

## Skopje green electricity

The largest green-field investment in the country and the largest energy facility established with private capital TE-TO AD Skopje, noted record production results last summer. Namely, in the third...

The Energy Community Secretariat held its Just Transition Forum in the capital of North Macedonia. Officials, experts and representatives of state-owned power utilities agreed that the country is the frontrunner in the energy transition in the Western Balkans. However, one of the main takeaways was that the concept of a just energy transition remains largely unknown to the population of coal regions.

The plans to decommission coal-fired power plants and close all mines herald a major blow to employment, prompting the need for social programs. In addition, the affected areas need to quickly overcome their dependence on coal and switch to other economic activities. One Of the most sensible solutions is to turn the devastated coal land into solar parks and open the way for new energy technologies.

Energy Community Secretariat Deputy Director Dirk Buschle said the debate needs to involve all stakeholders such as working groups, regions, municipalities and civil society. "The transition per se has crossed the point of no return. Make no mistake by believing that we are discussing whether or not countries will transform. It is about the impact of this transformation," he pointed out.

There are 40,000 coal workers in the Western Balkans and another 60,000 jobs indirectly depend on the sector, said energy and climate specialist Anna Vasylyeva from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Power plants that run on fossil fuels have a combined capacity of 8.7 GW, of which 2.6 GW is scheduled to be shut down by the end of the decade.

The bank calculated that the Western Balkans require EUR 31 billion to EUR 36 billion climate-neutrality aligned just energy transition by 2030 excluding regional economic diversification. Most is needed for renewables, 52%, and it would primarily be covered by the private sector. Another major chunk, 42%, is for grids and storage while 5% of the sum is envisaged for the closure, remediation and repurposing of coal assets. It leaves 1% for workforce support, for 32,000 employees.

"The Energy Community region needs a green deal. And the core of this deal is the issue of just transition," said Head of Green Deal Unit at the Energy Community Secretariat Adam Cwetsch. He underscored that the countries in question have different starting positions than their counterparts in the European Union.

Cwetch also pointed to the social costs of pollution and emissions and called on including them in the equation as a "deal with nature." It would also ensure the funds needed to be redirected into the economy, in his view.

“The recipe for a social deal is first to have awareness,” he added. Cwetsch explained that a study last year showed 80% of people in the Energy Community are not familiar with the term just transition.

Contact us for free full report

Web: <https://www.somethingtasty.co.za/contact-us/>

Email: [energystorage2000@gmail.com](mailto:energystorage2000@gmail.com)

WhatsApp: 8613816583346

