

For Boro Krsic, an electrician at the Stanari Thermal Power Plant (TPP) in northern Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), working at the plant makes him proud. “I wish I could be younger,” he told Xinhua, wishing he could work there for more years.

The Stanari TPP, built by China Dongfang Electric Corporation (DEC), is located in Stanari municipality, 150 kilometers north of Sarajevo, the BiH capital. It is also the first power plant in Europe built by a Chinese company.

The plant was successfully connected to the grid for the first time in January of 2016. Up to October this year, overall on-grid power generated by the plant had amounted to 7.34 billion kilowatt-hours. And the electricity generated is mainly sold to European markets, including Croatia and Germany.

Energy-saving, emission-reducing technology

The Stanari TPP went into operation in January 2016. However, it was not until a year later did local residents learn that the plant had started generating electricity, as they did not see smoke from the chimney or hear the roar of the machines.

The plant uses lignite, a low-quality coal produced locally, which emits a lot of pollutants if burned in a conventional way. In order to protect the local environment and prevent pollution, DEC proposed to adopt the energy-saving emission-reducing technology from China — 300 MW circulating fluidized bed boiler technology.

“This is a boiler specially developed for burning inferior coal and dealing with huge changes in coal quality. Compared with traditional power station boilers, this kind of boiler has low emission of pollutants and good adaptability to the local lignite,” said Ji Hongchun, deputy manager of DEC’s Stanari project technology department.

Aleksandar Milic is technical director of the plant. He said the factory is not only efficient but also environmentally friendly. With the 300 MW circulating fluidized bed boiler technology independently developed by the Chinese company, Stanari TPP meets or exceeds the European Union standards in controlling sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide and dust emissions.

“The Chinese helped us build one of the best power plants in Europe,” said Milic.

Pride for all

Every employee at Stanari TPP is proud of the plant.

For Krsic, his job at the plant now means better payment and improved working conditions than his previous one. He is also able to renovate his house and travel more.

Krsic's Chinese connection is there for everyone to see. At his home, there is a mini folding screen with panda images sitting on a shelf and a calendar featuring Chinese paper-cuts hanging on the wall. Krsic is very happy that his son also works at the same company.

Dusan Panic, mayor of Stanari municipality, which has a population of about 5,000, is all praise for the plant.

Over four years, the mayor said, Stanari had spent 20 million convertible marks (11.41 million U.S. dollars) on the municipality's infrastructure alone, and all of the investment came from the power plant.

Without Stanari TPP, Stanari would still be a village, he said. Thanks to the plant, average salary in Stanari city is way higher than the country average.

This year, Stanari TPP is expected to generate 8.8 million convertible marks (about 5.02 million U.S. dollars) to Stanari municipality, Panic told Xinhua, adding "The income enables every citizen to enjoy free education and medical care."

The plant provides jobs for nearly 900 people. The average monthly salary in Stanari is now 1,260 convertible marks (about 719 U.S. dollars), higher than the average 926 convertible marks (about 528 U.S. dollars) in BiH.

It is then no wonder that in Stanari, Chinese technicians have become very popular.

"Walking down the street, we are often treated to a drink by a local," said Zhu Weilin, a boiler engineer from the DEC. Zhu is a member of DEC's current operation and maintenance team in Stanari.

Marko Lazarevic, chief operation engineer of Stanari TPP, said many of the local technicians had become personal friends with Chinese technicians. "Chinese engineers are very professional," he noted.

Ivan Krstic, the chief maintenance engineer, now uses chopsticks expertly and has become a fan of Sichuan hot pot, a unique and popular cooking method in China, prepared with a simmering pot of soup stock and containing a variety of ingredients and foodstuffs.

"I am Chinese," he claimed.

Source: xinhuanet.com