

According to former National Ombudswoman Maya Manolova, four companies entered into a cartel agreement on the Independent Bulgarian Energy Exchange (IBEX), thus creating unfair competition. She specified that nuclear power plant Kozloduy already sent a report to the Commission for Energy and Water Regulation (KEVR) and IBEX, but there was no reaction.

Manolova said that Bulgarian companies lost about 27 million euros due to rising electricity prices on the energy exchange in the first 10 days of August. It is suspected that the reason for such high prices is the artificially created deficit, as well as the inactivity of power plants. According to Manolova, other irregularities were also recorded at IBEX, such as conflicts of interest, uncollected debts (around 4 million euros) from bankrupt companies. Last week, KEVR said that it has requested information from state-owned thermal power plant Maritsa East 2, electricity transmission system operator ESO and IBEX regarding the extremely high electricity prices on the Bulgarian spot market. The regulator has launched a preliminary investigation due to a well-founded suspicion that there has been a violation of the Wholesale Electricity Market Integrity and Transparency Regulation (REMIT). As part of the initial investigation, information was requested from three energy companies. The aim is to assess the extent to which the non-participation of production capacities of TPP Maritsa East 2 affected the dynamics of wholesale electricity prices.

Manolova states that the energy companies still refuse to provide the information requested by the National Assembly, adding that information on the high price of thermal energy are expected from 13 district heating companies. The largest of them - Toplofikatsiya Sofia, sent only part of the requested documentation, without data on uncollected receivables from industrial consumers.