

The cities of the Western Balkans often occupy the first places on the lists of the most polluted in the world

There is a well-known saying throughout the Balkans that trouble never comes alone. That this folk saying has a foothold in practice was shown in 2020, when the impoverished and air-polluted society was additionally hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

When the global COVID-19 pandemic, which absolutely marked 2020, and is still going on, is added to the poor air quality, the result is an additional increase in the number of respiratory diseases and higher mortality.

The main factor of polluted air in the Western Balkans are powdered substances (PM), which negatively affect the same cells and parts of cells in the human body as coronavirus. Therefore, in people who are exposed to air pollution on a daily basis, the immune system is weaker, and the body's response to the presence of coronavirus is more violent, which contributes to the development of more severe forms of COVID-19, while deaths are more frequent.

Prolonged exposure to harmful substances in the air increases the risk of acute and chronic diseases, most often those that affect the respiratory system. Due to impaired function, it becomes more susceptible to the influence of viral infections, including those caused by coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2).

Source: Belgrade Open School