

For this year cold reserve services will be provided only by state-owned coal-fired thermal power plant Maritsa East 2, said Temenuzhka Petkova Bulgarian Minister of Energy. This is a response to allegations that the Government is favoring TPP Varna, which is owned by Ahmed Dogan, founder and honorary chairman of political party DPS. TPP Varna provided the majority of cold reserve services in the past few years and it was paid by electricity transmission system operator ESO about 15 million euros per year. Because the plant was used only for this purpose it was never operational. During the cold wave in early 2019, TPP Varna failed to provide cold reserve services because it was unable to start production and it was subsequently fined by ESO with around 1 million euros.

The current contract for cold reserve services in the amount of 650 MW is valid until 31 July, after which a new tender for 2020/2021 should be launched. However, the Government aims to adopt emergency amendments to the Energy Act that will automatically award this contract to TPP Maritsa East 2 before that date.

This is just a temporary measure because Bulgarian electricity market should be fully liberalized as of July 2021.

In late 2017, CEZ announced that it has sold its Bulgarian coal-fired thermal power plant Varna, which is currently out of operation, to local company SIGDA. The statement from the company said that SIGDA's offer was evaluated as best of all received in the tender, while the final purchase price will be determined as of closing of the transaction based on the level of working capital. TPP Varna has been out of operation since January 2015 and the plant itself does not have significant value but the land and the existing port facilities attracted the attention of potential investors. Previously, Bulgarian Commission for Energy and Water Regulation (KEVR) has approved the decommissioning of three units at TPP Varna. The capacity of TPP Varna will decrease from 1,260 MW to 630 MW as a result of the decommissioning. In 2018, Dogan acquired 70 % stake in SIGDA.