

In a letter addressed to caretaker Prime Minister Stefan Yanev, the Association of the Organizations of Bulgarian Employers (AOBR) asks the Government to take urgent action to contain increasing electricity prices on the day-ahead market. The organization says that the excessive electricity prices are forcing businesses to resort to stoppages and threatens national protests to protect the interests of the hundreds of thousands working in the industrial sector in Bulgaria.

The average price on the day-ahead market on the Independent Bulgarian Energy Exchange (IBEX) on 4 August was 132.07 euros/MWh. On the intraday segment, the average price was 205.05 euros/MWh.

The price levels in the past three days were more than 50 % higher than in Germany, Italy, France and Austria, and on 4 August alone it was 70 % higher.

The letters to the Prime Minister reads that ss responsible, nationally represented employers' organizations, AOBR has repeatedly warned of the potential risks to the electricity market in Bulgaria. But the limit of tolerance has already been passed and after discussions with the managements of major energy-intensive companies, it was decided to start a phased shutdown of production facilities, starting at 12:00 AM on 4 August.

The Association calls for urgent action by the Energy Ministry, the Bulgarian Energy Holding (BEH), the electricity transmission system operator ESO and the regulators to make sure the state-owned TPP Maritsa East 2, which produces cheap electricity, starts operating at full capacity, that temporary restrictions are set in place for electricity export and that support is provided for the worst-hit energy-intensive industrial consumers.

According to BEH, three of the eight units at TPP Maritsa East 2 are currently in operation and a fourth one is ready to be switched on.

The Association further says that the leaders of the competent state institutions have proven unable to cope with the crisis which is why the Prime Minister should ask them to resign and ensure resources to address the problems that prevent the normal functioning of the Bulgarian economy.