

The European Union has today approved an updated set of binding standards for power plants, which include new, stricter pollution limits.

The standards, known as the LCP BREF, were adopted today by the IED Article 75 Committee. These standards do not address CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions, and therefore would not help countries meet their obligations under the Paris Agreement. Yet, once implemented, they will help prevent thousands of premature deaths caused by air pollution from coal power plants, by restricting emissions of sulphur dioxide, dust, nitrous oxides, hydrogen chloride, hydrogen fluoride and mercury.

Several Western Balkans countries already require the use of the EU's BREF standards in their legislation as a basis for issuing permits. As a result, as soon as the new standards are published in the EU's Official Journal later this year, they will also apply to new plants across most of the region. Therefore, governments in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia - where planned new coal power plants are most likely to be affected by the updated BREF - need to revisit investment plans to ensure the project designs are indeed in line with the new standards and consider the possible financial implications.

Ioana Ciuta, Energy Co-ordinator at CEE Bankwatch Network, says:

"Governments across the Western Balkans urgently need to review their plans for new thermal power plants. If they fail to comply with the new standards they will be landed with expensive investment costs within just a few years".

Pippa Gallop, Research Co-ordinator at CEE Bankwatch Network, says:

"None of the new coal plant projects in the region appears to have taken these new standards into account in their planning. But it would be a lot cheaper for them to adjust the project designs now than to have to carry out retrofits in a few years' time".

Source: bankwatch