

The new agreement, signed in Athens, will directly benefit communities most impacted by the end of lignite and coal mining.

Energy Minister Kostas Skrekas and European Investment Bank President Werner Hoyer have signed a financing agreement set to unlock plans for high-impact sustainable energy, green mobility, social housing, skills and training, and environmental investment, along with boosting employment across Western Macedonia, including Kozani and Florina, as well as Megalopoli in the Peloponnese, in the years ahead.

Communities across northern and southern Greece traditionally dependent on coal and lignite mining, heavy industry and fossil-fuel power generation are set to benefit from up to 325 million euros in new investments and technical best practice backed by the EIB, as well as associated grants provided by the European Union.

“Two years ago, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis announced to the United Nations the country’s flagship reform, the retirement of all lignite-fired plants by 2028. Phasing out lignite is the fastest way to reduce CO2 emissions and meet the climate targets of 2030,” Skrekas stated.

“Such a momentous shift will inevitably pose a number of challenges for the local economies in Western Macedonia and the Peloponnese which now rely heavily on lignite, as well as in the flexibility of our electricity system. That is why experts from the government and the EIB have been working tirelessly together to unlock targeted local investment backed by the pan-European Just Transition Mechanism. The new cooperation between Greece and the EIB agreed today represents a major step in the transition to a new, sustainable economy not just for the areas which rely on lignite but for the whole of the country,” added the minister, noting that the deal “will prepare significant new investment in energy, environment, transport, housing and skills essential to create jobs, upgrade infrastructure and improve the environment in industrial areas of Western Macedonia and the Peloponnese.”

“Greece has taken bold steps to end lignite power generation and the agreement signed today will ensure that Greece benefits from targeted financing under the pan-European Just Transition Mechanism and maximize the impact of the Just Transition Development Plan for Greece,” Hoyer said.

Source: ekathimerini.com