



BiEPAG

December 2023

**Kosovo Energy
Transition:
BETWEEN
PRIVATISATION
AND MARKET
LIBERALISATION**

Authors: Donika Emini

*With contribution: Zoran Nechev, Gresa Hasa, Center for
Southeast European Studies, University of Graz*

Introduction

This policy brief examines the Kosovo energy sector during a critical juncture in its transition towards sustainability. The study delves into the geopolitical factors influencing this energy transformation, shedding light on the public perceptions of Kosovo's energy partners and the government's strategy for transitioning to renewable sources. Furthermore, the paper delves into the energy crisis spurred by Russian aggression in Ukraine, intensifying the demand for sustainability and transition within Kosovo. Geopolitical considerations and the substantial costs associated with establishing gas infrastructure have hindered the exploration of gas as a viable alternative energy source. Despite these challenges, the Kosovo government has affirmed its commitment to progressing towards energy transition by exploring wind and solar energy.

This paper underscores identified challenges, including a significant reliance on coal and the need for energy diversification. Additionally, the early stage of development in Kosovo's renewable energy infrastructure presents further obstacles. The coexistence of a public monopoly in energy production and a private Turkish consortium managing distribution and supply, complicates the transition process. Thus, it analyses the role of Turkey in the privatisation process in 2012, as well as the challenges that it might pose to future energy transition toward renewable energy as the country gradually moves toward market liberalisation. Lastly, the paper looks at market liberalisation as a strategic necessity to introduce competition, and the importance of dismantling monopolistic structures within the energy sector to facilitate a smoother transition to renewable energy.

Recommendations

The EU and the US should continue to advocate for the immediate introduction of privatisation and market liberalisation in Kosovo's energy sector, to enhance economic efficiency and foster competition.

The EU and the US should prioritise strategic investments in modernising Kosovo's coal-fired power plants as a temporary solution during the ongoing energy transition.

The EU and the US should continue to mobilise substantial financial support and expert guidance to facilitate Kosovo's energy transition.

The EU and the US should expand financial assistance for ongoing initiatives, particularly in the residential sector, to advance energy efficiency programs and align with the government's efforts.

Mapping the 'unbundled' Energy Infrastructure in Kosovo

The energy market in Kosovo is still recovering from the war in 1999, especially in terms of its organisational, technical, and commercial aspects, while it strives to modernise its energy production and distribution infrastructure, which were established during Yugoslavia. As part of this transformation, the Kosovo electric power system is transitioning from a vertically integrated structure to a more market-oriented environment.

During UNMIK's administration in the early 2000s, while Kosovo institutions were still provisional, the goal was to change the structure of the energy sector by disbanding the Kosovo Energy Corporation (KEK), thus establishing separate entities for each service provided. The structure of KEK was vertically integrated and designed to manage the entire energy cycle, making it one of the biggest corporations in Kosovo. In the process of breaking down KEK, in 2005, the Kosovo authorities established Kosovo's Transmission System and Market Operator (KOSTT), a publicly owned enterprise and a member of the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity (ENTSO-E). KOSTT is responsible for managing the transmission and operational aspects of the electricity system. Additionally, the Electricity Distribution Services in Kosovo (KEDS) is a company owned by a Turkish consortium comprised of Çalik Holding and Limak. KEDS started operating in 2013, controlling the energy distribution network and infrastructure, whereas Kosovo Electricity Supply Company (KESCO) oversees billing and was established in 2015.

The electricity supply chain in Kosovo is characterised by a combination of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and private entities. Regarding energy production, a core position in the energy infrastructure is reserved for KEK. KEK primarily produces electricity through the two main coal-based power plants, Kosovo A and Kosovo B, and is responsible for the coal (lignite) mines supplying these plants. Both power plants were constructed in Yugoslavia, and now exceed the recommended operational lifespan. Ibër-Lepenci operates and oversees the Ujmani hydroelectric power plant, which relies on reservoirs for its operations. Kosovo has two private wind energy production companies: the 'Kitka Wind Farm' a Turkish-led company, and 'Bajgora Wind Farm', a German-Kosovan consortium.

Coal and Pollution, Energy Supply and Demand

Possessing around 12.5 billion tons of lignite in geological reserves, Kosovo has the second-largest lignite reserves in Europe and the fifth-largest in the world. Coal is the primary source of energy production in Kosovo, with the two ageing lignite coal plants producing up to 880 MW, depending on their condition. Energy produced from coal in Kosovo is relatively cheap but comes at a higher environmental price. Prishtina often tops the list of the most polluted cities in the world. The Energy Community Secretariat took steps against Kosovo for 'failing to meet their National Emission Reduction Plan (NERP) and for not achieving significant reduction of air pollution from thermal power plants.

In 2004, the Kosovo government committed to shutting down Kosovo A to align with EU standards on gas emissions. The plan was to replace it with a new power plant requiring a billion euros of investment. Kosova C/Kosova e Re, a new power plant, was planned to be implemented in cooperation with a strong financial partner, such as the World Bank, in 2017.

The decision to build Kosova e Re triggered immense reactions from civil society organisations, mainly related to environmental concerns. However, the bid for investment went through. Numerous challenges followed. The UK-based company ContourGlobal won the bid, but many details related to the contract were not made public. The project experienced years of stagnation, with little to no progress made, until 2020, when ContourGlobal, a company that had previously signed an agreement with the Kosovo government, withdrew from the project. However, this event produced the right momentum to close the chapter of the attempts to build new energy plants based on coal in Kosovo.

In 2022, the import demand increased after part of Kosovo A, block A5, collapsed. Each day out of operation has cost KEK at least 1 million euros. KEK has paid 266 million euros for not making this block operational, adding 3.5 million for the bid given for its repair. So, within less than a year, KEK has paid 299.5 million euros to cover the losses caused by the collapse of block A5.

The energy crisis of 2023 highlighted the urgent need for stable, base-load power generation within Kosovo to fill the energy gap.¹ Kosovo introduced the plan to develop renewable energy, but in the meantime it acknowledged the immediate need to refurbish the two existing power plants, as an interim step.

Privatisation of the Energy Distribution and Citizens' Perceptions

Kosovo adopted the first energy strategy in 2007 which solely looked at the persisting problems within KEK, such as the energy production and distribution network and energy billing. In 2008, the government initiated the privatisation process. This privatisation process concluded in 2013 when the Turkish consortium Limak-Çalık assumed control of KEDS.²

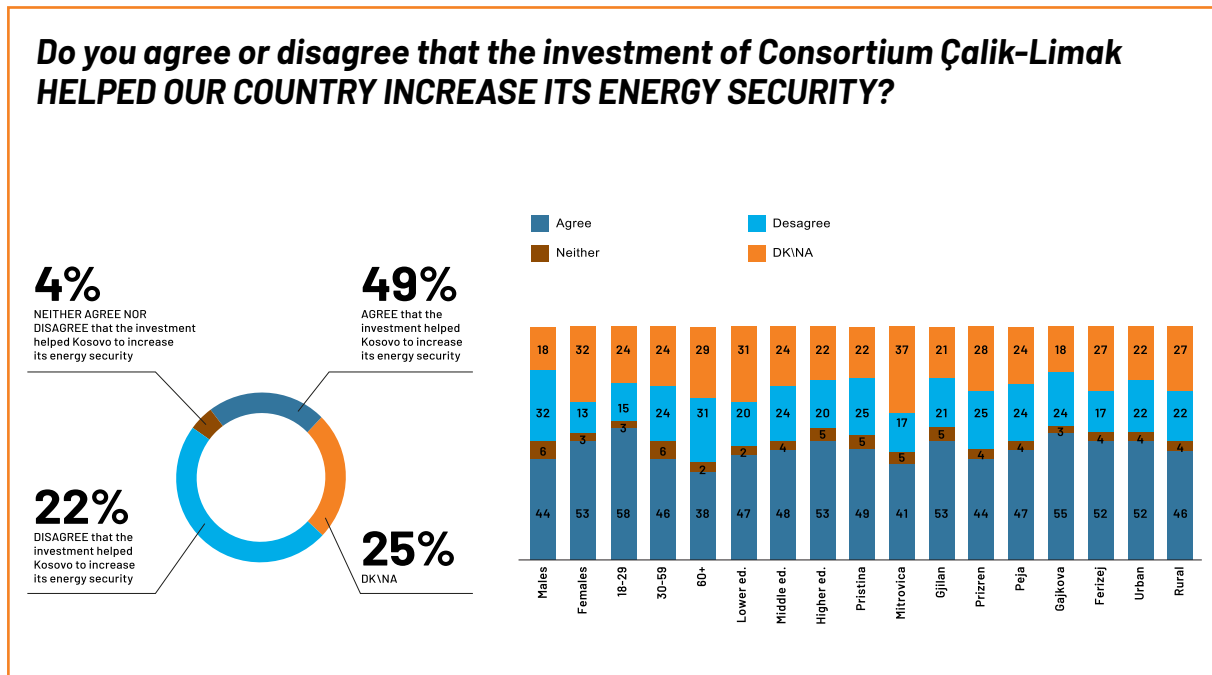
When looking at the public perception of energy distribution network privatisation in Kosovo, it is crucial to distinguish between privatisation and the energy distribution post-privatisation phase. On the one hand, the privatisation process has been the subject of ongoing debate, primarily concerning the very low price of the distribution network and the alleged links of the political elite with Turkey, which determined the process.³ On the other hand, the period following privatisation has witnessed improvements in energy distribution, which was a persistent issue after the war in Kosovo. This improvement, at least from the citizen's perspective, is marked by reduced power outages. As such, it created the perception that privatisation has enhanced energy security in Kosovo. Thus, it artificially created the perception of energy security among citizens as shown in Figure 1.⁴

1 Taylor, A. (2022) 'Kosovo's energy crisis takes another hit as power plant suffers technical problems', *www.euractiv.com*, [online] Available from: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/kosovos-energy-crisis-takes-another-hit-as-power-plant-suffers-technical-problems/> (Accessed 1 November 2023).

2 Ekonomia, M. of E. (2012) 'Nënshkruhet Kontrata Për Privatizimin e distribucionit të KEK', *Ekonomia*, [online] Available from: <https://www.ekonomia.info/sq/energjetike/nenshkruhet-kontrata-per-privatizimin-e-distribucionit-te-kek> (Accessed 15 October 2023).

3 Olluri, P. (2018) 'Kosovo PM installs ally to head privatisation body', *Balkan Insight*, [online] Available from: <https://balkaninsight.com/2018/11/22/kosovo-pm-installs-ally-to-head-privatisation-body/> (Accessed 28 October 2023); Morina, D. (2018) 'Thaci firms up Kosovo's alliance with Turkey', *Balkan Insight*, [online] Available from: <https://balkaninsight.com/2018/12/30/thaci-in-turkey-12-30-2018/> (Accessed 28 October 2023).

Figure 1. Attitudes toward Energy Distribution and Supply Privatisation. Source: BIEPAG survey, N = 1,000 [2023]



Energy distribution privatisation at a bargaining price of 26 million euros: The privatisation of energy distribution at a substantially reduced value compared to its asset worth raised concerns due to a lack of transparency in the procurement process. These concerns intensified when the same owner acquired both KEK divisions responsible for supply and distribution.⁵

Market monopoly: The initial objective of privatising the distribution system was intended to eliminate the inefficiency and lack of profitability associated with the traditional vertically integrated energy companies. The energy sector in Kosovo, while undergoing privatisation, has yet to transition to a liberalised structure; it still operates under a new monopoly framework.⁶ Implementing the liberal model has encountered regulatory obstacles and conflicts of interest. Some power lines are owned by KEDS, under the same ownership group as KESCO, creating a worrying conflict of interest.⁷ This situation has hindered the establishment of a competitive market.⁸ Furthermore, it is anticipated to

4 Interview with Expert 4, (14 July 2023).

5 Hashani, A., Lumir, A., Vokri, V. and Pozhegu, D. (2016) 'Privatisation in the Energy Sector', KFOS and RIIVEST, Foundation for Open Society (KFOS) and the Institute for Development Research RIIVEST, [online] Available from: https://www.riinvestinstitute.org/uploads/files/2016/September/21/Privatizimi_Sektor_i_energji_eng1474445425.pdf (Accessed 14 October 2023).

6 Vitia, D. (2020) 'Kosovo's energy market: When will the monopoly end?', Prishtina Insight, [online] Available from: <https://prishtinainsight.com/kosovos-energy-market-when-will-the-monopoly-end-mag/> (Accessed 28 October 2023).

7 Interview with energy expert and owner of renewable energy sources (11 July 2023).

8 Vitia, D. (2020b) 'Privatizimi i keds-it pamundëson liberalizimin real të Tregut të energjisë', Raporto Korrupsionin! KALLXO.com, [online] Available from: <https://kallxo.com/gjate/hulumtim/privatizimi-i-keds-it-pamundeson-liberalizimin-real-te-tregut-te-energji/> (Accessed 1 November 2023).

hinder the market even more when the energy transition occurs, and the energy market moves toward full liberalisation.⁹

Profit with electricity purchase from KEK: Under this structure, KEDS purchases electricity at a fixed price, allowing it to generate profits during price surges. However, in times of crisis, KEDS has had to seek government subsidies or assistance.¹⁰ As a result, even though KEDS does not generate its electricity and procures it from KEK within a regulated market, it continues to function as if it were a vertically integrated company.¹¹

Increased quality and reliability: post-privatisation, technical and commercial losses caused an annual loss of over 40 per cent of electricity. Privatisation facilitated significant reductions in these losses through enhanced investments in electricity infrastructure.¹²

Energy subsidy: the interim step assisted by the EU and US

To mitigate the impact of rising energy prices during the energy crises driven by the Russian aggression in Ukraine, the government allocated 120 million euros to the energy sector. This subsidy was passed on to consumers through discounts on their electricity bills and was used to provide import subsidies.

This arrangement effectively shielded businesses and households consuming less than 800 kWh per month from the price increase.

In this regard, the role of the EU and the U.S. in energy subsidy is crucial. The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) project administered through the Millennium Foundation Kosovo (MFK) programme has provided significant support for households and foresees large-scale investment in energy

9 Vitia, D. (2020) 'Privatizimi i KEDS-it pamundëson liberalizimin real të Tregut të energjisë', kallxo.com, [online] Available from: <https://kallxo.com/gjate/hulumtim/privatizimi-i-keds-it-pamundeson-liberalizimin-real-te-tregut-te-energjise/> (Accessed 15 October 2023).

10 Interview with Expert 3 (18 July 2023).

11 Interview with Expert 2, (12 July, 2023); Kosovo Government (2012) 'Kosovo Electricity Distribution and Supply Privatisation - Implementation Plan', Prime minister's Office, [online] Available from: https://me.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/IA_notarized_opt.pdf (Accessed 28 October 2023).

12 World Bank (2017) Kosovo KEDS privatisation - the World Bank, International Finance Cooperation - Member of the World Bank Group, [online] Available from: <https://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/742311542227814406/pdf/132069-KosovoKEDSPrivatization-Booklet-FINAL.pdf> (Accessed 5 October 2023).

subsidies.¹³ This is a game changer, especially during the wintertime when energy is used for heating.¹⁴ The EU has introduced an initiative with a fund totalling 75 million euros to subsidise energy bills, endorse alternative heating methods, and encourage energy conservation among the public to improve energy efficiency for households and enterprises.¹⁵

New Strategy: moving away from coal, saying no to gas, exploring renewables

Amid the energy crisis, Kosovo started building on the 2023 energy strategy to launch investment in sustainable domestic energy generation, reducing reliance on costly imports, and ditching coal. The strategy formally announced the decommissioning of one coal-fired power plant, setting a 35 per cent target for renewable energy in electric energy consumption by 2031 and enhancing integration into regional energy markets.¹⁶ The strategy also includes plans for 390 MWhs of battery storage capacity, funded through a grant from the Millennium Challenge Corporation, to support renewable energy and grid stability.

¹³ Millennium Foundation Kosovo (2022) 'The Glossary of the Millennium Foundation Kosovo', MFK, [online] Available from: <https://millenniumkosovo.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/MFK-BEYOND-BOOK-7DEC2022-DIGITAL-S.pdf> (Accessed 1 November 2023); MCC (2022) 'MCC, Kosovo celebrate major milestone in \$285M energy sector overhaul', Millennium Challenge Corporation, [online] Available from: <https://www.mcc.gov/news-and-events/release/release-101922-mcc-and-kosovo-celebrate-energy-sector-major-milestone> (Accessed 1 November 2023).

¹⁴ GAP Institute (2023) 'Economic payoffs of Energy Efficiency in Kosovo', Instituti GAP, [online] Available from: [https://www.institutigap.org/documents/58261_eficiencia_energijise_EN_\(draft3\).pdf](https://www.institutigap.org/documents/58261_eficiencia_energijise_EN_(draft3).pdf) (Accessed 31 October 2023).

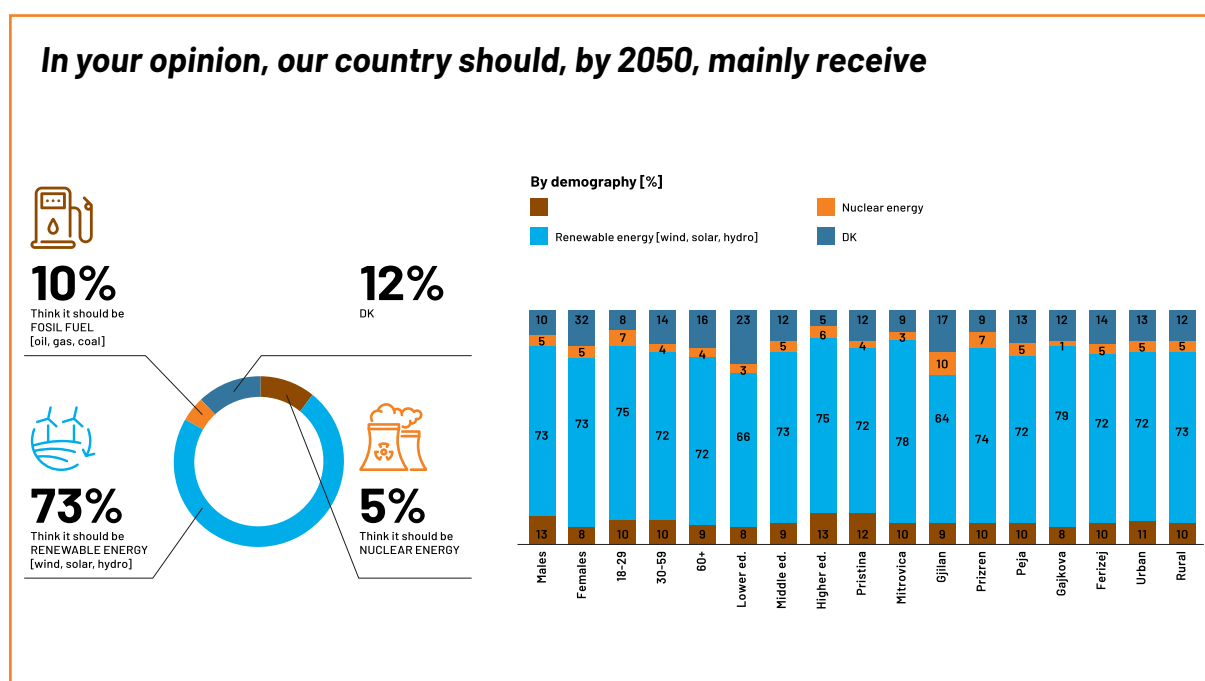
¹⁵ European Union Office in Kosovo European Union Special Representative in Kosovo (2023) 'Energy support package: EU Grants EUR 75 million to Kosovo to help it cope with the energy crisis', EEAS, [online] Available from: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kosovo/energy-support-package-eu-grants-eur-75-million-kosovo-help-it-cope-energy-crisis_en?s=321 (Accessed 16 October 2023).

¹⁶ Todorović, I. (2022) 'Renewables are cornerstone of Kosovo* energy strategy through 2031', Balkan Green Energy News, [online] Available from: <https://balkangreenenergynews.com/renewables-are-cornerstone-of-kosovo-energy-strategy-through-2031/> (Accessed 1 November 2023).

Kosovo aims to reduce energy consumption by 32.5 per cent by 2030 compared to projected levels, in alignment with the EU's energy efficiency targets. The strategy envisages the development of wind and solar energy, the latter making Kosovo the only country in the region to explore this form of energy production.¹⁷

The ambition for renewable energy is widely supported among Kosovo citizens, driven mainly by the need to address air pollution challenges. Most citizens believe that by 2050, Kosovo should rely entirely on renewables (as shown in Figure 2)

Figure 2. Attitudes toward renewable energy. Source: BIEPAG survey, N = 1,000 [2023]



17 Demiri, L. (2023) 'Solar Blossoms', Kosovo 2.0, [online] Available from: <https://kosovotwopointzero.com/en/solar-blossoms/> (Accessed 24 October 2023).

The future: Kosovo is betting on wind and solar energy

Kosovo currently has two operational wind farms. With a 32.4 MW capacity, the Kitka windfarm, which is currently undergoing an expansion, was built using a loan from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).¹⁸ Air Energy, a dedicated entity explicitly created for this initiative, leads the project, and a Turkish company owns it.¹⁹ Furthermore, the Developer Air Energy 2 is set to construct two wind farms and a solar power plant, with a combined capacity of 99.6 MW, in Kosovo.²⁰ This marks a significant Turkish presence in Kosovo's future energy production. After the successful project in Kitka, Kosovo started construction of the Bajgora wind farm, which has recently become operative. This wind farm, the biggest in Kosovo with a capacity of 102.6 MW, was constructed by Notus Energy²¹ using a loan from the EBRD,²² with participation from Erste Bank and NLB Group.²³ The Foreign Minister of Germany, Annalena Baerbock, was present at the inauguration, showing support for Kosovo's quest for renewable energy.²⁴ Additionally, the Budakova wind farm (46 MW) is in the pipeline and offers substantial generating capacity.²⁵

18 European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (2023) 'Kitka Wind', EBRD, [online] Available from: <https://www.ebrd.com/work-with-us/projects/psd/kitka-wind.html> (Accessed 28 October 2023). Notus is a German company.

19 Kitka Wind Farm (2023) KITKA - Air Energy ShPK, [online] Available from: <http://www.kitkawpp.com/EN,2653/group-companies.html> (Accessed 28 October 2023).

20 Balkan Green Energy News (2021b) 'Turkey's Guris holding to build windfarms in Kosovo* and Ukraine', Balkan Green Energy News, [online] Available from: <https://balkangreenenergynews.com/turkeys-guris-holding-build-windfarms-kosovo-ukraine/> (Accessed 28 October 2023).

21 NOTUS Energy (2021) '102.6 MW windfarm in Kosovo begins feeding the grid - largest direct investment since country's founding 2021', NOTUS energy, [online] Available from: <https://www.notus.de/en/news/1026-mw-windfarm-kosovo-begins-feeding-grid-largest-direct-investment-countrys-founding> (Accessed 28 October 2023).

22 Bennett, V. (2019) '€18m EBRD loan to Kosovo's first wind farm', European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), [online] Available from: <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2019/18m-ebrd-loan-to-kosovos-first-wind-farm.html> (Accessed 28 October 2023); Reuters (2019) EBRD to lend 58 million euros to build Kosovo's biggest wind farm, [online] Available from: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kosovo-energy-wind-idUSKBN1YK1EC> (Accessed 28 October 2023).

23 Balkan Green Energy News (2021) 'Kosovo's 102.6 MW wind farm Bajgora goes on Stream', Balkan Green Energy News, [online] Available from: <https://balkangreenenergynews.com/kosovos-102-6-mw-wind-farm-bajgora-goes-on-stream/> (Accessed 28 October 2023).

24 Buxhovi, A. (2022) 'Inagurohet Parku I erës në mitrovicë, investim Qindra Milionësh Nga Gjermania', GazetaBlic, [online] Available from: <https://gazetablic.com/inagurohet-parku-i-eres-ne-mitrovice-investim-qindra-milionesh-nga-gjermania/> (Accessed 24 October 2023).

25 Isufi, A. (2022) 'New Wind Park hailed as step towards Green Energy', Prishtina Insight, [online] Available from: <https://prishtinainsight.com/new-wind-park-hailed-as-step-towards-green-energy/> (Accessed 31 October 2023).

In addition to wind energy, Kosovo aims to reach the target of 600 MW of solar energy and is set to construct a 150 MW solar farm. The Solar Energy Group Europe (SEGE) has initiated the construction of solar farms, which will operate without government subsidies, with all its output to be sold on the open market.²⁶

In May 2023, Kosovo opened a competitive bidding procedure to secure 15-year power purchase agreements (PPAs) for photovoltaic projects. This marks the first solar power auction in the region, with an available capacity ranging from 90 MW to 105 MW.²⁷ The initial deadline has been extended twice, with the most recent of which reported to have expired on October 16. Over 140 companies, including those from Southeastern Europe, have shown keen interest in participating in the solar power auction.²⁸

Although most citizens believe that Kosovo should rely on the US (as shown in Figure 3) regarding energy, the Government of Kosovo showed no interest in pursuing the gas pipeline connecting Greece and North Macedonia.²⁹ Thus, the 234-million-dollar grant from the US agency MCC was given to support Kosovo's ambition of solar renewable energy.³⁰ The project is conditioned by Kosovo's increasing capacities in renewable energy, namely solar energy. It involves procuring and installing high-capacity batteries, boasting a combined installed capacity of 200 megawatt-hours (MWh).³¹ The project has total local ownership, and Kosovo is selecting the team and preparing to begin project implementation. This has been reflected in the perception toward the EU and the US, which are seen as the biggest supporters of the energy transition in Kosovo (as shown in figure 4).

26 Reuters (2023) Consortium starts building 150-MW solar farm in Kosovo, [online] Available from: <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/consortium-starts-building-150-mw-solar-farm-kosovo-2023-05-19/> (Accessed 1 November 2023). The German power equipment and service group Siemens Energy AG is constructing the plant

27 Todorović, I. (2023a) 'Kosovo* initiates solar power auction for up to 105 MW', *Balkan Green Energy News*, [online] Available from: <https://balkangreenenergynews.com/kosovo-initiates-solar-power-auction-for-up-to-105-mw/> (Accessed 1 November 2023).

28 Todorović, I. (2023) 'Solar power auction in Kosovo* draws interest from over 140 companies', *Balkan Green Energy News*, [online] Available from: <https://balkangreenenergynews.com/solar-power-auction-in-kosovo-draws-interest-from-over-140-companies/> (Accessed 1 November 2023).

29 Bami, X. (2022) 'Rejecting gas, kosovo eyes US funds for Renewable Energy', *Balkan Insight*, [online] Available from: <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/05/30/rejecting-gas-kosovo-eyes-us-funds-for-renewable-energy/> (Accessed 1 November 2023).

30 MCC (2022a) 'MCC Board approves \$202 million grant to improve Kosovo's energy sector', *Millennium Challenge Corporation*, [online] Available from: <https://www.mcc.gov/news-and-events/release/release-070122-mcc-board-approves-kosovo-compact> (Accessed 1 November 2023).

31 Spasić, V. (2022) 'Kosovo* to install 200 MWh battery storage system', *Balkan Green Energy News*, [online] Available from: <https://balkangreenenergynews.com/kosovo-to-install-200-mwh-battery-storage-system/> (Accessed 1 November 2023).

Figure 3. Attitudes toward reliance on energy partners. Source: BiEPAG survey, N = 1,000 [2023]

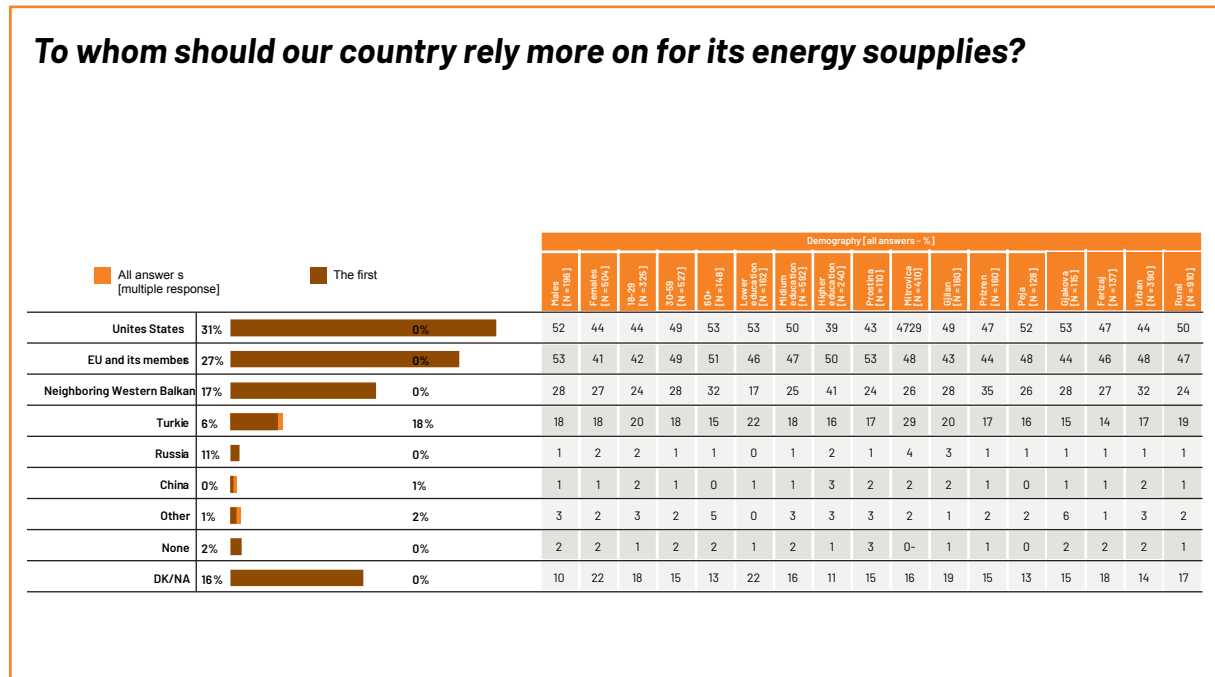
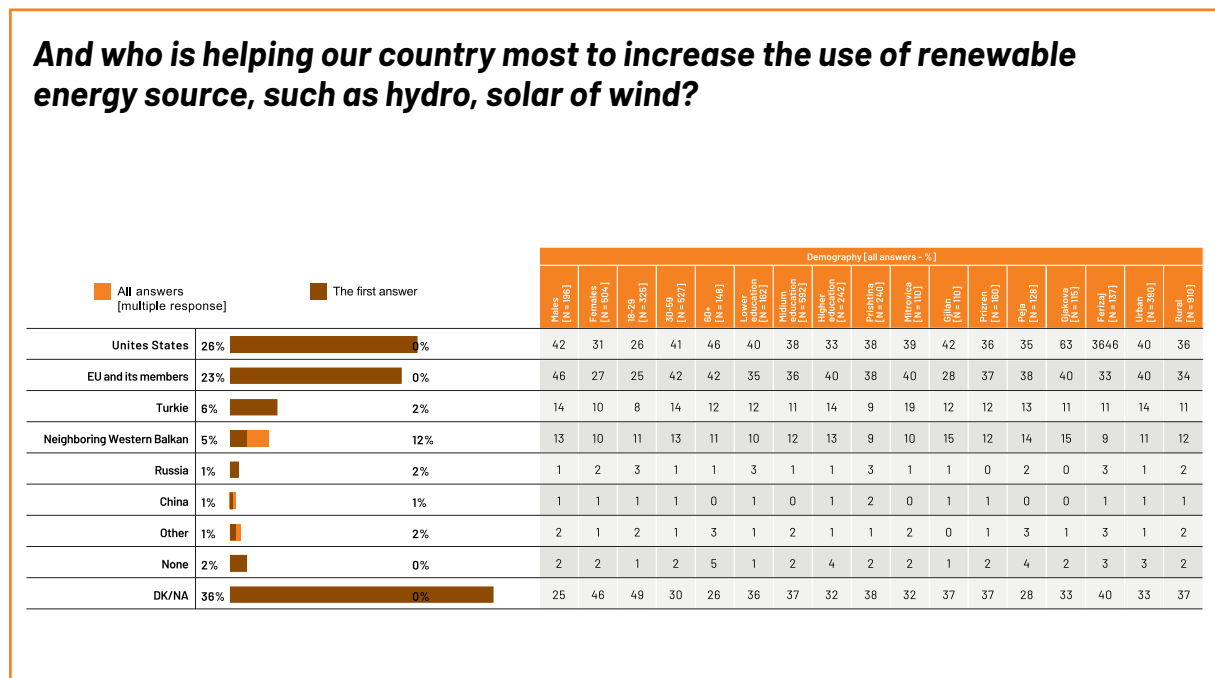


Figure 4. Attitudes toward partners in energy transition. Source: BiEPAG survey, N = 1,000 [2023]



The Way Forward and Recommendations

The main obstacle in Kosovo's energy transition is its heavy reliance on coal, the absence of energy diversification, and the need for sufficient interconnectors.

While energy production in Kosovo has remained under public ownership, distribution and supply underwent privatisation approximately a decade ago and are currently controlled by the Turkish consortium Limak-Çalık.

The quest for energy transition: Kosovo has undertaken commitments to transition away from coal and prioritise the adoption of wind and solar energy. Notably, the motivation for this shift comes from within Kosovo. Nonetheless, the EU and the US must extend their support to assist in navigating the immense challenges in the quest for energy transformation.

Privatisation and market liberalisation: Introducing competition into the market is crucial for achieving economic efficiency in the liberalisation process. Moving towards renewables opens the energy market for private companies in Kosovo and fosters competition. The leap to renewables should go hand in hand with market liberalisation.

Transitioning from Coal to Renewables: The decision to forgo gas as an interim solution has prolonged Kosovo's reliance on coal for energy generation. Therefore, it is recommended that Kosovo prioritises investments in enhancing its coal-fired power plants as a temporary measure during the ongoing energy transition. These investments are pivotal in ensuring energy security and addressing environmental issues, particularly the need to reduce air pollution.

Guidance and financial support to complete energy transition: To propel Kosovo's energy transition successfully, the EU and the US must provide substantial financial incentives and expert guidance to address the ongoing energy crisis and mitigate air pollution. This support is crucial for the initiative's overall success, emphasising the need for assistance in achieving a successful energy transition. Additionally, the EU should expand financial support for

Kosovo's ongoing initiatives, particularly in the residential sector, advancing energy efficiency programs. Elevating the existing co-financing involvement is crucial to effectively implement energy efficiency measures and support the government's efforts.

About us

The Balkans in Europe Policy Advisory Group (BiEPAG) is a joint initiative of the European Fund for the Balkans (EFB) and Centre for the Southeast European Studies of the University of Graz (CSEES) promoting the European integration of the Western Balkans and the consolidation of democratic, open countries in the region. BiEPAG is grounded in the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. It adheres to values that are common to a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail. It is composed of prominent policy researchers from the region and wider Europe with demonstrable comprehension of the Western Balkans and the processes shaping the region. The members are Florian Bieber (Coordinator), Bojan Baća, Dimitar Bechev, Matteo Bonomi, Srđan Cvijić, Milica Delević, Nikola Dimitrov, Marika Djolai, Vedran Džihčić, Donika Emini, Richard Grieveson, Dejan Jović, Damir Kapidžić, Marko Kmezić (Assistant Coordinator), Srđan Majstorović, Jovana Marović, Zoran Nechev, Tena Prelec, Corina Stratulat, Nikolaos Tzifakis, Alida Vračić, Gjergji Vurmo, Natasha Wunsch.

<https://biepag.eu>

Contact: info@biepag.eu

The European Fund for the Balkans is a joint initiative of the Erste Foundation, Robert Bosch Foundation and King Baudouin Foundation that envisions and facilitates initiatives strengthening democracy, fostering European integration and affirming the role of the Western Balkans in addressing Europe's challenges. Its strategy is focused on three overarching areas – fostering democratisation, enhancing regional cooperation and boosting EU Integration. The EFB supports the process of affirming the efficacy of EU enlargement policy across the Western Balkans, improving regional cooperation amongst civil society organisations based on solidarity and demand-driven dialogue. It provides means and platforms for informed and empowered citizens to take action demanding accountable institutions and democracy. The focus is on continuous reforms of the policies and practices of the Western Balkans countries on their way to EU accession.

www.balkanfund.org

Contact: ALEKSANDRA TOMANIĆ, Executive Director

aleksandra.tomanic@balkanfund.org

The Centre for Southeast European Studies was set up in November 2008 following the establishment of Southeast Europe as a strategic priority at the University of Graz in 2000. The Centre is an interdisciplinary and cross-faculty institution for research and education, with the goal to provide space for the rich teaching and research activities at the university on and with Southeast Europe and to promote interdisciplinary collaboration. The Centre also aims to provide information and documentation and to be a point of contact for media and public interested in Southeast Europe, in terms of political, legal, economic and cultural developments. An interdisciplinary team of lawyers, historians, and political scientists has contributed to research on Southeast Europe, through articles, monographs and other publications. The centre regularly organizes international conferences and workshops to promote cutting edge research on Southeast Europe.

<http://csees.uni-graz.at/>

Contact: UNIV.PROF. DR. FLORIAN BIEBER,
Professor of Southeast European History and Politics
florian.bieber@uni-graz.at

This study has been supported by the European Climate Foundation. Responsibility for the information and views set out in this study lie with the author(s). The European Climate Foundation cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained or expressed therein.

European Fund for the Balkans 2023. All rights reserved. The views expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) alone and do not necessarily represent the positions or views of the European Fund for the Balkans. the positions or views of the European Fund for the Balkans.

