DEAR READER,

ENERGY MONITOR represents a comprehensive media summary of selected energy related local and regional media articles. The newsletter is sum-mon-ened by the American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo, however, it does not reflect views and opinions of the Chamber on energy issues in Kosovo. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us. Should you want your email address unsubscribed from the list of recipients, please send an email to energymonitor@amchamksv.org, containing the word ‘UNSUBSCRIBE’ in the subject part.

REPORTING PERIOD: JANUARY 2021 – MARCH 2021
Security of Energy Supply in Kosovo

EBRD and ProCredit promote residential energy efficiency in Kosovo

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is supporting green investments in Kosovo with a €2.5 million loan to ProCredit Bank Kosovo (PCBK), a development-oriented commercial bank and part of Germany’s ProCredit Holding. The funds will support investments in high-performance green technologies, materials and solutions undertaken in or in relation to privately owned residential buildings. The financing is extended under the EBRD’s Green Economy Financing Facility (GEFF) for the Western Balkans which supports residential energy efficiency investments in a region that includes some of the most energy-intensive countries in Europe and suffers from high emissions of greenhouse gases. The GEFF program operates through a network of more than 145 local financial institutions across 27 countries, supported by more than €4.6 billion of EBRD finance for 190,000 clients to date. These projects have led to annual CO2 emission reductions of more than 8.6 million tons.

To date, the EBRD has invested €522 million in Kosovo through 75 projects since it began operations there in 2012. Supporting the competitive development of the private sector is one of the Bank’s key priorities in the country.


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GGF, KEP Trust boost green financing for farmers in Kosovo

The Green for Growth Fund (GGF) has invested EUR 3 million into microfinance organization KEP Trust for on-lending to private individuals and small farmers in Kosovo. The loans will be made available particularly for borrowers in rural areas to implement energy efficiency and resource efficiency measures in their homes and businesses. Through the new investment, the partners aim to support a green recovery both during and after the COVID-19 crisis, according to a press release by GGF. The GGF’s investment will support KEP Trust in expanding credit lines for green measures – such as updating agricultural equipment with more energy-efficient models or improving household insulation in order to reduce energy waste. By financing such activities, the investment is expected to save over 2,700 MWh and prevent more than 320 tons of CO2 emissions every year.


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Solar Energy Group to build 150 MW photovoltaic plant in Kosovo

Solar Energy Group signed an agreement with the Transmission, System and Market Operator (KOSTT) of Kosovo for the connection of its planned 150 MW solar power plant to the grid. The Transmission, System and Market Operator (KOSTT) of Kosovo said its Chief Executive Officer Mustafë Hasani (pictured left) signed a deal on connecting a 150 MW photovoltaic plant to the grid with head of Solar Energy Group Europe Egbert Schnuse. The projected generating capacity is 136 MW in terms of alternating current, while the nameplate capacity is the peak in direct current, the statement reveals. Solar Energy Group plans to install the plant in the municipality of Gjakova, and production is expected to start in 2022, KOSTT said. It is one of the biggest photovoltaic stations in the pipeline in the Western Balkans region.

The operator added the facility would be connected to the 110 kV transmission network by a new 6.5-kilometer line to the 110/35 kV Gjakova 1 substation.


Click here to read the full article.

EDS invests over 2.8 million euros in the city of Ferizaj

KEDS has almost completely renovated the electricity network in the center of the city of Ferizaj. Already, there are new cables with transmission facilities which provide much better services with electricity for about more than 20 thousand inhabitants of the center of this city. Through these investments, a complete modernization of the network is being enabled in order for customers to receive quality and safe electricity services. Investments in the energy networks are continuing every day throughout Kosovo, which shows the company’s commitment to fulfilling its promises and determination to be as close as possible to the customer.


Click here to read the full article.
KEDS: Discounted electricity bills only for March

The change of the decision by the Government of Kosovo for subsidizing the production of energy from renewable sources, within the Law on Economic Recovery will also affect the electricity bills of consumers. According to KEDS, with the preliminary decision, already repealed, the government had allocated an amount of about 16 million euros, which would be given to energy producers from renewable sources through KOSTT. This meant that the amount that these producers would benefit from would be deducted from the consumers.

"The last decision taken by the Government of Kosovo (no. 03/64 dated 12 February 2021) has halved the amount foreseen to be allocated to these producers, from 16 million to 8 million. With the halving of the budget for subsidizing energy producers from renewable sources, according to the amendment of the agreement signed by the parties, the beneficiary period of the discount on bills will be shortened, which will end with the billing of March 2021 and will not be applied for the following months ", announces KEDS.


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Nitaj: The tender for energy efficiency returns to regular procedure

The incumbent Minister of Economy and Environment (MEA), Muharrem Nitaj has requested that the tender announced by the Agency for Energy Efficiency, for public lighting in 23 municipalities, be conducted according to regular procedures. Minister Nitaj has requested that this procedure not go with an accelerated procedure, as there is no reason for such an action. "The Agency for Energy Efficiency has opened a tender for the implementation of energy efficiency measures for public lighting in 23 municipalities and this with an accelerated procedure."

Although in the reasoning of the requesting Unit it is stated that "The opening of the tender was done with a shortened deadline for submission of bids, since the project in question will be co-financed with municipalities and we are facing the COVID-19 pandemic, where the budget of municipal donors will "It must be done within the fiscal year", I as a minister do not see any valid reason for the tender to be opened with accelerated deadlines, therefore I have officially requested that this process be conducted according to regular procedures ", wrote Nitaj.


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On 31 March 2021, the Energy Regulatory Office (ERO) has requested from the Electricity Supply Operator, KESCO, to continue to perform the PUBLIC SERVICE OBLIGATION for the supply of final customers, including within this service also the customers connected to the 35kV and 10kV, who are qualified to enter the free market at unregulated prices.

ERO has reached this attitude because currently the Regulator’s Board is not able to make decisions due to the lack of the decision-making quorum, which is legally required to be composed of three members out of five provided by law to be in the Board in total. Under these circumstances, no decision can be taken until the completion of the Board by the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo.

The exit to the free market of this group of customers has become even more difficult following the pandemic situation in the country. Major concerns have been raised on this issue also by all chambers of commerce regarding the increase in energy costs and limited access to offers by more than one supplier, due to the fact that the market is largely concentrated on only one supplier.

https://www.ero-ks.org/zrre/sq/blogs-list
Click here to read the full article.
KOSTT signs connection agreement for 192 MW for solar park in Kosovo

Kosovo's power transmission system operator inked its third big deal in three months for the connection of planned renewable power plants to the grid. Dukagjini Solar intends to install two photovoltaic units of 96 MW of alternating current power each. The planned combined peak capacity is 250 MW.

The Transmission, System and Market Operator (KOSTT) of Kosovo said its Chief Executive Officer Mustafë Hasani signed an agreement for a solar park in Peja-Peć that is expected to start production in 2023. The deal is for a capacity of 192 MW in alternating current (AC) terms, while the peak level, expressed in direct current, will be 250 MW, project managers said.

The solar park will be connected to the 110 kV transmission network through a new line and connected to the 400/110 kV Peja 3 substation, according to KOSTT.


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Nitaj and the Director of the European Bank for Reconstruction discuss about advancing projects in the field of energy and public enterprises

The Minister of Economy and Environment, Muharrem Nitaj met with the Director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) for Kosovo, Neil Taylor. The topic of discussion was the cooperation between the Government of Kosovo, respectively the Ministry of Economy and Environment (MEA) and the EBRD in the economy sector, with special emphasis on energy and public enterprises. In the field of energy, the process of reviewing the Energy Strategy was discussed, and the loan agreement from the EBRD for the infrastructure dedicated to public enterprises was also discussed. Nitaj confirmed the readiness for coordination of projects and long-term interests of the Ministry of Economy and Environment in sustainable economic development as one of the main factors in the well-being of the citizens of the Republic of Kosovo. The first tranche amounts to 10 million, which includes the reimbursement of expenditures that have already been completed under Measure 4 of the emergency package, while the value of 20 million euros is included in tranche 2, which should go as a loan from the Government of Kosovo to public enterprises.


Click here to read the full article.

Balfin Group: 30 million euros invested in Ferronickel, need the government help to save the industry

The Vice President of the Balfin Group for Business Mergers and Acquisitions, Steven Grunerud, gave an interview for the magazine Monitor, where he raised concerns about the economic consequences that threatened the mining industry in Kosovo and especially the Ferronikel company that owns the group. Albanian, with a wide portfolio of businesses in the Balkan region and in several European Union countries. But it seems that a determined and clear intervention of state bodies in Kosovo would be needed, in order for this industry not only to be saved, but to create the conditions for it to flourish in the coming years, thanks to the investments that the Balfin Group has made in and that promise increased production and employment.


Click here to read the full article.

KEDS launches a new innovative website for its customers

The Kosovo Electricity Distribution Company (KEDS) has launched a new website that offers a lot of innovations for consumers and citizens of the country regarding electricity issues. The site has a contemporary design and offers easy access for the entire public.

All communication channels with KEDS are listed from the beginning. This is done in order to inform the customer of any surprises and to be instructed if he needs to report any emergency or any misuse.

Kosovo to host 150 MW Solar Park

Kosovo’s grid operator KOSTT has revealed that a 150 MW solar park will be built soon, in the municipality of Gjakova, in the southwestern part of the country. The CEO of KOSTT, Mustafa Hasani, and the director of Solar Energy Group Europe, Egbert Schnuse, signed an agreement for the grid connection of the solar plant, which is planned to be connected to the 110 kV transmission network through a new 110 kV line with a length of about 6.5km, the network operator said in a statement.

The plant is scheduled to begin commercial operations in 2022. No further details were revealed on the project. When built, the plant will be Kosovo’s first large scale solar park. The Kosovar government has made several attempts to support small sized and utility scale solar in the past. These efforts, however, have produced little results to date. In December, for example, Kosovo’s State Aid Commission (KNSH) deliberated that the feed-in tariff scheme for PV installations not exceeding 3 MW in size, introduced by the country’s Office of the Energy Regulator (ZRRE) in late November, was not complying with European state aid regulations.

Kosovo had just 7 MW of installed PV capacity at the end of 2019, according to the International Renewable Energy Agency. The country recently raised its renewable energy target to an additional 400 MW of capacity by 2026. That would be enough to meet a quarter of its power demand and would reduce dependence on aging coal-fired power plants.

https://www.world-energy.org/article/16210.html

KEDS invests in the tourist area of Brezovica

KEDS is completing a major investment project in Brezovica. Through this investment, security of supply will increase and the quality of services will be significantly improved. This will directly affect the further development of that area, which is considered a tourist area. KEDS has already installed a completely new transformer blind with sufficient capacity to supply customers on that side and has laid out completely new cables along with ancillary facilities. Investments in the energy network are continuing every day throughout Kosovo.


Click here to read the full article.
The municipality of Suhareka benefits about 141 thousand euros for energy efficiency

The municipality of Suhareka has benefited 140,800 euros for energy efficiency. The news was announced by the mayor Bali Muharremaj, saying that the implementation of this year will start the implementation of projects. “140,800.00 euros is the provision of support by the Kosovo Agency for Energy Efficiency for the Municipality of Suhareka. "Today we just signed a memorandum of understanding, which will begin to be implemented this year in our municipality," Muharremaj announced on Facebook.

Click here to read the full report.

KEDS employs about 400 workers in areas affected by bad weather

Continuous rain and snow are causing power outages in some areas. KEDS responded immediately, hiring about 400 field workers to repair the damage being caused to the network as a result of atmospheric factors. The most affected areas are currently: District of Peja, Mitrovica and partly Prishtina. KEDS teams have been working continuously since the late hours of yesterday in order to stabilize the electricity supply as soon as possible. However, atmospheric conditions are making the intervention extremely difficult, as in many areas teams are not being able to penetrate with heavy machinery, because the terrain is impassable by rainfall. Thus, they are being forced to fix the breakdown by physically carrying all the necessary material.

https://www.keds-energy.com/shq/lajme/keds-angazhon-rrreth-400-punetore-ne-zonat-e-a-301/
Click here to read the full report.
Renewables overtake fossil fuels in EU power generation for first time ever.

For the first time ever, the European Union (EU) has produced more electricity in a year from renewable energy sources than from fossil fuels. In 2020, the share of wind, solar, and other renewables accounted for 38% of all power generated in the EU, compared with 37% from fossil sources, according to a study by research groups Ember and Agora Energiewende. Wind and solar together accounted for 20% of all power generated in the EU last year, with the highest share recorded in Denmark (61%), followed by Ireland (35%), Germany (33%), and Spain (29%), according to the study. Even in the Western Balkans, where fossil fuels still account for the bulk of electricity output, wind and solar are seen pushing coal out of the market. The region is likely to transition to energy systems in which the share of coal in power generation will be much lower than the current 70%, according to speakers at a recent regional conference organized by the RES Foundation.


Click here to read the full article.

New initiative to support sustainable hydropower in the Western Balkans

The International Hydropower Association (IHA), the Albanian Power Corporation (KESH), and the Swiss government’s State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) have launched a new initiative in the Western Balkans designed to support authorities, investors, and developers to implement international good practices in hydropower development. Starting in early 2021, the three-year initiative will see IHA Sustainability, the organization’s non-profit subdivision, work with project developers, alongside regulators, investors, and civil society organizations from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia. According to IHA, the aim is to ensure hydropower projects comply with the Hydropower Sustainability Tools, a set of guidelines and assessment tools developed by governments, industry, and social and environmental NGOs. These tools are aligned with the lending criteria used by international institutions such as the World Bank and International Finance Corporation.


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Albania introduces obligations for public, private sector to increase energy efficiency

The parliamentary committee on production activities has approved the amendments to the law on energy efficiency which establishes a series of obligations in terms of reducing energy consumption by the public and private sector.

Starting from September 1, 2021, the public sector must renovate a minimum of 3% of the total stock of public buildings annually to meet the minimum requirements for energy performance. Also, large energy consumers, after receiving energy audits, have to draft an action plan to save at least 4% of electricity consumed, the media reported.

For the first time, the law obligates municipalities to prepare local action plans for energy efficiency, which include policies and measures to save energy in all sectors on the local level, based on their energy consumption.


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Germany extends EUR 80.5 million in cheap loans for energy in North Macedonia

Germany’s KfW Development Bank is providing a credit package of EUR 80.5 million under favorable terms to the Government of North Macedonia for energy projects, including the transition from coal to gas, and a EUR 2.4 million grant for feasibility studies for renewables.

Elektrani na Severna Makedonija (ESM) signed an agreement with Germany’s KfW Development Bank, which approved EUR 2.4 million in grants for feasibility studies and other documentation for renewable energy projects with a projected output of 650 GWh per year. The deal opens the way for the state-controlled energy company of North Macedonia to draw EUR 80.5 million in cheap loans for projects, Prime Minister Zoran Zaev said.


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EU carbon price surpasses EUR 43 to reach new record

European Union carbon dioxide allowances surged to a record of EUR 43.14 per ton in intraday trading today. The price of the permits has increased by as much as 32.4% in 2021 and almost 16 times since the all-time low, registered on April 17, 2013. EU ETS limits emissions from more than 11,000 heavy energy-using installations including power and industrial plants, and airlines. It covers around 40% of the EU’s greenhouse gas emissions. To achieve a climate-neutral EU by 2050 and the target net reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of at least 55% by 2030, the European Commission is currently revising the EU ETS.


Click here to read the full article.
Saipem, Alboran Hydrogen plan hydrogen facility in Albania

Saipem and Alboran Hydrogen have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the joint development and the construction of five plants for the production of green hydrogen through the electrolysis process. Three facilities are planned in Italy and the remaining two in the Mediterranean basin. The agreement includes the plan for the development and construction of two additional plants in the Mediterranean basin – in Albania and Morocco. The latter will produce ammonia from green hydrogen, Saipem said on its website.


Click here to read the full article.

Europe is halfway into closing all coal power plants by 2030

Fifty percent of coal-fired thermal power plants are closed or planned to be shut down by the end of the decade, according to data compiled by Europe Beyond Coal. Operators of the facilities are under pressure from rising prices of CO2 emission allowances, environmental regulations and the drop in costs for renewable energy production. EDF Energy has announced it would decommission its West Burton A coal-fired thermal power plant in the United Kingdom by the end of September of next year. Europe Beyond Coal said it means 50% of such systems have been closed or are on track to be shut down by 2030 in Europe, including the Western Balkans and Turkey. The organization tracks data since 2016 and has 162 units left, though there are plans to build 36 coal plants.

https://balkangreenenergynews.com/europe-is-halfway-into-closing-all-coal-power-plants-by-2030/

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