

The Bulgarian interim Government said that it plans to propose to the European Commission that the country should stop using coal for electricity generation by 2038 at earliest.

The press release said that the other date to be considered for coal phase-out is 2040, adding that the Government is making efforts to extend the deadline for the closure of its coal-fired power plants until that date.

Caretaker Prime Minister Stefan Yanev said that the result of the negotiation with the European Commission on the 2040 deadline extension will be known by the end of the week. He added that businesses and local governments in Bulgaria will need support to adapt to the transition to green energy, which has to be smooth, fair and take into account the specifics of Bulgaria's economy.

There are four operational coal-fired power plants in Bulgaria - state-owned Maritsa East 2, ContourGlobal Maritsa East 3, AES Galabovo and Bobov Dol. These have a combined installed capacity of 3,848 MW and produce about 40 % of Bulgaria's gross electricity consumption.

Last month, the EC urged Bulgaria to create a clear plan on the closure of its coal-fired power plants and ensure that European funding for the regions does not go only to the capital, Sofia. Deputy Prime Minister for European Projects Atanas Pekanov said that Bulgaria is surprised by the sharp tone of the European institutions for closing the coal-fired power plants and the transfer of funds to southwestern part of the country, adding that it is hard to make such decision in time of political uncertainty.

Bulgaria is holding the third parliamentary elections in this year, after the parties were unable to form the Government on two occasions. It is currently ruled by a caretaker Government.

Previously, the Government of Boyko Borissov claimed that Bulgaria will not stop using coal for electricity generation by at least 2050.