

General Director of North Macedonia's state-owned power utility ESM Vasko Kovacevski said that the company plans to build 1,000 MW of solar capacity in the long-term, as part of its strategy for the transition from coal-based to electricity generation based on renewable energy sources.

Kovacevski said that solar power plants will be built either as the direct investment of ESM or in private-public partnerships. He noted that over 70 % of ESM's electricity generation currently comes from coal, therefore it is imperative to implement rapid electricity transition to more sustainable electricity generation, by increasing the company's renewable energy portfolio.

In June, the Government of North Macedonia said that it has signed contracts with Bulgarian company Solarpro Holding and Turkish company Fortim Energy Electric for the construction of 100 MW Oslomej solar power plant, a project worth 70 million euros. Each company will build 50 MW solar power plant in public-private partnership with state-owned power utility ESM. Under the partnership, ESM will receive 18.5 % of electricity produced by Solarpro's plant and 18.1 % of electricity produced by Fortim's plant. ESM will provide the land on which the plants will be built. The agreement is valid for 35 years, after which the solar parks will be transferred to ESM. The plants will be built on the site of depleted Oslomej coalmine and its worth is estimated to 80 million euros.

North Macedonia is the first country in the Western Balkans to decide to stop using coal for electricity generation and has announced that it will close all of its coal-fired thermal power plants by 2028.