

Lignite has been responsible for around half of the country's electricity generation in recent years, contributing to the Western Balkans' chronic air pollution problems. The energy strategy now plans to significantly ramp up solar and wind power.

The government has approved a national energy strategy that makes it the first country in the Western Balkans to consider a coal phase-out before 2030. Two of the strategy's scenarios entail a coal exit by 2025, with the third delaying the closure of the Bitola lignite power plant until 2040. A final decision on which pathway to take will be made later in the year.

A total of 120 MW of solar photovoltaic capacity is planned on the defunct open-cast lignite mine at Oslomej, where an obsolete power plant will soon be closed. The solar plant's operators plan to use the same infrastructure and employees as the power plant. 10 MW is already under construction, and a tender has been launched for an additional 100 MW. Civil society groups welcomed the adoption of the strategy as a decisive first step towards sustainable decarbonisation.

Source: bankwatch.org