

New SEE Energy Roadmap shows investing in energy efficiency in buildings would reduce final energy demand by almost 50% and create new job opportunities

Even though buildings consume almost 50% of all energy spent in South East Europe, €500 million of funds available for energy efficiency projects were unused in 2015. Investing more in energy efficiency in buildings would reduce the final energy demand for heating and cooling by almost 50% by 2050, and would also stimulate new job opportunities in this sector. These are the findings of a new energy roadmap for 2050 developed for 7 countries of SEE [3], and launched today at a policy session organised by SEE Change Net and co-hosted by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, as a part of EU Sustainable Energy Week 2016.

There are currently almost €5 billion of existing and pipeline coal investments in the SEE region. New coal plants would increase the health costs caused by the existing plants in SEE countries, which amount up to 8.5 EUR billion annually, causing 7181 premature deaths per year in Europe.

"Energy efficiency has been lately politically upgraded from 'Cinderella' of all energy areas to the 'first fuel'. This is very good, but it is not enough. It needs a complete and enabling legal framework, and requires both intelligent and adapted financial mechanisms and on the ground implementation", said Dirk Buschle, deputy director and legal counsel of the Energy Community Secretariat.

Despite the obvious opportunities for new jobs, as well as available funds, the potentials of energy efficiency remain unused. "Western Balkan governments have been given all the tools they need to implement energy efficiency reforms - reforms that will deliver significant benefits. But implementation of these reforms is just too slow", said Dr. Nigel Jollands, EBRD's Associate Director, Energy Efficiency and Climate Change.

However, non-EU countries lack defined financial mechanisms that support energy efficiency, said Tihomir Civkaroski, Knauf Insulation general manager for Balkan countries, Cyprus and Malta. "We are also missing governmental dedication, especially having in mind the direct impact of energy efficiency on GDP and job increase", said Civkaroski, and added that advancing energy efficiency in Serbia would create 15 000 to 30 000 more jobs in this sector

"The Roadmap clearly shows that nearly-zero energy buildings and retrofits would almost halve the final energy demand for heating and cooling in buildings by 2050 compared to today's level. This also presents a big opportunity for creating sustainable local jobs - twice as many than in the energy generation sector", said Professor Daniel Kammen, director of UC Berkeley's Renewable and Appropriate Energy Laboratory. "As the Roadmap shows, the development of a clean energy infrastructure in SEE is a political choice, not a technical obstacle."



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On behalf of SEE SEP partnership, Garret Tankosić-Kelly, Principal of SEE Change Net, asked all parties to commit to two concrete targets: “All new buildings should be nearly-zero energy from 2025, and there should be a 90% savings in energy consumption of all buildings retrofitted after 2030 in SEE.”