialized courses, thematic tracks, and program descriptions )
  6. **Adoption of Innovative Educational Strategies** (such as teacher training)
  7. **Partnerships and Exchanges** (faculty exchanges, joint research projects, or sharing best practices with EU HEIs)



## 4. GAP ANALYSIS BETWEEN WBC AND EU

- **Gaps regarding SDGs linked to subjects offering Climate Change and Sustainability Practices:**
  - lack of a uniform SDG alignment within the curricula
  - low SDG integration across various programs compared to the EU HEIs
  - predominant presence of SDG topics within master's studies at WBC institutions



## 4. GAP ANALYSIS BETWEEN WBC AND EU

- **Recommendation** to address the existing gaps regarding SDGs in curricula:
  1. **Uniform Alignment** (systematic integration of SDGs across all aspects of educational content and learning objectives)
  2. **Curriculum Enhancement** (review and update existing curriculum structures, especially at the bachelor's level)
  3. **Interdisciplinary Approach**
  4. **Faculty Training and Development** (conduct training sessions or workshops for faculty members)
  5. **Engage Students and Alumni** (student involvement and collaboration in sustainability initiatives; engage alumni who have expertise in sustainability to offer insights or mentorship)
  6. **Partnerships and Research** (develop research projects or initiatives to engage practically and contribute to real-world solutions)
  7. **Policy and Governance** (Advocate for policy changes or university governance)
  8. **Promote Awareness** (Organize seminars, conferences, or awareness campaigns)



## 4. GAP ANALYSIS BETWEEN WBC AND EU

- **Gaps regarding projects and research:**
  - scale and international reach might be comparatively smaller than EU HEIs
  - lack of interdisciplinary research, collaboration, and participation in EU-funded projects that address broader and more diverse sustainability domains
  - lack of better-established collaborative networks, access to a broader range of resources
  - non-existence of a comprehensive and strategic approach by engaging in interdisciplinary research
  - no formalized specific research centers and initiatives



## 4. GAP ANALYSIS BETWEEN WBC AND EU

- **Recommendation** to address to address the existing gaps in projects and research:
  1. **Enhance International Collaboration**
  2. **Expand Funding Resources**
  3. **Promote Interdisciplinary Research**
  4. **Establish Long-term Collaborative Networks**
  5. **Capacity Building and Skill Development** (providing "coaching" – to set up a coordinating unit for sustainability; someone with experience)
  6. **Leverage Existing Strengths**
  7. **Develop Knowledge Hubs**
  8. **Engage Alumni and Professional Networks**
  9. **Enhance Visibility and Outreach**
  10. **Facilitate Practical Application and Knowledge Transfer**



## 4. GAP ANALYSIS BETWEEN WBC AND EU

- **Gaps regarding services and practices:**
  - lack of multifaceted sustainability initiatives with a deeper emphasis on diverse and comprehensive programs
    - community engagement, policy advocacy, inclusive practices, and innovative technologies, extending beyond conventional academic activities)
  - lack of engagement in innovative projects, inclusive programs, and student-led initiatives with a broader international perspective
  - no active engagement in policy advocacy, leveraging the research and initiatives to influence national and international policies on sustainability
  - no evaluation of the impact of sustainability initiatives, implementing measures for continuous improvement, and assessing the effectiveness of their programs
  - challenges in implementing advanced technological solutions or innovative practices due to resource limitations and infrastructure constraints



## 4. GAP ANALYSIS BETWEEN WBC AND EU

- **Recommendation** to address the existing gaps regarding SDGs in curricula:
  1. **Expand Scope and Depth of Sustainability Initiatives** (developing multifaceted initiatives that encompass community engagement, policy advocacy, innovative technologies, and student-driven projects, mirroring the comprehensive programs offered by EU HEIs)
  2. **Strengthen Policy Advocacy and Influence** (collaborating with governmental bodies, agencies, and policymakers can help in shaping national and regional policies)
  3. **Promote Inclusive International Exchanges** (encourage student and faculty exchanges, facilitating exposure to different sustainability models and practices across countries)
  4. **Develop Comprehensive Programs and Forums**
  5. **Leverage Student Engagement and Innovation** (establishing platforms, grants, or competitions focused on sustainability)



## 5. CONCLUSION

- Recap of the analysis should contain:
- Summarize the main findings of the analysis;
- Reiterate the importance of addressing the identified gaps;
- Emphasize the potential benefits of closing these gaps for the WBC HEIs.



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Thank you for your attention

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