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RECONSIDERING ECONOMIC COAL RESOURCES IN DRAFTING ENERGY STRATEGIES. THE CASE OF ROMANIA

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Abstract

Global energy demand is following a strong upward trend. As highlighted by the latest analyses the overall black coal resources are able to satisfy human needs for more than 200 years including the particular case of intensive exploitation. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA) renewable energy and natural gas resources have encouraging perspectives for further expansion. Even so coal will continue to cover almost a quarter of primary energy resources needs. The EU is currently developing an energy policy which covers all energy sources from fossil fuels, to nuclear and renewable energy.

This paper analyses the circumstances in which Romania has revised in several stages its own energy strategy in order to reconsider the particular place of coal exploitation. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the most important economic issues which motivates (or not) the insertion of such resource within the national strategy. On the one hand we might take into consideration that Romanian coal deposits are located in complex geo-mining conditions, while mineralogical features which influence their quality are placed at the lower limit. On the other hand, from an economic and energy perspective, national resources of black coal are becoming marginal sources for the production of electricity. Therefore, excluding renewable energy sources, the lignite is the only domestic resource able to generate primary energy which might considerably support electricity supply for consumption for the next 20-40 years.

Key words: costs and benefits, coal deposits, energy policies and strategies, exhaustible resources

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