

Serbia has announced its contribution to the Paris climate agreement. The emission reduction the country is planning to achieve are far below the EU's target. According to Climate Action Network Europe, this undermines prospects of Serbia's EU accession.

Serbia is the first Balkan country to publish its contribution to the Paris agreement. Today's announcement happens on the occasion of the EU-Serbia High Level Conference on Climate Change in Belgrade, attended by Vice-President of the European Commission, Maroš Šefčovič.

According to Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe, it is a welcome step forward that Serbia, for the first time in its history, decided to take action to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. This is a direct result of the momentum that is building up towards the Paris Climate Summit, where most countries of the world will present their initial plans to reduce carbon pollution. Unfortunately, as in case of many other countries, Serbia's commitment falls well below of what is needed to avert dangerous climate change.

The pledge announced today has extremely low ambition. Serbia's target for 2030 is to decrease emissions by 9.8% compared to the 1990 levels. Serbia is one of the most advanced EU candidate countries. According to Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe, this means that it needs to submit a pledge that is in line with the EU 2030 target of at least 40% reduction compared to 1990. Even while decisions on how the effort will be shared among the different EU Member States, preliminary calculations indicate that all EU Member States, including the poorest, will have to reduce their emissions by at least 25% by 2030 compared to 1990.

As Serbia plans to become a member of the EU well before 2030, its climate and energy policies should take into account the EU climate targets. The climate pledge announced today clearly shows lack of true commitment to the EU integration among current leaders of the country – Dragana Mileusnic, Energy policy coordinator for South East Europe at Climate Action Network Europe said. The government has yet again demonstrated its short-sightedness. Serbia will miss the opportunity to reap the co-benefits of ambitious climate action in a form of green jobs, better health of its citizens and reduction of energy imports. Furthermore, the inventory data which the pledge is based on is questionable. Due to Kosovo's declaration of independence, emissions in 1990 and in 2030 might have been calculated for a different geographical range. Since Kosovo's energy mix is based on coal, significant share of Serbia's planned emission reduction might have already been achieved by the pure fact that coal power plants in Kosovo are no longer located on its territory. This would make Serbia's target irrelevant.

Serbia: Climate action plan undermines prospects of Serbia's EU accession says Climate Action Network

Serbia's energy policy is currently at a crossroads, as the country plans a wave of new coal investments, and at the same time struggles to move closer to the EU environmental and climate standards.

Source: caneurope.org