

CEO of state-owned coal mining company Mini Maritsa East Ilza Chinkova said that that the company will export 1.75 million tons of coal to Serbia over a period of one year, which will be the first coal export deal in its history.

The agreement was signed with Serbian company Virom Group that will supply coal for the Nikola Tesla energy complex (TENT) operated by state- owned EPS. The agreed price is 9 % higher compared to the price at which coal is sold to state -owned TPP Maritsa East 2.

Chinkova said that the export of Bulgarian lignite was unthinkable until recently, especially on the backdrop of the bleak forecast for impending closure of the mining company, adding that the export contract will not affect supplies to the coal- fired thermal power plants in the Maritsa East energy complex.

The first coal batch will be shipped for Serbia in the coming days via the Danube ports of Russe and Svishtov.

Last month, Serbian Government approved EPS to import 4 million tons of coal for its use, as it is estimated that the utility will lack that amount of coal by the end of 2023. Serbian Minister of Mining and Energy Zorana Mihajlovic said that Serbia will need to spend probably up to a billion euros by the end of the year for the import of electricity and coal due to poor management at state-owned power utility EPS, adding that normal supply of coal from domestic coalmines is expected in early 2024.