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Energy Resources of the Balkans with Perspectivies for Overcoming Economic Contrdictions

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ABSTRACT

The Balkan countries as a whole exist with numerous energy resources that represent a significant segment of their social environment. The energetics of each creation in the current global context mark the first-rate basis of their international position. The countries of the observed region, especially the Western Balkans objectively have small oil and gas capacities as essential drivers of economic development. This space is characterized by the permanent presence and competition of great powers in accordance with their strategic interests. Current planetary conflicts, especially the war in Ukraine, produce negative social connotations with major crisis trends. It is evident that the countries of the region invest respectable financial resources in order to improve their energy infrastructure. Therefore, European integration projects and concrete foreign investments are necessary postulates of existence and long-term prosperity.

Keywords
Energy resources; Balkans; USA; Russia; European Union

Introduction

The Balkans are important and interesting for the EU and the USA for two reasons. Firstly, for military and political reasons as a very important geostrategic area, secondly as the shortest route to the world's largest deposits of oil and natural gas. The second one is more important for the EU than for the USA, but for the USA it is important for the reason that this road leads not only to Russian sources of oil and gas, but also to the mouths of the Caspian region, the Caucasus region and Central Asia, and this is important for the USA because by securing of oil and gas from those areas, attempts are made to minimize Russian influence on Europe through oil and gas, supporting oil and gas projects that provide oil and natural gas that are not from Russian deposits, i.e. that are competitive with oil and gas projects that are essential for Russia to transport to Europe as the largest consumer of Russian oil and gas. The Balkans are also interesting for Russia, for two very important reasons. First, the Balkans is very important as a transit area, as the shortest route for Russian oil and natural gas to the European market, to ports and oil terminals in the Mediterranean, and from them to the further Western world. That is why Russian oil and gas companies under the auspices of Russia want to include as many Balkan countries as possible in their oil and gas projects, which are of vital importance for both. Second, after the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia lost its once great influence in the Balkans. Now he wants to return that influence. She realized that the easiest way to do this would be through oil and natural gas, through oil and gas companies.

Oil and gas companies from Russia very quickly conquered the Balkans, through oil and gas. In a very short time, in the last decade, Russian gas and oil companies have bought all the largest oil and gas companies, oil refineries, oil terminals, oil and derivatives warehouses and most of the sales facilities or put them under their influence, without asking for a price. This is how it came to be that all the countries of the Balkans fell under the energy influence of Russia through their oil and gas companies. The energy security of the Balkan countries depends on Russia from Russian gas and oil. There is no country in the Balkans that does not provide at least 50% of its energy needs from Russia, some even 100%, some over 80%. That is why the Balkans are important for Russia as a market and consumer of Russian oil and gas. In all of this, the Republic of Serbia takes its place, as an energy-dependent country and that of Russian oil and gas.

Methodology

Energy resources represent a conglomerate of natural resources that are of essential importance for energy security and the existential functioning of every country. It is a fact that the Balkan region disposes of huge quantities of various goods of almost all categories, which has always

been of particular interest to the great powers. Therefore, this space is the scene of permanent conflicts with implications for their social development. The subject of our research is the phenomenon of energy resources in the Balkan region with possible perspectives for the economic development of the countries in the observed territory.

The aim of the work is a scientific consideration of the availability and application of energy resources in the Balkans. Also, pointing out the importance of current segments for achieving stable economic development of the country. The basic hypothesis is: Energy resources play a first-class role in the development and prospects of the countries of the Balkan region. Auxiliary hypotheses are:

1. The area of the Balkans has huge amounts of different energy sources;
2. Existing energy potentials with optimal use can provide perspective development of certain creations.

During the research, known scientific methods and techniques will be implemented. Methods of analysis and synthesis of relevant literature content, descriptive method, comparative, specialization and generalization of selected materials will be used. The scientific justification of the work is reflected in the contribution to the academic community from an area that is not sufficiently researched. The social justification of the text means analyzing the topics of energy resources that are of first-class importance for every community. This is especially pronounced in the current situation caused by the war in Ukraine, which produced major crisis trends.

Discussion

Energy Resources and Perspectives of the Balkan Countries

The Balkan countries cannot boast of a wealth of energy sources. Oil and natural gas reserves are rarely found in the Balkan countries, so the need for these energy sources is mostly covered by imports. However, the geographical position of the Balkans is outstanding for the purpose of transporting energy sources from the Caspian region, Central Asia and the Middle East to the EU market.

There are no proven reserves of oil and natural gas in Montenegro, Macedonia and Kosovo, so neither Kosovo nor Montenegro have gas or oil pipelines. On the other hand, in the SFRY, the use of natural gas was reduced to a minimum, while electricity was used to the maximum, so that in some former countries of the SFRY, such as BiH and Macedonia, even to this day, gas pipeline networks are not sufficiently developed.

The energy crisis, which has been happening between Russia and Ukraine in recent years, has influenced many Balkan countries to start looking for alternative sources of gas. Except for Albania, all Balkan countries have connections with Russia when it comes to the natural gas network. In the medium term, countries in the region have begun initiatives to connect national gas pipeline networks, while in the long term, almost every country hopes to one day benefit from the natural gas of the Caspian region, Central Asia and the Middle East.

The energy sector of the Balkans follows European trends - consumption in the region is also expected to grow, mainly due to economic growth. In this environment, many aspects of the energy sector of the Balkans are not yet clear. The countries of the region must comply with European conditions and, at the same time, ensure their energy balance. This could only happen if there are new investments in energy infrastructure.

Coal is a very important energy resource for the Balkans, as it is available in sufficient quantities, especially on the territory of Serbia. There is mostly lignite, especially in the area of Kosovo and

Metohija. Considering the low calorific value of lignite, it is mostly used for the production of electricity in thermal power plants. Thermal energy from coal is currently the most dominant primary source of electricity in the Balkans, because from the aspect of the amount of energy they produce and the operational incremental costs of production, they directly affect the formation of the price of electricity on the Balkan regional electricity market. The current state of thermal power plants in terms of ecology is very dramatic.

Almost all thermal power plants in the Balkan region work on ecologically unacceptable grounds, as well as with a reduced energy efficiency factor. Those thermal power plants need environmental rehabilitation, so some of them will experience an increase in size, an increase in energy efficiency, elimination of environmental problems, while some of them will be shut down. Thermal power plants in the Balkans produce about 160 TWh of electricity, which represents about 60% of the total electricity produced. The country with the highest percentage of electricity produced from thermal power plants is Greece. Greece produces as much as 90% of its total production from thermal power plants (Anderson, 2020). Hungary is the next largest producer of electricity in thermal power plants; it is the first in the conversion of old thermal power plants into thermal power plants powered by biomass. Characteristic of Greece and Hungary is their open electricity market, especially in Hungary. The open electricity market may be the main force driving so much investment in these two countries, compared to others.

Recent information that Bosnia and Herzegovina lies on oil has again initiated the search for deposits. Research shows that large reserves are hidden in the area of Mostar, Stolac, Nevesinje and Gacko. A lot of money is invested especially in oil and gas exploration. It is estimated that there is oil in those areas for the next 50 years to satisfy internal needs.

Balkan countries dream of oil riches. Balkan countries have high hopes for an oil boom, which they say could bring much-needed cash flow and reduce the region's reliance on imports. Albania rejoiced at the recent discovery of large deposits in its territorial waters in the Adriatic Sea, which could yield a billion barrels of oil. Such announcements have some dreaming of new riches for the Balkan states, which have traditionally struggled with high unemployment and limited economic prospects. Albania is one of the few countries in the region and Europe where huge reserves of oil and natural gas have been discovered in the last century.

Results

Many experts in the field of energy emphasize the fact that citizens in the Balkan region, due to insufficient investment in the energy sector, are threatened with darkness in the coming years, and due to the lack of energy - stagnation in economic development. They recommend building new capacities as soon as possible. According to the latest study by the World Bank, one of the ways to reduce the energy uncertainty of the Balkans is the construction of regional and main gas pipelines, as well as the expansion of the distribution network in the countries of the Balkans. Energy security in the Balkan region is very uncertain.

Oil reserves in the Balkans in 2009 amounted to 981 million barrels, 61% of these reserves were located in Romania, 20% in Albania, 8% in Croatia and the remaining part in other countries of the region. (Anderson, 2010)

Natural gas reserves in the Balkans amount to 156.1 billion cubic meters, of which 40% are in Romania, 31% in Serbia, 23% in Croatia, and the rest is in other Balkan countries. As can be noted, Romania is the richest country in the region in oil and natural gas reserves. With the influence and

surface size of this country, Romania is the country that has the longest network of oil and gas pipelines in the region. (Anderson, 2020)

In Republika Srpska, four potential sites stand out, two in Posavina and one each in the area of Lopar and Tuzla. Potential reserves amount to almost 300 million tons, and proven reserves based on previous research are 50 million barrels. Experts say that the oil is at a depth of 2,000 to 6,000 meters. According to the current stock market price, that oil is worth about thirty billion dollars. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, they are seriously working on the continuation of research, which the world's oil companies are interested in.

Research at new locations has also begun in our country. Images of oil fields could become a reality and a common image in one year, both in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Serbia. During the last decade of the last century, American and British companies investigated whether there is oil and gas in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The war interrupted this work, but the results remained. On the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, numerous researches were conducted and around 70 potential sites were located.

The oil industry of Serbia conducts research in Serbia, there are also reserves that have not yet been used south of the Sava and Danube. In Serbia, the extraction of oil shale in the Aleksinac mining basin is a strategic decision for the future of Serbia. Aleksinac would meet 10 to 15 percent of Serbia's oil needs, which would reduce its dependence on imports.

The Slovenian government is seriously considering increasing the capacity of the Krško nuclear power plant by an additional 1,000 MW, as the country currently lacks 400 to 500 MW of new electricity generation capacity. However, if Slovenia decides to build a new nuclear plant, it must, among other things, count on the opposition of Austria, which will not allow the construction of new nuclear power plants in neighboring countries.

Also, Croatia is considering the option of building a nuclear power plant, because a nuclear power plant is a necessity, because it is the only way to produce energy economically and environmentally friendly. The price of oil is rising, supplies are decreasing, and Croatia, if it wants to join the EU, must ratify the Kyoto Protocol and reduce carbon dioxide emissions, which means it must find new sources of energy. The sun, wind and biomass, as renewable sources of energy, are expensive and therefore nuclear energy is the only acceptable and safe source of energy.

Gasification in gas power plants is also being considered, as an alternative to the aforementioned nuclear plants, as well as the possibility of building a new gas pipeline between Russia and Italy, which would pass through Slovenian territory. This should be understood as Russia's confirmation of the main supplier of gas to the countries of Central and Southeastern Europe. Also, the Croatian company "Gasakro" plans to raise its own gas pipeline system to a higher level in the next five years and enable BiH, Montenegro and Albania to connect to the Croatian gas pipeline network. Of the Balkan countries, only Bulgaria has openly declared that it will continue with the construction of the "Belane" nuclear power plant, which will meet its long-term needs. Macedonia is planning accelerated gasification of the country and creation of new hydro potential, with the support of the World Bank. As far as Montenegro is concerned, the possibility of intensifying research and investing in renewable energy sources is being considered, given that hydro potential, biomass, and solar and wind energy are the most important in that country. The total hydropower potential of Montenegro is about 11 billion KWh per year, of which 17% has been used so far. Republika Srpska sees its future in large and small hydropower plants, but also in the "Stanare" thermal power plant, which should be built by EFT (Radoman, 2007).

With its establishment, the Energy Community of Southeast Europe created a unique energy market, the area of which covers a territory slightly larger than France, and with fifty-five million

inhabitants it is equal to the size of the Italian market. Considering the insufficiently developed infrastructure and the forecast growth in the consumption of all types of energy, especially electricity, the area of Southeastern Europe is becoming more and more interesting to investors, due to above-average growth rates. The estimated value of the electricity market in Europe in 2005 was 244.4 billion euros, with a forecast average annual consumption growth of 1.4%.

At the same time, in Southeast Europe, according to the results of the World Bank study, an average annual consumption growth rate of 2.3% is expected until 2022. The current operational capacities for the production of electricity in Southeast Europe amount to about 43.9 GW, which represents slightly more than 5% of the total European capacities. The structure is dominated by thermal capacities, which use lignite. Observed by periods, the greatest investment activity is expected in the period from 2012 to 2022, when as much as a quarter of all new capacities in Europe will be built in the region of Southeast Europe.

However, the construction of new capacities will not be equally distributed over the entire region, because in some countries the priority will be the rehabilitation of existing ones. It is expected that Albania will remain a net importer of electricity in the coming period as well; in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the construction of 400 MW of hydro capacity is expected, but the priority still remains on the rehabilitation of the system; in Bulgaria, 2,400 MW of new capacities are expected, along with the rehabilitation of existing ones; Croatia plans to build 2,000 MW of new capacity, although a timetable for implementation has not yet been adopted; in Romania, the rehabilitation of 8,000 MW of thermal capacity is expected, while in Serbia, a significant expansion of capacity is expected only after 2012. The most significant current issue in the region is the impact of the closure of the "Kozloduy" NPP in Bulgaria on the energy situation in Southeast Europe. With the closure of this nuclear power plant, a significant part of the production capacity will "disappear", which will have a negative impact not only on Bulgaria, but also on the surrounding countries - in the form of great pressure and a possible sudden jump in the price of electricity in Southeast Europe. Bulgaria has traditionally exported electricity to Greece, Serbia, Macedonia and Romania, meeting a significant part of consumption in these markets. Bulgaria is currently the largest exporter of electricity in the Balkans and the fourth largest exporter in Europe.

In the last few years, investments in the development and modernization of energy plants and infrastructure have been evident throughout the entire territory of the Balkans, which speaks of the importance of energy as a strategically important product and the Balkan area in the field of energy. It is necessary to invest about 10.5 billion euros in the development of energy infrastructure in Serbia by 2020, and investments of up to 240 billion euros are expected in the region. The Regional Energy Institute conducted a study on the development of the regional energy market. In this sector, the countries of the region are highly dependent on imported oil and gas. Therefore, energy connection is necessary, as is the development of regional infrastructure (Savković, 2007). The region needs more gas and oil pipelines for the sake of energy security, and connection in the electrical energy sector will become one of the primary goals by 2020. The biggest challenges facing the countries of Southeast Europe are: high dependence on oil and gas imports, low level of diversification of energy sources and insufficient production of energy from renewable sources. In some countries, the production of electricity from renewable sources has increased, but other countries should follow suit. Coal consumption has decreased in the region, with a constant increase in oil consumption, and the jump in the price of this energy will increasingly affect the overall economy of the Balkan countries. Therefore, strengthening the energy infrastructure and connecting it is one of the solutions for a good energy supply. Investments in Serbia will include the construction of gas infrastructure, modernization of refineries, construction of power plants for

the production of electricity, as well as investments of around 600 million euros in renewable energy sources. Of the planned 240 billion euros, which is required to be invested in the energy sector of the region, it is planned to invest about 55 billion euros in the oil sector, about 90 billion in the field of electric energy, 24 billion in the field of gas and about 20 billion in renewable sources (Savković, 2007).

The European perspective of the Balkan countries is the main factor in the development of their energy sector. The region is located in the middle of routes that connect energy suppliers (Russia, the countries of the Caucasus and the Middle East) with large energy consumers of Central and Western Europe. At the same time, the region itself is increasing its energy consumption. The energy "crossroads" can greatly benefit the countries of Southeast Europe, in terms of new investments in energy capacities and energy infrastructure.

Great world powers have always demonstrated a strategic interest in controlling the area in question, which has been called the region of Southeast Europe since 1992. At the same time, its narrower part (subregion) is called the Western Balkans in the geopolitical discourse, which includes Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro. Hegemons with their geopolitical, geosecurity and energy policies directly or indirectly manifest different paradigms of influence on the Balkans, where we prioritize the role of the Russian Federation, the United States of America and the European Union. Their positioning produces evident, direct repercussions on the economic condition and development of individual countries. Full member states of the EU undoubtedly receive numerous jurisdictions and financial support, which implies a more favorable economic status. Therefore, the determination of other creations towards European integration is essential.

The energy policy of the Russian Federation, that is, Russia, is contained in the Energy Strategy document, which defines its policy for the period up to 2020. The economic effects of the mentioned concept are reflected in the huge profit from the sale of energy products. In 2000, the Russian Government approved the main provisions of the Russian energy strategy until 2020, and in 2003 it was confirmed by the Government. The energy strategy highlights several main priorities: increasing energy efficiency, reducing the impact on the environment and sustainable development and development of energy and technological development, as well as improved efficiency and competitiveness. The Russian Federation is one of the world's two energy superpowers, rich in natural energy sources. That country is an energy superpower, because it has the largest known natural gas reserves of any country in the world, for about 50 years, the second largest coal reserves in the world, eighth in the world in terms of oil reserves, and fourth in the world in terms of electricity production, after the USA , China and Japan. Russia exports about 7 million barrels of oil per day, and the entire Middle East, by comparison, exports 20 million barrels per day. It is the largest supplier of natural gas to the EU (Simurdić, 2009).

Alternative, i.e. renewable energy sources in Russia are mostly represented by hydropower. Geothermal energy, used for heating and electricity generation in some parts of the North Caucasus and the Far East, is the most developed alternative energy source in Russia. Of the non-renewable energy sources in Russia, natural gas is the most common. In the last few years, that country has identified the natural gas sector as a sector of strategic importance and vital national interest. The share of natural gas as a basic energy source is extremely high compared to the rest of the world. Natural gas capacities are mostly under the monopoly of Gazprom, which produces 94% of Russian natural gas production. In the global context, Gazprom has 25% of the world's known gas reserves and produces about 16% of global production. In 2006, Russia was the world's largest

producer of natural gas with 22.0% of world production and the largest exporter with 22.9% of global natural gas exports (Petrović, 2007).

The main export markets for Russian natural gas are the European Union and the CIS. Russia supplies a quarter of Europe's gas consumption, mainly via transit through Ukraine (Soyuz, Bratstvo) and Belarus (Yamal - Europe gas pipeline). The main importers are Germany, as well as Ukraine, Belarus, Italy, Turkey, France and Hungary.

Russia is the largest oil producer in non-OPEC countries, and the second largest in the world after Saudi Arabia. In 2006, Russia accounted for 12.1% of global oil production and 11.6% of global oil exports. Russia is also the main transit country for oil from Kazakhstan. Russia has been conducting research under the Arctic ice, which is believed to contain reserves of 10 trillion tons of oil and gas, and has submitted a request to the UN Boundary Commission to move its borders beyond the previous 200-mile zone within the Arctic Russian sector (December 20, 2001 year) (Petrović, 2007). With 157 billion tons of coal reserves, Russia is second in the world. Russia's coal reserves are widely decentralized. The main deposit of hard coal is located in the Pekhora and Kuznets basins. The Kanc-Akhinc basin contains large deposits of brown coal. The Siberian Lena and Tunguska basins constitute largely unexplored resources. Russia has the largest oil shale reserves in Europe, the reserves amount to 35.47 billion tons of oil shale. More than 80% of oil shale reserves have been identified. Uranium exploration and development activities are mainly concentrated in three locations east of the Urals. Russia is the fourth largest producer of uranium, producing 8.2% of global production.

Russia is the fourth largest producer of electricity in the world after the USA, China and Japan. About 63% of Russia's electricity is produced in thermal power plants, 21% comes from hydropower and 16% comes from nuclear reactors. Russia exports electricity to the CIS countries, Latvia, Lithuania, China, Poland, Turkey and Finland. While production and sales are open to competition, transmission and distribution are under state control. Regarding the structure of Russian energy consumption, domestic production largely exceeds domestic needs, which is why Russia is the world's leading net exporter of energy (Simurdić, 2009).

Russia's status as an energy superpower has recently become a hot topic in the European Union. Mostly large reserves of natural gas helped it get that title without much debate. Russia was recently accused in the West, i.e. Europe and the USA, to use their natural resources as policy instruments. On the other hand, Russian officials want to remind their Western partners that even at the height of the Cold War, the Soviet Union never cut off energy supplies to the West.

The energy policy of the United States of America is determined by federal, state, and local legislation that deals with issues of energy production, distribution, and consumption. Three energy policies in the form of Laws were adopted in 1992, 2005, and 2007, which include many provisions for energy conservation and energy development, with grants and tax incentives for renewable and non-renewable energies.

Coal provided the majority of US energy needs in the 20th century. Soon the primacy of coal was taken over by oil. By 1950, oil consumption exceeded coal consumption. Coal is still far cheaper than oil. The greatest use of oil came with the development of the automobile. US oil reserves and production increased until 1970 and then began to decline. By 2005, imports were twice as large as production. The abundance of oil in California, Texas, Oklahoma as well as Canada and Mexico, combined with low costs, ease of transportation, and the use of internal combustion engines, led to increased oil consumption. The demand for oil in America was growing rapidly. That is why the import of oil has increased sharply, American foreign policy is inevitably drawn into the Middle East, where there are huge reserves of fossil fuels that it needs for further sustainable

economic development. Lessons learned from the 1973 oil crisis, the federal energy law of 1978 introduced mandatory strategic oil reserves, gave more importance to alternative energy sources, and took measures to plan energy supply from multiple and mutually independent sources.

In the USA, in various ways, they are trying to find a solution to reduce energy consumption, because due to economic development, the increase in the standard of living, consumption is increasing from year to year, and they are aware that energy from fossil fuels is energy from limited resources, which are increasingly consumed and supplies are less and less, they are also aware of what can happen when there is a sudden drop in fossil fuel production and in the meantime no satisfactory alternative solutions are found. Because of the above, solutions are being proposed in the USA to reduce the use of fossil fuel cars, that is, to increase the use of electric cars, so that 20% of energy is obtained from biofuels and 20% from solar energy. In the USA, measures are being taken to increase the efficiency of energy use and reduce consumption. That is why more and more money is allocated from the budget for research and development related to renewable energy. As can be seen from the above, the USA is energy dependent on imports, so they are forced to find the best solutions for reliable and safe energy supply through their energy policy, to reduce their energy dependence on imports, i.e. to increase their energy security , especially regarding the supply of oil and natural gas.

The European Union must solve important challenges, such as the increasing dependence on energy imports, which leads to a continuous increase in energy costs. In response to these challenges, the EU tried to solve by adopting the Energy Policy Action Plan for Europe (EPE) from 2007.

Through the Action Plan, it was concluded that we must strive for: greater security of supply; ensuring the competitiveness of European economies and the availability of affordable energy and promoting environmental sustainability and the fight against climate change. The increase in energy efficiency and the use of renewable sources will increase the security of energy supply by causing a drop in projected consumption, keeping prices stable (higher availability and lower demand) and reducing harmful gas emissions.

European energy policies will firmly commit the European Union to a low consumption, economy based on safer, more competitive and sustainable energy. Priority energy goals include ensuring the smooth functioning of the internal energy market, security of supply, reduction of harmful gas emissions due to energy production or consumption, and the ability of the EU to have a unique position on the international stage. The document "Energy Policy for Europe" was adopted by the European Parliament on January 10, 2007. This document is a strategic overview of the European energy situation, it represents a complete set of European energy policy measures.

The European energy policy is recognized as the most effective response to the energy challenges faced by all member states. The European Union is trying to establish a single internal energy market and it would be developed at Community level, to ensure that consumers have the opportunity to choose a supplier, with fair and competitive prices. However, as pointed out in the Information on the prospects of the internal energy market and strict competition in the gas and electricity sector, there are obstacles that prevent the economy and European consumers from fully taking advantage of the opening of the gas and electricity markets. Ensuring an effective internal energy market would be crucial. One of the goals of the EU energy policy is to create a competitive market. The internal energy market essentially depends on cross-border energy trade. However, such trade is often difficult due to disparities between national technical standards and differences in network capacities. The goal of the EU is to create a unique European energy network. The Priority Interconnection Plan emphasizes the importance of financial and political support for the

implementation of infrastructure, which have been identified as essential, and the proposal of European coordinators for monitoring the most problematic priority projects. With its energy policy, the European Union is determined to persevere in its fight against energy poverty by developing a charter of energy buyers. The charter will primarily encourage the implementation of aid programs for the most vulnerable citizens in the event of rising energy prices, as well as improving the level of consumer information about the existence of various suppliers and supply options.

One of the main objectives of the EU policy is to ensure a safe and reliable energy supply. Minimizing the EU's vulnerability to imports, supply shortfalls, possible energy crises and uncertainty about future supply is a clear priority. This uncertainty is increasingly problematic for member states that depend on a single gas supplier. One of the key goals of the EU's energy policy is to reduce emissions of harmful gases, committing to reduce its own emissions by at least 20 percent by 2022. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions involves using less energy and using more clean energy.

The European Union is not able to achieve the goal of secure, competitive and sustainable energy on its own. In order to do this, it requires the engagement and cooperation of both developed and developing countries, energy consumers and producers, and transit countries. In order to ensure efficiency and coherence, it is crucial that Member States and the EU are able to have a single position on international energy issues. The EU's relations with consumer countries (such as the USA, India, Brazil and China) and producer countries (Russia, Norway, OPEC countries and Algeria, for example) and transit countries (such as Ukraine) are of primary importance from the aspect of geopolitical security. and economic stability. The European Union will therefore strive to develop transparent, predictable and reciprocal energy partnerships with these countries, especially with neighboring countries. The European Union is committed to helping developing countries implement decentralized energy services that are cheap, reliable and sustainable.

Conclusion

To ensure the economic development of every country, energy is of prime importance. It has become strategically extremely important, especially for economically developed countries and world hegemons. The world's leading states could not exert all their power without energy, because all military modern technology would be unusable without energy. That is why energy is especially important for the great powers and they will use all their power to ensure that energy is always available to them in sufficient quantities and under the most favorable and safe supply conditions. The region of Southeast Europe, i.e. the Balkans as a geostrategically important planetary area, represents the cradle of Europe in its cultural, historical and civilizational development. From a geographical and geostrategic point of view, the Balkans represent the "geopolitical hub" of East and West, the great door to the east and west, north and south of Europe, the "chains of the world", as some of our famous geographers would say. The Balkans are not rich in energy sources. Oil and natural gas reserves are rarely found in the Balkan countries, so the need for these energy sources is mostly covered by imports. However, the geographical position of the Balkans is outstanding for the purpose of transporting energy raw materials from energy sources in the Caspian region, Central Asia, the Middle East and Russia to the EU market.

We look at the energy policy of the major powers in the Balkans in the context of their overall influence on this region. For them, the energy policy in the Balkans is a part of the general energy policy in Europe and global policy, and at the same time it is a means to realize the overall interests

in the region of Southeast Europe and the European Union. Therefore, the energy policy in the Balkans is not an isolated conglomerate of determinations and strategies of great powers exclusively towards the Balkans, but part of the doctrine of the world masters with permanent implications for the wider environment of Asia and Africa. Is this way, the set hypotheses were proven and the scientific and social justification of research on the current topic was confirmed.

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