

Two new studies on harmfulness of coal were presented in Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Center for Ecology and Energy from Tuzla and Center for Environment from Banja Luka have decided to present the citizens with the hidden costs of using this fossil fuel in power stations to generate electricity. The authors of the study were dr.sc. Abdel Đozić a health expert and Svetlana Cenić, a renowned economic analyst.

The study "Presence of heavy metals in soil and locally produced food in communities around the ash dumps in Divkovići/Plane at Tuzla coal power plant" has clearly shown that the soil and water around ash dumps of the coal power plant Tuzla are contaminated with very dangerous heavy metals.

Džemila Agić, Center for Ecology and Energy: "The ash dumps of the coal power plant Tuzla have been killing residents in local communities of Divkovići, Plane and Šićki for decades now. Power plant Tuzla has only in 2011 started contributing to Environmental Fund for this pollution. However, the local community still receives a very small portion of these funds. And, whatever the amount is, how do you get compensated for the death of loved ones or for getting cancer?"

The study "Investments in past or how coal is burning our property and health" is giving broader economic picture on using coal for generating electricity. In this analysis the emphasis is given to the so called externalized costs, the costs that are not usually mentioned when new coal power plants are being promoted.

Svetlana Cenić, economist: "When the energy industry is presented to the public, the truth is usually bent, especially when we are talking about coal. People must be told where their money is going. It must be clearly explained that if you go for cheap energy from coal now, you will later pay more for pollution related medical treatments, destroyed agriculture land, water, roads, subsidized oil and concession agreements for our natural resources".

This meeting was held a couple of days after the Climate Summit in Paris, where a clear message was sent that the era of fossil fuels is coming to an end. Center for Environment warned that even though Bosnia and Herzegovina currently does not have a commitment to decrease greenhouse gas emissions, we have to follow global trends, and that is the removal of thermal power plants on fossil fuels, whose emissions will most likely be taxed.

Igor Kalaba, Center for Environment: "Investing in the energy sector is extremely long term. The decisions that we make now will impact the next generations. In Tuzla and other polluted cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina you can easily see the reality of energy sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Climate change is one of the biggest challenges for human kind. We have to be prepared. It requires complete energy strategies, at every level, lined with Paris agreement and other findings."

Energy efficiency, renewable energy sources, decentralization of electric energy production and change in the way how we use energy, together with the development of new technologies can prepare us for the future which is very uncertain. With fossil fuels there is no uncertainty, only a poisoned environment and catastrophic climate change.

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