

Solar energy for the environment skopje

Prime Minister Dimitar Kovačevski said North Macedonia has proven that it can implement projects that bring stability and security to electricity supply and improve the standard of living. Speaking at the opening ceremony for a 17 MW solar power plant, he said the government continues to tackle the energy crisis but that it is also setting the course for future energy production and the green industry and economy.

The new photovoltaic system, the largest in the country, is located southeast of the capital Skopje. GEN-I Skopje, a subsidiary of Slovenia-based GEN-I, won the right to build it in 2019, at a tender for a 50-year lease of state-owned land.

Construction started early last year. The solar power plant was connected to the grid four months before the deadline. The facility with an estimated annual output of 25 GWh spans 30 hectares in Azambegovo in the municipality of Sveti Nikole.

Kovačevski said he expects the remaining 130 MW on state-owned and private land, awarded through public calls, to come online within two years. Minister of Economy Kreshnik Bekteshi revealed there are photovoltaic facilities with a combined 65.7 MW in capacity currently connected to the grid. By the end of the year, 12 MW more is scheduled to be added, he said.

Government-controlled power utility Elektrani na Severna Makedonija is preparing to install two solar power plants of 50 MW each at its coal complex REK Oslomej. It is a public-private partnership with Fortis and Solarpro. The arrays will be in former open-cast mines.

There are projects being finalized for the other coal mine and thermal power plant complex, REK Bitola, according to Kovačevski. The combined capacity is 200 MW to 300 MW, the prime minister underscored.

He said that within 40 days several laws on strategic investments, including for projects being prepared by wpd and Akuo Energy, would be submitted to parliament. Kovačevski pointed out that Mytilineos from Greece intends to build a gas-fired cogeneration plant in Skopje. The government will decide soon whether to declare it a strategic investment, he asserted.

As for wind power, the prime minister expressed confidence that Bogoslovec would “start operating within the next two quarters.” Turbines are starting to arrive at the location, which is just a few kilometers from Azambegovo. It is the first private wind farm project in the country.

Of note, firms controlled by former Deputy Prime Minister Kocho Angjushev have just built an 8 MW solar power plant. Until now, the largest photovoltaic unit was in REK Oslomej - 10 MW on an abandoned coal pit.

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