

The loans taken by Srbijagas for investments could not be a justification for postponing the separation of activities of the company and for high gas prices, said the Director of the Energy Community (EnC) Secretariat Janez Kopac.

However, he expect that this problem will be solved this year because the loans for investments that Srbijagas is now repaying cannot be an excuse to break the law and reap monopoly profits, because consumers pay much more than they should, since competition is not allowed. Kopac added that the EnC Council of Ministers would discuss measures against Serbia in November this year, but he expects that the problem of Srbijagas would be solved by then.

Asked whether Serbia will have to close all coal-fired thermal power plants by 2050 due to the Sofia Declaration, which predicts that the countries of the Western Balkans will work together with the EU to accelerate the decarbonization of the energy sector and make Europe climate, Kopac said the document implies complete decarbonization, which in practice would mean that there are no more coal-fired power plants. According to him, Serbia could start paying the tax on carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions due to the combustion of coal in thermal power plants in two or three years. There is no binding date for Serbia to pay the CO₂ tax, but since the EU is introducing a carbon border adjustment mechanism (a type of carbon tax) that will have an impact on Serbia, he expects that payment for CO₂ emissions will be introduced in two or three years.

Decarbonization means the cessation of the use of fossil fuels - coal, oil and natural gas. On the other hand, it means mass construction of wind farms and solar power plants, in the first place on the roofs, while gas and oil will be partially compensated by hydrogen, synthetic gases and biogas. It is still premature to talk about a concrete plan for decarbonization in Serbia, which needs to be carefully prepared, Kopac concluded.