

As a part of the European Semester Spring 2022 package, the European Commission (EC) said that Bulgaria needs to accelerate the diversification of its gas supply routes and sources away from Russia, reduce its dependence on fossil fuels and increase the share of renewables in the energy mix.

The recommendations from the EC state that, following Russian invasion of Ukraine, Bulgaria should prioritize energy efficiency to lower demand whilst increasing investments, in line with its Recovery and Resilience Plan, that are needed to improve interconnection and gas storage projects with neighboring EU member states.

Bulgaria is the most energy and emissions intensive member state in the EU, with its energy mix still very much reliant on fossil fuels, although coal and lignite extraction and fossil fuel-based electricity generation are declining sectors of the Bulgarian economy.

Bulgaria should also focus on increasing energy efficiency, both in public and private sector. Acceleration of the deep energy renovation of public and residential buildings and support for the installation of solar heating systems and heat pumps for own use can lead to further energy consumption savings, benefiting both citizens and companies. In addition, efforts could be made to increase the energy efficiency in industry, as it remains a large gas consumer with a share of 40 % in 2019.

As a means to reduce dependence on Russian gas, the country should pursue its ambitious Recovery and Resilience Plan targets, which allow for 37 % of investments to be aimed at the energy sector and foresee strong further decarbonization and renewables installation.