

The “United Balkans for Clean Air” campaign demands that coal-fired thermal power plants be shut down as soon as possible

The countries of the region, as it is stated, paid 72.7 million euros of direct subsidies to coal electricity producers in 2019 and guaranteed loans worth 2.15 billion euros.

Participants in the “United Balkans for Clean Air” campaign demanded that coal-fired thermal power plants be shut down as soon as possible and that pollution from heavy industry be urgently reduced to the proper framework. The “United Balkans for Clean Air” campaign was initially launched by the European Fund for the Balkans (EFB) in partnership with other organizations.

“Companies that operate thermal power plants and the countries of the region do not comply with the laws and regulations on harmful gas emissions, which leads to disputes such as misdemeanor proceedings within the Energy Community,” the statement said.

“Instead of building and renovating thermal power plants, the money from the budget can be directed to social programs and retraining of workers, as well as the construction of solar power plants on the site of coal mines that would replace the shutting down electricity capacities,” the statement said.

It is pointed out that coal combustion is the largest single source of air pollution in the Western Balkans, and the main role is played by thermal power plants.

“The same goes for other large combustion plants – these are the plants that consume the most energy. In the industrial activity, they are most responsible for air pollution in addition to electricity production,” the statement added.

It is stated that sulfur dioxide, heavy metals and other substances endanger the health of the inhabitants of the Western Balkans and beyond. Of the 3,906 premature deaths in 2016 attributed to the impact of thermal power plants in the region, 2,013 were recorded in the European Union, 1,239 in the region itself, and the rest in other countries.

Campaign participants also advocate for citizens to be involved in decision-making on environmental and other permits for production facilities.

In addition to industry, coal is also consumed in households and even in heating plants.

“The cessation of the use of that fossil fuel would eliminate the main single source of air pollution in the Western Balkans,” the statement said, recalling that the EU was abandoning coal use and encouraging the use of clean technologies in industry to bring net carbon emissions to zero by 2050. thus contributing to the mitigation of global warming.

In carrying out that task, it is added, “there is less and less tolerance towards the entire polluting industry and it will not be able to survive.”

The participants in the campaign remind that the countries of the region accepted those goals when they signed the Sofia Declaration in November 2020, which opens the way to non-refundable funds and financial support from the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans.



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