

Another announcement came out that coal-fired power plants do not respect the limits for their harmful emissions. The Energy Community, more specifically, its secretariat, issued an annual Implementation Report showing that none of the members met the requirements of the National Emission Reduction Plans (NERP) in all three key pollutants (nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxides, and particulate matter) enacted under the Large Combustion Plants Directive.

Kosovo has not complied with any of the three pollutants, while Bosnia and Herzegovina and Northern Macedonia have pledged to limit emissions from sulfur dioxide and particulate matter. Ukraine's 67 NERP factories have barely managed to somehow comply with the limits for this year, while Moldova has not even submitted an emission report for 2018, and Serbia has not even adopted a National Emission Reduction Plan, which is why it respects the emission limits set by the Directive and apply these rules to each individual power plant, which however does not work, and sulfur dioxide emissions are of particular concern.

The Energy Community Secretariat also examined the remaining life expectancy of coal-fired power plants in Eastern Europe. If they continue to operate at capacity of 2018 and with a life expectancy of 20,000 hours, more power plants will need to be shut down by 2021. The first would be Montenegrin Plevja, which would have to be shut down as early as 2020 unless it was upgraded with purification filters. Tuzla Block 4 is due to be shut down in May 2021, followed by the shutdown of three power plants in Serbia by December 2023. These are estimates based on emissions of power plants without filters and at the 2018 level and the use of filters (because we have already seen from the example of the Zenica ironworks that the owner of Mittal does not use the filters installed at all) or by reducing the number of operating hours.

Are we making progress every day in every aspect?

However, the Report, which is not publicly available and we are forced to rely on the information available in the press release, states that the percentage of successful implementation of environmental measures in Eastern Europe has increased from 43% to 48% in the last year alone. Montenegro remains the leader in implementing environmental measures, with Northern Macedonia and Serbia fighting for second place. The offenses are also listed, with Bosnia and Herzegovina having nine complaints, followed by Serbia with 5. The Energy Community Secretariat complains that the Balkan countries do not respect the provisions of the Second and Third Energy Packages. The question must necessarily be

posed here, if Germany doesn't respect European energy strategy, why should the Balkan countries respect it?

The apparent contradiction can be easily resolved: although the Energy Community primarily serves to expand the EU market to "new" markets, and thus the rules of the Second and Third Packages are not socially equal to those who will export energy from the EU to the "new" Balkan market and to our countries that will import it, the commitments our countries have agreed to also aim to reduce the pollution of our cities. Last year, we had more opportunities to witness the record pollution of our countries' capitals. Pollution is the primary one that translates into huge health and environmental costs, which, with little lag, become both social (heating) and economic costs (expensive overheads) because the world is following the logic of more expensive charging of dirty energy. It is for this reason that it must be in the interest of countries to respect the constraints of further pollution and to finally tackle the green transition in the Balkans.

Source: bilten.org