

Recently, the director of the European Energy Community, Janez Kopac, clearly criticized Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Kosovo and Ukraine - because they subsidize coal mining and use it extensively for energy production. "A look at the statistics shows how dependent these countries are on coal production: 95 percent in Kosovo, 66 percent in Serbia, 60 percent in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Ukraine still has a 26 percent share in consumption. And at the same time, it is not the case that the share would be smaller with age. In Serbia and BiH, new coal-fired thermal power plants are even planned, in Ukraine, the existing ones are being adapted for operation in the next 25 to 30 years ", states the Frankfurter Zeitung.

Those countries, which, with the exception of Kosovo, have all signed the Paris Convention on Climate Change, support hundreds of millions of euros of coal every year, it is emphasized further in the text. "Kopac, whose Energy Community wants to introduce EU standards in energy and climate and outside the EU, reckons that Ukraine and the countries of the Western Balkans in 2018 and 2019 directly subsidized the production of electricity using coal and lignite with 900 million euros - the most in Ukraine, 751 million euros, and then in Serbia with 88 million euros, and Bosnia and Herzegovina with about 40 million. " In addition to these direct subsidies, governments provide the coal industry with loan guarantees. In 2019 alone, it was in the amount of about two billion euros. Very often, this is actually covert state aid, which is otherwise prohibited by the Energy Community Treaty. The European Commission is aware of this problem, but so far no one has been interested in it, "the text reads.

To change that, the World Bank and other international financial agencies have launched an initiative aimed at helping Serbia and other countries in the region and Ukraine move more resolutely towards renewable and environmentally friendly energy sources.

Thus, at the end of last week, the so-called "Platform" started working. "It should act together with the already existing EU initiative 'Regions of Coal in Transition', which has tens of billions of euros at its disposal. The goal is to achieve a 'fair transition'. This means drawing up plans to close coal mines and power plants, organizing aid for affected people, municipalities and companies. In the Western Balkans alone, about 30,000 people live from coal, and about 40,000 in Ukraine. "

Funding for this new platform should come from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). In the past, that bank financed the construction of solar power plants and wind power plants with a capacity of about 500 megawatts. In part, new windmill parks have sprung up on the surface of former coal mines.

Source: dw.com

