



Covenant of Mayors  
for Climate & Energy  
South East Europe

# COVENANT OF MAYORS SOUTH EAST EUROPE GREEN CHAMPIONS 2026



Photo by [enriso.bet](#) on [Unsplash](#)

## Covenant of Mayors SEE Green Champions 2026

Organised by the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS)

### Background

The Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS) brings together 14 Associations of Local Authorities representing nearly 9,000 local governments across the region. In April 2024, the XIX NALAS General Assembly endorsed the Covenant of Mayors for Energy and Climate South-East Europe (CoM SEE) Commitment and supported the establishment of the CoM SEE Office as a regional hub for strengthening local climate and energy action.

Through the Covenant of Mayors SEE Green Champions 2026 initiative, NALAS aims to recognize municipalities that demonstrate leadership, innovation and measurable impact in advancing the green transition at the local level, particularly through the implementation of sustainable energy and climate measures.

The initiative builds upon the 2023 Green Champions of the Western Balkans Recognition Award, launched under the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans Action Plan 2021–2030 and the Tirana Conclusions of the Local Self-Governments Forum 2023.

The 2023 edition highlights the growing leadership of local governments in advancing decarbonisation, sustainable transport, circular economy practices, biodiversity protection, and



community-driven environmental initiatives.

Building on this momentum, the 2026 initiative broadens its reach to South-East Europe and continues to celebrate municipalities that turn environmental commitments into visible local action, promote mutual learning, and inspire the spread of proven solutions across the region.

## Overview of the 2026 winning initiatives

### ➤ Climate Action & Energy: City of Kragujevac, Serbia:

**Title of the initiative: RENEW-KG ("Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency for a Sustainable Kragujevac")**

The City of Kragujevac is implementing the second Energy Efficiency Program as a basis for continuously improving the energy efficiency of public buildings and individual combustion plants. Investments in the energy renovation of public buildings in the last year:

- Energy rehabilitation of "Đura Jakšić" elementary school 110,792,105.04
- Replacement of carpentry in the building of the city administration 43,576,040.00
- Replacement of carpentry and connection to the gas network and installation of MRS "Dragiša Mihailović" Elementary school 16,727,319.00
- Replacement of carpentry in kindergarten "Zeka" 13,402,450.00
- Replacement of the carpentry of the School of Economics 13,059,020.00
- Replacement of the carpentry of Elementary School "Miloje Simović" 8,693,677.19.

In the previous years there were also Energy renovation Elementary School "Stevan Prota Popović" 58,273,000.00 ; Energy renovation "Radoje Domanović" 39,152,398.43; Energy renovation "Mirko Jovanović" 75,500,000.00; Reconstruction of the substation and replacement of the heating system of "Natalija Nana Nedeljković" 3,357,785.99; Energy renovation "Dragiša Luković Španac" 50,264,511.42; Replacement methods of heating in "Jovan Popović" 16,000,000.00.

#### **Installation of solar panels on public buildings in Kragujevac:**

Solar panels were installed on 6 buildings of primary schools: "Sveti Sava", "Miloje Simović", "Natalia Nana Nedeljković", "Dositej Obradović", "Sreten Mladenović" and "21. October", value of investments 9,251,760.00.

During the year 2025, the implementation of a public-private partnership for the replacement of public lighting in the territory of Kragujevac began, with the installation of nearly 29,000 LED lamps in the city and rural areas.

The City of Kragujevac has been implementing reforestation projects for years in order to improve air quality and combat climate change in cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the PRO program, value 3,000,000.00 dinars.

#### **Subsidies to private households:**

In the housing sector, the city continuously implemented measures to subsidize private households for energy rehabilitation measures such as replacement of carpentry, installation of boilers, replacement or installation of new heating installations, solar collectors, heat pumps, installation of thermal insulation, preparation of technical documentation. For the reduction of air pollution from individual sources in Kragujevac, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection, 199 households have been supported with about 18 million dinars. Within the call of Ministry of Mining



Covenant of Mayors  
for Climate & Energy  
South East Europe

and Energy Currently in 2025 the city has supported 159 users, 29.342.041,08 dinars, the citizens of Kragujevac have 75 million at their disposal under the call from 2025.

#### Support for citizens' associations:

The financial resources allocated by the city for the support of civil society organizations have a growing trend, tenders for this area are announced every year, so for the year 2025, 4.5 million dinars have been provided, distributed among 18 projects.

During 2025, the City of Kragujevac actively worked on the development of an Action plan for climate and energy (SECAP).





Covenant of Mayors  
for Climate & Energy  
South East Europe

➤ **Circular Economy: Bursa Metropolitan Municipality, Türkiye:**

**Title of the initiative: Tarım Plast Factory - Drip irrigation pipe production facility**

The initiative was developed in response to increasing water scarcity, inefficient irrigation practices, and the need for sustainable agricultural production in Bursa. In Türkiye, approximately 77% of water resources are used for agricultural irrigation, and traditional methods such as flood irrigation significantly threaten water sustainability.

At the same time, farmers face high input costs and limited access to modern irrigation technologies, which restricts their ability to adopt efficient production methods. Additionally, improper use of irrigation materials can lead to soil pollution, further aggravating environmental challenges.

To address these issues, Bursa Metropolitan Municipality established the Tarım Peyzaj Inc., transforming an abandoned pepper drying facility into a modern production plant covering 8,500 m<sup>2</sup>.

The initiative combines circular economy principles with sustainable agriculture through three main components:

- **Production:** Drip irrigation pipes are produced using recycled plastic waste, including municipal packaging waste and agricultural residues.
- **Distribution:** The produced pipes are distributed free of charge (100% grant) to farmers across all 17 districts of Bursa, enabling access to modern irrigation systems.
- **Recycling loop:** Used irrigation pipes and plastic waste are collected, recycled, and reintroduced into the production process, creating a closed-loop system.

The project also includes strong stakeholder engagement. Farmers' needs were assessed through consultations with local agricultural chambers, and training activities (e.g., "Farmer Meetings") were organized in collaboration with universities to promote correct irrigation practices.

Key stakeholders include Bursa Metropolitan Municipality, Agricultural Landscape Joint Stock Company, Agricultural Chambers, Uludağ University, and recycling partners.

Through this integrated model, the initiative not only supports farmers but also promotes sustainable resource use, reduces waste, and strengthens local circular economy practices.

Consult here the detailed project presentation: [Tarım Peyzaj A.Ş. Damla Sulama Boru Üretim Tesisi Projesi Presentation.pdf](#)



Covenant of Mayors  
for Climate & Energy  
South East Europe

## ➤ Green & Inclusive Urban Development: Municipality of Lezhë, Albania

### Title of the initiative: Urban Development in the Drini Area for Economic and Social Development

This initiative represents an integrated approach by the Municipality of Lezha to promote green and inclusive urban development through the rehabilitation of public spaces, improvement of infrastructure and creation of community-oriented recreational areas. This has been done through the intervention of three different projects.

#### **Project: Infrastructure and Safety Improvement on the Drin River Promenade, Lezhë.**

This project represents an integrated urban intervention that addresses a clear local problem, generating measurable results, ensuring social inclusion and contributing to the sustainable and innovative development of public spaces.

#### Challenge addressed:

The promenade area along the Drin River lacked functional and safe infrastructure, limited pedestrian access and a lack of connectivity between the two sides of the river.

#### Main actions undertaken:

The project included the construction of pedestrian bridges, walking and cycling paths, lighting, urban furniture and green spaces. The intervention improved accessibility, bicycle parking spaces and reinforced safety elements along the promenade. The project brought increased use of public space, development of community activities and promotion of local businesses.

#### Actors involved:

Municipality of Lezha as implementing partner, with support from the RDPA program and funding from SDC and ADA, as well as local co-financing. Local institutions, community, businesses and vulnerable groups were involved, ensuring a comprehensive approach.

#### **Project: “Dua të Luaj”**

This project demonstrates a sustainable and comprehensive solution for improving the quality of life, addressing a concrete community need and creating measurable social impact through an innovative approach to urban development.

#### Challenge addressed:

The lack of safe and dedicated space for children limited their physical, social and creative development, as well as reducing opportunities for community interaction and quality family time.

#### Main actions undertaken:

The existing space was transformed into a modern children’s playground, equipped with infrastructure suitable for different age groups. A safe and functional environment was created that promotes physical activity, social interaction and community involvement. Various sports fields such as basketball, volleyball, tennis, etc. were built.



Covenant of Mayors  
for Climate & Energy  
South East Europe

Actors involved:

The project was financed by the Albanian Government and was implemented with the involvement of the Municipality of Lezha and the local community.

**Project: Rehabilitation of the Promenade and Garden on the Drin River**

This project focuses on revitalizing an existing public area, increasing its recreational and environmental value, creating added value for the community and visitors.

Challenge addressed:

Public spaces along the Drin River were in need of requalification, lacked functional organization and low level of greenery, limiting their use as recreational and social areas.

Main actions undertaken:

An urban concept was designed and implemented that connects the promenade with the park through functional pedestrian routes and green spaces. Urban infrastructure was improved with lighting, urban furniture and information point for visitors, increasing the aesthetic and functional quality of the area.

Actors involved:

The project was financed by the budget of the Lezha Municipality. Direct beneficiaries being citizens, businesses and tourists.





Covenant of Mayors  
for Climate & Energy  
South East Europe

Project: "Dua të Luaj"



Project: Rehabilitation of the Promenade and Garden on the Drin River