

5.5 CEPS University: Sustainability and Climate Action Plan

Introduction

In the scope of the work package 2 of the 1FUTURE project, it is foreseen to prepare and approve a Plan for Climate Action in each Higher Education Institution in the Western Balkan Countries. This plan is the product of the task 2.5 and is developed based on the findings of the previous tasks of the work package 2, especially on the results of the gaps analysis and study visits to EU partners.

The gap analysis of climate and sustainability initiatives between Western Balkans (WBC) and European Union (EU) Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) revealed notable differences in terms of national legal and strategic framework; Institutional framework; Curricula; Projects and research; Services and practices.

The situation in the EU HEIs shows comprehensive sustainability integration in the institutional framework; a holistic and structured approach to sustainability education, with focused programs and broader integration; engagement in broader and interdisciplinary research; different services and practices focused on climate and sustainability.

While the WBC face challenges in aligning with international standards, limited use of resources, and early-stage implementation; lack of specific institutional frameworks; lack of curricula focused on Climate Change and Sustainability Practices; disparity in SDG integration across various specialized programs; research and projects with a more focused approach; in providing services and practices addressing climate and sustainability challenges.

Addressing the identified gaps between WBC HEIs and EU HEIs in climate and sustainability initiatives can yield significant benefits for WBC HEIs. Closing these gaps elevates the international standing of WBC HEIs, fostering recognition for their commitment to sustainability and aligning with global standards. Aligning with EU practices opens doors for collaboration, joint projects, and research partnerships, providing WBC HEIs with access to broader networks and resources.

The aim of the Plan for Climate Action is to close these gaps by implementing a climate agenda in the future in WBC HEIs. Its approval and implementation will position WBC HEIs as key contributors to national sustainability efforts, fostering positive impacts on education, research, and environmental protection.

Chapter 1 Higher Education and Climate Action

According to the Country report¹⁵, Bosnia and Herzegovina's participation in *environment and climate change*, Bosnia and Herzegovina's initiatives remain at an early stage, requiring countrywide harmonization with EU policies. Urgent measures include implementing strategies for environmental protection, international conventions participation, and comprehensive plans for climate adaptation, energy, and emissions reduction. Challenges persist in waste management, water quality, nature protection, and civil protection, necessitating strategies aligned with EU directives for waste reduction, improved water management, nature conservation, and disaster management compliance.

This is a significant factor in why institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina have not yet fully embraced sustainable operations or a dedicated approach to combating climate change. However, it's important to note that this does not necessarily imply inaction or complacency within the HEIs. Instead, it could signify that efforts are underway but may require further development and coordination to meet international standards effectively. This serves as an opportunity for institutions to actively engage in strategic planning and collaboration to address environmental challenges and climate change mitigation. By framing it in this light, it underscores the potential for proactive measures and constructive partnerships to drive progress towards sustainability goals. The preceding analysis underscores the necessity for CEPS to formulate a Plan for Climate and Sustainability Action. This highlights the pivotal role HEIs can play in driving forward sustainable practices and climate resilience. By establishing a comprehensive plan tailored to the unique context of HEIs, institutions can proactively address environmental protection, energy efficiency, and climate adaptation strategies. This not only aligns with international standards but also fosters innovation, research, and education in sustainability across academic disciplines. Thus, the

¹⁵ Country Report for Bosnia and Herzegovina (2022): <https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-10/Bosnia%20and%20Herzegovina%20Report%202022.pdf>

creation of a dedicated Plan for Climate and Sustainability Action for HEIs emerges as a crucial step towards fostering a culture of environmental stewardship and contributing to broader national and global sustainability objectives.

University College “CEPS-Center for Business Studies” Kiseljak (hereinafter CEPS) established in 2010, is a modern private higher education and scientific institution, which independently conducts programs of basic academic undergraduate studies of the first (I) cycle, according to the Bologna process in three-year and four-year duration of study, such as: Traffic/Transport Engineering, Business Economy, Energetics (involving Renewable Energy Sources, Energy Management and Energy Efficiency), Information technology, Criminalistics, Occupational Safety and Fire Protection, Health studies, and Law. At CEPS, sustainability and environmental protection are integral components of all mentioned [study programs](#). We offer 51 subjects aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), covering topics such as Climate Change and Sustainability Practices. Sustainability is seamlessly integrated into the learning outcomes, often addressed through related concepts such as ethics and balance. However, there is room for improvement in the integration and explicit structuring of programs related to climate change and sustainability. This can be achieved by providing detailed program descriptions, thematic tracks, and specialized courses targeting sustainability aspects within various disciplines. Additionally, there is room for improvement by introducing lifelong learning programs.

CEPS has a modern building that is energy-efficient, with perfect thermal insulation, energy saving and it's environmentally friendly:

- **glass wool** in walls - energy efficient, excellent thermal insulation, addition to thermal conductivity, it is recyclable and its low density reduces the overall impact on the environment;
- quality **PVC window frames** – directly affect consumption of the building's heating and cooling;
- approx. 70% of the **building is covered in tint glass** – Energy savings up to 30%, sufficient natural light to illuminate the interiors during day; a green building material in green architecture; prevents the loss of heating energy, and enables the generation of energy

transmitted by the sun's rays; reduces the impact of the high temperatures during hot summer days;

- **LED lighting** throughout the building - reducing energy consumption for lighting by 7-8 times; by using LED bulbs instead of ordinary incandescent bulbs, you can save up to 80% of electricity for lighting annually;
- **Biomass heating system (wood pellet boiler):**
 - protect the forests (contributes to improving the use of RES, adaptation to the Kyoto Protocol and rural development);
 - eco-friendly material (compared to fossil fuels, pellets are almost CO2 neutral);
 - sustainability (renewable energy source);
 - there is a plan for transition to more renewable heating and cooling systems (solar energy and heat pumps).
- **Use of solar energy** – a bench with a solar panel in front of the building for charging devices, and 4 sets of solar panels on the roof of the school building to power the practical cabinet for the study program of Energetics;
- **Green environment** inside and outside of the building – different types of plants placed in the hallways of the building; behind the building there is a river and a park.

CEPS endeavors to satisfy the need for producing highly educated professionals who will successfully respond to modern business challenges, as well as with the aim of raising the quality of higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The CEPS's [Development Strategy \(2019-2024\)](#) has three main objectives: recognition, innovation and connection with the environment; curriculum development, student-centered; and internationalization, computerization and quality. Furthermore, according to the [Internationalization Strategy \(2019-2024\)](#), one of its key objectives is to enhance the quality of higher education, promote extensive mobility opportunities for students, academic, and administrative personnel, and to actively engage in international scientific and professional projects. Building upon this strategic mandate, CEPS has implemented numerous ERASMUS+ mobility projects, facilitating over 350 international staff and student mobilities. Through these initiatives, CEPS has gained valuable insights into sustainability, environmental, and climate practices employed by partner institutions. By fostering deep engagement with these universities and leveraging EU frameworks, CEPS has enriched its academic programs and

assimilated diverse perspectives and methodologies. This collaborative approach underscores CEPS's commitment to continuous improvement and its dedication to advancing sustainable development and environmental stewardship, both locally and globally.

CEPS is an institution that influences the changing awareness of its students and staff regarding sustainable development and environmental protection. This influence is further supported by CEPS's membership in many international organizations and networks, which serve as platforms for sharing knowledge, exchanging best practices, and fostering collaboration in these vital areas: [Global waste cleaning network](#) (dedicated to conserving and maintaining healthy oceans, coastlines, lands and the atmosphere for both people and nature), [ELTIS](#) (the urban mobility observatory facilitates the exchange of information, knowledge and experience in the field of sustainable urban mobility in Europe), [CIVINET](#) (transfers knowledge, good practices, and design joint projects that will finance future activities of sustainable transport and better mobility).

Since 2019, CEPS has hosted annual international student conferences on sustainability (held in [2019](#), [2021](#), [2022](#), [2023](#), [2024](#)). During these conferences, students, along with their mentors/lecturers, actively engage in exchanging opinions, acquiring new knowledge and competencies, and promoting innovative ideas across various fields related to sustainability and environmental protection.

CEPS is engaged in several [projects](#). The projects exhibit a strong commitment to sustainability, energy efficiency, environmental protection, and climate resilience. In this way, CEPS is showcasing a clear dedication to addressing environmental challenges.

CEPS offers diverse climate and sustainability services, encompassing educational programs, expertise, and involvement in global events. International summer schools ([2017](#), [2019](#), [2022](#), [2024](#)) focus on crisis management, corporate security, and risk prevention in urban areas, providing specialized training. Members from the Traffic and Transportation Engineering program contribute to Bosnia and Herzegovina's Environmental Strategy and Action Plan ([BiH ESAP 2030+](#)), and participate in the development of the strategy for [Mobility Islands](#) within "TRIBUTE" project. The institution actively advocates eco-friendly practices through events like [Earth Day](#)

celebrations, [World Bicycle Day](#) activities, [guest lectures](#), and [round tables](#) fostering environmentally responsible behaviors among its community.

However, actions are currently taken spontaneously, lacking a specific strategy or action plan. By establishing a clear strategy and action plan, we can ensure that our efforts are coordinated, impactful, and sustainable over the long term. This structured approach allows us to identify goals, allocate resources, and implement strategies to mitigate environmental impact, promote sustainable practices, and build resilience within our institution and community.

Mission

Mission is to provide transformative education, innovative research, and community engagement that promote sustainability, environmental protection, and resilience among our students, staff, and broader community. We aim to achieve this by integrating sustainability principles into all aspects of university operations, fostering a culture of responsibility and stewardship, and actively contributing to global efforts towards a more sustainable world.

Vision

Vision is to become a regional leader in fostering a sustainable and resilient future, empowering students, staff, company representatives, the broader community, and other stakeholders to make positive contributions to society and the environment. We aspire to lead innovative initiatives that not only address environmental challenges but also inspire others to adopt sustainable practices.

Strategic Goals

Strategic Goals related to climate, sustainability, and resilience include:

1. Integrating sustainability principles into all study programs and research activities.
2. Promoting sustainable practices and behaviors among students, staff, company representatives, the broader community, and other stakeholders.

3. Enhancing our infrastructure and operations to minimize environmental impact and promote energy efficiency and better quality of life.
4. Engaging in collaborative research and projects focused on addressing climate change, environmental protection, and resilience.
5. Fostering partnerships and collaborations with local and international organizations to advance sustainability goals.

By implementing this action plan we can make significant strides towards creating a more sustainable and resilient future for our university and society as a whole.

Chapter 2: Sustainability and Climate Action Plan Overview

This Plan will be developed through the following areas of action. The areas have been conceived following the action priorities of higher education institutions. For each area, the purpose of proposing concrete action is highlighted.

Environmental Sustainability in Academics: Learning, Teaching and Research

- To facilitate the development and empowerment of both current and future leaders in sustainability through our teaching and learning activities. To foster sustainability literacy through both formal and informal learning opportunities.
- To facilitate the development and empowerment of future leaders in sustainability through our research activities and, in doing so, maintain and enhance the University's standing and leadership in research on sustainability topics.

Sustainability Citizenship

- To support, enable and influence our students, staff, and wider community in achieving the SDGs and establish Sustainability Citizenship as a core ethos of HEIs.
- To be transparent, accountable, and inclusive and to place the just transition as a core element of our programmes.

Climate Action

- To build and operate within HEIs carbon budget and mitigate the impact of climate changes on our country, while acting as a leader for climate action locally, regionally and nationally aiming to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

Waste Reduction and Circular Economy

- To minimize the local, regional and global environmental impacts of our educational, research, operations, and infrastructural development.
- To make reuse the first option and promote a circular economy approach at all times.

Landscape and Natural Resources

- To promote engagement with campus green space amongst campus and local community.

Commuting and Active Travel

- To promote the use of more sustainable methods of commuting amongst our staff and students.
- To capitalize on the opportunities, to reduce our transport related emissions.

Food Health and Wellbeing

To enhance the health and well-being of the University and wider community through the facilitation and promotion of aspects of healthy eating and living as an integral part of sustainable living.

Chapter 3: Monitoring and Reporting

The newly created Knowledge HUB for Climate and Sustainability (KHCS) will have overall responsibility for reporting and communicating the associated outcomes. Staff members (teaching and administrative) and students will be involved in implementation of the actions. Head of the Knowledge HUB for Climate and Sustainability will be responsible for monitoring and reporting the action plan implementation. Once a year (in December), Head of the Knowledge HUB submits a report to the Administrative Board. Sustainability Reports will outline progress against each action and target within this plan. Final report will be submitted at the end of the Action plan. The duration of the plan is 4 years.

Where is needed, an action group will be established to oversee the development of targets and ensure successful delivery. The action group will be consisted of one representative from the KHCS staff, one student representative and one administrative staff. Each action group will submit the report to the Head of the KHCS outlining the progress of each action and target within this plan.

| No. | Areas | Goals | Activities | Outcomes | Deadline | Responsible Parties | Priority |
|-----|--|--|---|--|---|--|----------|
| 1 | Environmental Sustainability in Academics: Teaching, Learning and research | Promotion of scientific research in the field of environmental sustainability. Creating new opportunities for all staff and students to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding regarding environmental sustainability issues and solutions. | <p>Presentation of environmental principles to students.</p> <p>Analysis of study programs for the possibility of the degree of inclusion of environmental education.</p> <p>Organization of student conferences based on sustainability, climate and green agenda.</p> <p>Develop sustainability and climate action professional development courses for policy makers, businesses and communities</p> <p>Develop a Calendar of important days</p> | <p>INFO day</p> <p>Curricula mapped to SDGs</p> <p>Conference proceedings with research mapped on SDGs</p> <p>Train 20 participants</p> <p>Celebration of important days</p> | <p>Once per year</p> <p>2027</p> <p>Once per year</p> <p>2027</p> <p>2025</p> | <p>Head of the KHCS</p> <p>Action groups</p> <p>International Office QA Manager Editorial Board</p> <p>Action groups</p> | |

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| 2 | Sustainability Citizenship | Establishing the environmental system at the institutional level and promoting its environmental values | Develop and offer Environmental Awareness and Training Programs | Staff and students trained about SDGs | 2026 | Project team | |
| | | | Develop Monitoring and Reporting process on Sustainability actions, activities etc. | Transparent Sustainability Performance | 2026 | Project team | |
| | | | Align the Plan for Climate Action with relevant CEPS strategies | Sustainability included in relevant CEPS strategies | 2025 | CEPS Administrative Board | |
| 3 | Climate action | Support students, staff and the wider community to reduce energy consumption levels through the increase of energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy. | Create and place wallpapers for all classroom computers to remind users to turn off projectors and computers. | Energy and Cost Savings, Behavioral Change, Environmental Leadership | 2026 | Administration | |
| | | | Launch a campaign to reduce open windows in winter | | | | |
| | | | Launch a campaign about Energy-Efficient Lighting | | | | |
| | | | Renewable Energy Projects and Workshops | | | | |
| | | Conduct other best practice energy conservation, construction and reconstruction, behavioral change initiatives, and equipment placement and replacement actions | | | | | |
| Positively impacting on the sustainability performance of suppliers and the sustainability credentials of the goods and services we buy. | The introduction of eco and environment-friendly criteria while procuring materials and using third-party services. | Market Influence | 2026 | Administration | | | |
| | Conduct annual purchasing sustainability presentations at Administrative Board meetings. | Lower carbon footprint | | | | | |

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| 4 | Waste Reduction and Circular Economy | Analysis and creating a policy brief guiding the university towards adopting sustainable practices | Conducting the analysis and creating the policy brief towards a green university | Adoption of a Green University Strategy | 2025 | CEPS staff and students | |
| | | Prevention of environmental pollution through the implementation of the hierarchic principles of waste management (prevention, reduction, reuse, recycling and appropriate final treatment). | Placement in the faculty's premises of the necessary infrastructure for the differentiated collection of waste. | Differentiated waste Collection | Minimization of plastic usage | 2026 | CEPS staff and students |
| Encouraging the reuse of paper by establishing collection points for reusable paper. | | | | | | | |
| Signing agreements with recycling companies for the removal of waste streams. | | | | | | | |
| Organization of awareness campaigns for the differentiation of waste. | | | | | | | |
| Become single-use plastic free institution | | | | | | | |
| Default to double-sided printing | | | | | | | |
| Increase electronic availability of textbooks and class documents | | | | | | | |
| HEI increase number of papers to be submitted electronically | | | | | | | |
| Syllabuses are provided only electronically | | | | | | | |
| Promotion of recycling activities. | | | | | | | |
| 5 | Landscape and Natural Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote better integration and connection of green spaces across CEPS building and its surroundings. - Promote and enhance the use of our natural resources in teaching and learning and research on sustainability as well as in | The area of the building is equipped with green elements | - More green spaces in CEPS building and surroundings. | 2028 | CEPS staff and students | |
| | | | Adding green spaces where possible. | - Efficient use of natural resources | | | |
| | | | Plant 5-10 plants annually. | | | | |
| | | | Installation of bicycle parking in the HEI campus | | | | |
| | | | Create an open classroom environment | | | | |

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| | | <p>everyday use and recreation.</p> <p>- Promote and facilitate social and physical access to green space, and raise awareness of the associated ecosystem, biodiversity, heritage, social and health related values.</p> | <p>Installation of electric charger for e-cars in the HEI campus</p> | | | | |
| | | <p>Water conservation by increasing the efficiency of its use.</p> | <p>Placement of warning signs to avoid water wastage in environments with intensive use of water.</p> | | 2025 | | |
| 6 | Commuting and Active Travel | <p>Minimizing the environmental impact of the transport of staff and students for the purpose of teaching, learning, scientific research, by promoting healthy and environmentally friendly forms of mobility.</p> | <p>Student visit to companies that promote sustainable mobility</p> | <p>Increase use of sustainable forms of mobility</p> | 2028 | CEPS staff and students | |
| | | | <p>Develop guidelines for green travel to reduce single-occupancy vehicle commuting.</p> | <p>Multimodal mobility option provided</p> | | | |
| | | | <p>Provide bicycles and covered bicycle parking</p> | <p>Increased awareness about e-mobility</p> | | | |
| | | | <p>Promote videoconferencing as an alternative to air travel.</p> | | | | |
| | | | <p>Support staff and students in choosing more sustainable transport options by providing the correct incentives and infrastructural improvements</p> | | | | |
| | | | <p>Promotion of sustainable mobility activities</p> | | | | |

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| 7 | Food, Health and Well-Being | Improving working, learning, and living conditions in the faculty environment in order to increase the effectiveness of teachers and students. | Increase access to healthy extracurricular activities | Enhanced health and wellbeing of the faculty community | 2029 | CEPS staff and students | |
| | | | Creation of green recreational areas with open environments. | | | Municipality of Kiseljak | |
| | | | Construction and maintenance of bicycle and scooter parking stations. | | | | |
| | | | Developing a culture of micromobility and a healthy modes of transport | | | | |
| | | | Bike sharing options at CEPS | | | | |
| | | | Monitoring of air quality inside the CEPS building and in its environment | Report on air quality and noise pollution | Once a year | | |
| | | | Monitoring of noise pollution | | | | |

Conclusion

The Action Plan detailed in this document is a robust framework aimed at addressing environmental sustainability and climate resilience within CEPS. By focusing on integrating sustainability into academics, promoting environmental values, and supporting climate action, the plan sets a clear pathway towards achieving significant positive outcomes. The outlined goals and activities emphasize the importance of education, institutional commitment, and community engagement in fostering a sustainable future.

Implementation of this plan promises enhanced environmental awareness among students and staff, improved energy efficiency, and stronger alignment with international sustainability standards. The strategic initiatives, such as incorporating SDGs into curricula, organizing sustainability conferences, and launching energy-saving campaigns, reflect a comprehensive approach to environmental stewardship.

The Action Plan's success relies on coordinated efforts, continuous monitoring, and proactive engagement with all stakeholders. By following this plan, CEPS is positioned to not only meet but exceed sustainability goals, contributing to broader national and global environmental objectives. This commitment to sustainability will enhance CEPS's reputation as a leader in climate resilience and sustainable development, setting a benchmark for other institutions in the region.

No.: 773-5/24

In Kiseljak, 27.05.2024.

President of the Administrative Board

Božidar Konjevod