

The EU has pledged financial support for the construction of a new 400 kV electricity interconnection line between Albania and Macedonia, Albania's Ministry of Energy announced on Friday.

Albania's Ministry of Energy and Industry said Brussels had "guaranteed financial backing for the construction of the new interconnection line" with Macedonia.

The EU pledge was confirmed at Thursday's meeting between the energy ministers of Albania, Macedonia, Bosnia, Kosovo and Montenegro and in the presence of the EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Johannes Hahn, the ministry added.

The new interconnection line is expected to increase Albania's cross-border electricity transmission capacities, allowing it greater access to the regional electricity market.

Most countries in the Western Balkans produce energy from lignite, otherwise known as brown coal, with the exception of Albania, which mainly focuses on hydro-power.

The electricity sector in the Balkans is characterized by small, but in many cases fast-growing, markets. The size of the markets in terms of final electricity consumption varies between 3.2 TWh in Montenegro and 52.4 TWh in Romania.

Albania depends for electricity production on power dams on the River Drin, which are susceptible to droughts, and the country often faces power shortages, which have to be compensated for by costly electricity imports.

Source; BalkanInsight