

Announcements that the Czech company "Alta" is interested in the construction of thermal power plant "Stavalj" near Sjenica again provoked controversy whether coal driven power plants for electricity production should be constructed in Serbia or primarily focus on electricity production from renewable energy sources.

Expert public has no dilemma regarding this issue. Renewable energy sources should be developed to the most possible extent, however we should not give up thermal power plants because there are not enough capacities in Serbia that might replace the production of electricity from coal.

- Feasibility study for the construction of thermal power plant "Stavalj" of about 200 megawatts capacity was developed seven to eight years ago. Therefore, it is not about the new initiative but the project that was being developed for a long time. There is a coal mine "Stavalj" and with the expansion of its capacity the sufficient quantities of coal for the electricity production in thermal power plant "Stavalj" would be provided - says for "Danas" Slobodan Ruzic, a former Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Mining and Energy and the Director of consulting company Energy Saving Group.

He added that the construction of the thermal power plant would be a "home run" for the mine too as it would maintain the current job positions and also create conditions for the opening of new positions with the expansion of production.

- Conditions for the construction of thermal power plant in the area exist. It only takes to expand mine capacities and thus provide sufficient quantities of coal for the electricity production. If there is indeed a serious interest of the Czech company for the implementation of the project, it is definitely a good thing for the stability of the power system of Serbia. Namely, not a single new production facility has been constructed for a long time. When it comes to existing production facilities, some of them are outdated and require revitalization. Considering the situation, the construction of 200 megawatts thermal power plants is very good and useful thing which should be welcomed. Of course, it should be equipped to comply with all environmental standards that exist in developed European countries - says our interlocutor.

He added that comments that Serbia should not build thermal power plants and focus primarily on RES are completely incompetent and meaningless.

- All those supporting such attitude do not know the real situation in the Serbian energy sector. As a consultant, I mainly work with projects in the field of renewable energy, and it is completely true that Serbia should develop in RES to a large extent. However, it does not imply giving up the construction of thermal power plants. Simply, there is enough coal in Serbia and it is logical to use it for electricity production for at least next 30 years. If we

would cease to produce electricity from coal and only focus on RES, Serbia would face electricity supply shortages and significantly higher electricity import. In other words, electricity from renewable energy sources is too expensive and cannot be an alternative to electricity produced from coal. When it comes to Serbia, alternative to coal can only be nuclear energy. It would be very interesting to hear a comment from various environmental organizations that oppose to construction of thermal power plants regarding the fact they could only be replaced with nuclear power plants. Thus, the conclusion is that thermal power plants are necessary for Serbia, but should only be constructed taking into consideration the environmental protection – Ruzic says.

Ljubodrag Savic, a professor at the Faculty of Economics in Belgrade shares his opinion – Not a single power production facility has been built in Serbia for the last 40 years. Accordingly, especially if it is intended to implement reindustrialization, new electricity production facilities are needed and to that end, the construction of TPP “Stavalj” is extremely important” says our source.

According to him, the production of Stavalj mine would be increased and its stagnation prevented. In addition, new conditions would be created not only for keeping the existing job positions but also for the opening of new ones.

– On one hand, all consumers in Serbia would benefit from this project as another production facility would be constructed that would enable uninterrupted power supply, and on the other hand, this investment would contribute to development of Sjenica and surrounding area – says Savic.