

The EU-Western Balkan summit in Sofia next month carries considerable stakes for Kosovo. The geopolitics are fraught enough, with several Balkan countries refusing to participate over Kosovo's status as an independent country.

Pristina is also struggling with a key requirement in terms of its European aspirations: EU emission standards. Instead of showing goodwill by committing to European energy norms, Pristina and its neighbours are falling prey to counterproductive tendencies borne of misguided energy nationalism.

That fail in implementing the EU requirements carries serious risks for relations between the Western Balkans and Brussels. The latter demands a fundamental energy transition and a shared electricity grid that run up against Balkan energy security and industry competitiveness.

Energy nationalism prevents Kosovo from pursuing a real transition towards cleaner energies, reinforcing instead energy autarky based on unsustainable coal electricity. Kosovo embodies this dilemma like no other Balkan country. Although Bosnia and Serbia are building coal power plants as well, Kosovo sits on top of the world's fifth largest lignite deposit and wants to use it.

Lignite currently provides 97% of the nation's energy, but it also gives off also more toxic fumes than other coal types when combusted.

However much they distrust each other, neither Kosovo nor its neighbours can afford to underestimate the importance of the energy transition.

The European Commission's Western Balkans Strategy emphasises the transition to sustainable energy as a precondition for membership.

It also stresses that the relevant provisions of the Energy Community Treaty, which apply EU energy and environmental law across the region, must be translated into concrete policy.

The Energy Community wishes to harmonise the EU's energy market with that of the Balkans and promotes the objectives of the 2030 Energy Strategy.

The Strategy stresses a greater role for low-carbon technologies, including renewables and nuclear energy, to reduce CO₂-emissions by 40% compared to 1990 levels and make energy more affordable.

Source: [energyworldmag](#)