

The European Commission (EC) wants a clear plan from Bulgaria 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.

Bulgaria is highly dependent on coal-fired electricity generation. Almost 40 % of its electricity comes from coal, 36 % from nuclear energy and 23 % from renewables.

However, the EC is stepping up the pressure and wants an exact date for the closure of coal-fired power plants, while Bulgaria is reluctant to do so for political reasons. Nearly 100,000 Bulgarians work in industries related to the coal industry.

Bulgaria said earlier that it plans to close 1,800 MW of coal capacity by 2030, but the closure of the three major coal-fired power plants in the Maritsa basin must take place after 2035.