

Although Romania is not far from reaching the goal of gaining its energy independence, still half of its electricity generating capacity is ineffective economically, according to specialists in the field. This capacity needs subsidy schemes established at EU level. Also, experts say that Romania needs an adequate financing framework and well-established bonus schemes, because so far, state support has mainly consisted in covering up for economic ineffectiveness and not in growing this country's energy efficiency.

According to the Foreign Investors' Council, foreign investors operating in the energy sector have invested over 22 billion Euros in Romania since 2002, an amount that has helped stabilize this field. The Council believes that, in order to attract further investments in the sector, Romania must have a stable, predictable and transparent market, with regard to the implementation of public policies and framework regulations.

Here is the president of the National Energy Regulatory Authority, Nicolae Havrilet: "Investments are needed, because Romania provides a whole range of opportunities when it comes to the development of energy markets, from the generation of electricity from renewable sources and the use of the Black Sea's gas reserves, to the geo-strategic position of this country, which can play a significant role in managing new grids interconnecting the EU member states among themselves, and also with other third countries, such as the Republic of Moldova".

The President of the Energy Regulatory Authority has talked on Radio Romania about the situation of gas and electricity prices: "Prices are the responsibility of this Authority, and I can tell you that no increases are envisaged, at least for this colder period of the year. We have decided that any price analysis should be made just once a year, not every quarter, in summertime, to make sure prices are predictable and stable for a period of at least one year."

But for this period, is there any risk regarding the energy supplies? Nicolae Havrilet once again: "Every year, our country has been facing problems as regards stability, especially that of the pressure in the transport and distribution systems. And that's precisely why the authority has stipulated that storage is mandatory for all gas-supplying firms, whether we speak about household or industrial users, precisely in order to provide gas supplies in winter, which account for 1.7 billion cubic meters. However, beyond that quantity, suppliers stored extra quantities, so that at the beginning of the cold season 2.5 billion cubic meters have been made available for the market. For the extreme cold periods, the National Energy Regulatory Authority has ruled that a minimum level of imported gas standing at 3 per cent should be provided to household users. "

The President of the National Energy Regulatory Authority also spoke about Romania's gas

imports: “In the last three years, the import of natural gas has never ceased to plummet, from 25 to 7.5 %. Such a sharp drop is generated by internal as well as external factors, but its core element is the decrease in natural gas consumption against the backdrop of renewable energies providing their own contribution, added to which is a growing concern for an enhanced efficiency for household, but also for industrial users. The insulation of houses, as well as a reduced activity of great consumer industries, have generated the decrease in overall consumption. So basically, throughout the year, starting April, Romania has not imported a single cubic meter of natural gas.”

In turn, Euro MP Theodor Stolojan spoke about the role Romania plays, energy-wise, in Central and Eastern Europe. “We should not forget that energy-wise, we are almost self-sufficient, we are a supplier of energy security in the region since we have energy supplies available for export. Of course, we fare less well as regards our European-level integration, regional differences are still big. However, what I believe Romania should do to make the most of such a potential is first of all to finalize its energy strategy.”

Energy Ministry officials intend to provide affordable energy prices and protect the consumers while pursuing strategic investments in energy projects that can revitalize Romanian industry, such as Units 3 and 4 in the Cernavoda nuclear power plant, and the construction of a 600 MW steam power plant in Oltenia. Another option is to find ways to revitalize the coal-based energy production sector, to modernize mines and develop interconnections with neighbouring states, with a view to enabling Romanian energy companies enter foreign markets.

source: balkans.com