

Production of wind power on Monday February 13, in the morning, at a temperature of 10 degrees below zero, was at a low level (125 to 150 MW, ten times less than the average production in January). This caused a drop in domestic production below the consumption level which is why Romania was forced to import electricity from Ukraine, Hungary and Serbia.

The Ministry of Energy announced that the import in this period was implemented in the interests of customers, because the import price of electricity was lower than the price in the domestic market. The statement said that the price in Romania was EUR 74 per MWh, and on the coupled day-ahead market the price was EUR 71 per MWh.

According to officials, Romania did not have difficulties in the supply from domestic production and there are sufficient generation capacities and fuel supplies to cover consumption, including possibilities for export. The electricity import on February 13, 2017 was on the day-ahead market, coupled with markets in Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia.

However, the situation recorded on Monday presents a surprise in light of the fact that Romania has generation capacities that are above the maximum level of consumption, as demonstrated in January this year, when the consumption was 10,000 MW.

There are several reasons for this situation. Typically, wind turbines produce 500 to 600 MWh, and then the production exceeds consumption. When wind turbines generate less than 200 MWh, it is necessary that other producers increase the amount of electricity delivered to the system. However, hydropower plants and thermal power plants, in accordance with the Government decision, have minimal supplies.

In addition, the price on the day-ahead market on Sunday from 9 to 13 hours amounted to EUR 34 per MWh, and on Monday morning the price was increased to EUR 74 per MWh, which is three euros more than the price on the markets in Hungary and Slovakia, and 12 euros more than the price in the Czech Republic. It is possible that domestic producers have not anticipated such a high demand, or they have opted for a higher price comparing to neighboring markets, which led to electricity import.

This is not the first time that production was below consumption, but the intervals were much shorter. In the last few days, it happened on February 10, from 9:30 to 10:30 and on February 11, from 18 to 19 hours.

During the two days, on February 2 and February 6, the production was below the level of consumption for several hours. Both periods were characterized by the low production of wind energy, under 200 MWh.

On February 13, the greatest amount of electricity was imported from Ukraine (407 MW), Hungary (145 MW) and Serbia (125 MW). Romania has a negative balance with Bulgaria, as exports exceed imports.

Since the beginning of the year, a high level of production from wind turbines has been

recorded. However, portal profit.ro warned that renewable energy represents a weak point of the power system for two reasons. The first reason is the tendency of maximum production when demand is at a minimum level (in summer) and vice versa (reduced production during the high-consumption period in winter). Second, subsidized price for renewable energy sources resulted in the withdrawal of alternative energy sources, such as coal.

Hydropower plants had the important role in order to compensate system instability during the cold days, and in the beginning of winter they were required to maintain a minimum amount of water in reservoirs. "Given the significant contribution to the stable operation of the power system in the first half of January," with a reduction of supplies at a faster pace than previously estimated, according to a new Government decision, their supplies have been reduced from 200 to 170 cubic meters. The share of hydropower plants production in February is estimated to 22.6% and in March to 16.5% despite the fact that in the first month of this year hydropower plants covered the higher percentage of the total production.