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Renewable energy still facing challenges in 17 countries in South and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia

Despite comprising over 300 million inhabitants and representing 4.9% of the world's GDP 17 UNECE countries in South and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia represented only 0.5% or USD 0.9 billion of global renewable energy investment in 2014. Attracting investment represents a major challenge in these countries, despite numerous support schemes and policies for renewable energy.

These are some of the main findings of the **UNECE Renewable Energy Status Report**, produced for the first time by UNECE and the Renewable energy Policy Network for the 21st century (REN21), in collaboration with the International Energy Agency (IEA).

The report provides a comprehensive overview of the status of renewable energy and energy efficiency markets, industry, policy and regulatory frameworks, and investment activities. The report draws on information from national and regional sources to present the most up-to-date summary of sustainable energy in:

Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Russian Federation, Serbia, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

There is huge untapped renewable energy potential in many of these countries, while the share of renewable energy in total final energy consumption differs widely.

Countries with high shares of renewable energy in total final energy consumption are amongst those with limited or no fossil fuel reserves. These include Tajikistan (58%, hydropower), Montenegro (46%, traditional biomass and hydropower), Albania (38%, mostly hydropower with traditional biomass use), Georgia (28%, mostly hydropower with some traditional biomass uses) and Kyrgyzstan (22%, hydropower).

There is significant deployment of modern renewables only in Ukraine (mostly solar photovoltaics – or PV - and onshore wind), which is currently however effected by the difficult geopolitical situation. Smaller developments (mostly onshore wind, solar PV and biogas/biomass installations) exist in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

The report highlights, that although rural electrification is not a central issue for the countries, distributed renewable energy solutions such as solar PV, small-scale wind, biomass and micro-hydro can be a practical way forward to provide electricity people living in remote areas or in areas suffering frequent power outages or unstable power.

The penetration of modern renewable energy technologies for heating and cooling in the 17 countries remains modest, despite considerable potential and supportive energy efficiency measures. Countries of South East and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia continue to face challenges in improving the efficiency of their electricity supply, despite ongoing modernization of their aging electricity infrastructure.

“Over the past two decades, South East and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Russian Federation made strides into the realm of renewable energy and energy efficiency. Governments advanced in developing targets and policies to promote the diverse renewable energy sources that are abundant across the region. Viewed from a global perspective, however, these developments remain marginal and greater project deployment and investment flows are needed to catch up with global renewable energy market development” says Christine Lins, Executive Secretary of REN21.

“This report shows that these 17 countries are highly promising for the deployment of the various renewable energy technologies but still lack behind the considerable advances made in other regions of the world. It also shows that renewable energy will be key to achieve Global Goal 7: Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all. This will require significant efforts and thinking out of the box” outlines Christian Friis Bach, Executive Secretary of UNECE.

The key finding of the report are available at:

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/energy/se/pdfs/comm24/ECE.ENERGY.2015.8_e.pdf

The full report will be launched on 7 December 2015 at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris. It will be made publicly available on that date via www.ren21.net (<http://www.ren21.net/status-of-renewables/regional-status-reports/>) and linked from <http://www.unece.org/energy/se/gere.html>.

Note to editors

The report is the result of the work of the UNECE Group of Experts on Renewable Energy which aims to increase the uptake of renewable energy in its region. It closes data and information gaps which is key to unlock progress across a stream of priorities and reinforce the basis to track future progress. Key findings were presented during the 24th session of the UNECE Committee on Sustainable Energy on 18-20 November 2015 (more at: [http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=38539#/#/](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=38539#/)).
