

Jiu Valley is Romania's best-known coal region. It is one of the European Union's 20 coal regions, those that are heavily dependent on mining of the fossil fuel and coal-fired power plants and included in the EU's Initiative for coal regions in transition. It was launched by the European Commission in December 2017 as part of the Clean Energy Package for All Europeans to help coal regions in transition from high to low carbon society. The closure of the two coal mines was planned for the end of 2018, but it was postponed. Now the plan is for the Lonea mine to be closed at the end of this year, and for Lupeni by July 2021.

Romania has drafted the decision to grant RON 110 million (EUR 22.6 million) for the closure of coal mines Lonea and Lupeni in the Jiu Valley. The mines are operated by energy company Complexului Energetic Hunedoara (CE Hunedoara). The decision is being prepared by the Ministry of Economy and Energy, according to the local media.

The grant will be approved for CE Hunedoara as state aid, the media reported.

The company operates two more coal mines in Jiu Valley - Vulcan and Livezeni, and coal-fired power plants Mintia and Paroseni. More than ten mines were closed in the valley in the last 20 years.

The money will be used for payments to employees, costs of the closure of the mines' pits and the recultivation of the areas used for mining.

The state aid was approved by the European Commission.

In June, it launched the Just Transition Platform to help member states draw up their territorial just transition plans and access funding from the Just Transition Mechanism, valued at more than EUR 150 billion. The scheme is envisaged by the European Green Deal, launched in January.

A few weeks later, Romanian Prime Minister Ludovic Orban said coal is doomed. He added the EU's carbon emissions target may wipe out two fifths of the current domestic power production capability.

In order to help citizens of the Jiu Valley, nongovernmental organizations Greenpeace and Bankwatch Romania presented a report on scenarios for the just transition of Jiu Valley.

Source: balkangreenenergynews.com