

Bulgarian power plants are becoming more uncompetitive, as a result of the decline in electricity production due to the coronavirus pandemic, as well as low prices on international markets, said Professor Valentin Kolev, dean of the Faculty of Electrical Engineering at Sofia University.

He noted that in Germany electricity consumption fell by 25 %, in Bulgaria just by 4 %, but production fell by 15 % due to reduced exports. Therefore, it is expected that exports will be three times lower in 2020 compared to the previous year.

Professor Kolev also commented on the future of coal-fired Maritsa East complex. He believes that if Bulgaria is financially capable of paying carbon dioxide quotas, which enter into force on 1 July 2025, there will be no problems for the continuation of the work of the complex. On the other hand, the transformation of this complex will cost a lot. If it switches to natural gas, for example, around 100 million euros will be needed to convert the fuel system.

According to him, the costs of energy transition of the region, which includes retraining and reorientation of the labor force, could reach 10 billion euros. However, the independence of the Bulgarian energy sector is guaranteed only by electricity production from domestic coal. If the power plants have to run on gas, Bulgaria will not be energy independent, because this gas will have to be imported.