

SEE West Balkan (WB) region the power generated by fossil power plants accounts for about 59% (52% from coal, 4% from oil, and 3% from gas).

Most of the fossil power plants currently in operation in WB were constructed between 1955 and 1990, during lower emission restrictions, and after 1991 the power generation technology and the environmental characteristics of the operating fossil fuel-fired plants in this region had not been improved considerably, mainly due to poor maintenance and lack of investments in the energy generation sector.

The other problems that WB countries are facing are changing ownership structure, reorganization and redefining position and functioning of energy complexes. Special types of problems arise when it comes to coal exploitation such as: out dated technology, low efficiency, difficult working conditions, non-lucrative production, social issues, etc., on one side, and obvious need for coal of higher quality on the local market, on the other. Some mines will definitely not be able to continue with operations, while others will have to go through the process of adapting to harsh conditions of market operations. Nevertheless, coal is generally expected to continue to play a key role in the future energy mix as the most abundant and cheapest fossil fuel source. However, the increase of plant efficiency and the minimization of the respective CO₂ emissions are some of the main challenges that the coal industry faces nowadays, raised by the targets of Kyoto protocol towards the reduction of greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions and the mitigation of climate change.