

The current Slovenian national strategy envisages three possible coal phase-out deadline: 2033, 2038 and 2042. According to GZS, the 2033 deadline is not based on a comprehensive plan to replace those resources and providing stability to the electricity system, which could lead the country into a state of energy poverty. Indeed, the high dependency of Slovenia on energy imports could be detrimental in a crisis, which is why imports should be kept under 15-20 per cent.

The Strategic council for energy transition, a body established in 2019 by the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GZS), believes that closing the Šoštanj thermal power plant, as well as the nearby Velenje coal mine by 2033 is a premature decision and the appropriate deadline should be somewhere between 2037 and 2040, similar to what is planned in Germany.

“Before the phase-out, decision-makers will have to take a number of other actions, including extending the lifetime of the Krško nuclear power station, until 2043 and draft by 2025 the documents needed to build a second reactor,” said GZS president Boštjan Gorjup. In the meantime, during a visit to both sites, the President of the National Council of Slovenia, Alojz Kovšca noted that although the mines are closing, there are enough new opportunities in the world for further development and transfer of this Slovenian coal wealth.

“The export of knowledge is actually the greatest potential in the future and I believe that with the vision and goals presented to me at the meeting at the Velenje Coal Mine and the Šoštanj Thermal Power Plant, such thinking can be realised,” he said after his visit. “Of course, the State with the relevant institutions will also have to be more actively involved in this. The process of introducing the regions, coordinated by the National Council, is approaching the final phase and the introduction of the new SAŠA province may represent a new step in the right direction of realising this unique business opportunity.”

The management of the Velenje Coal Mine presented to the President of the National Council the current situation in which the Velenje Coal Mine finds itself, related to the issue of restructuring and closure of the coal mine

“Regardless of which year the cessation of coal use will be adopted in the national strategy for the exit from coal and restructuring of the coal regions in accordance with the principles of fair transition, we must be aware that the Velenje Coal Mine needs a minimum of 15 years to successfully rehabilitate and close the coal mine,” he said. “Together with the owner, we will actively look for suitable solutions that will be acceptable to all parties and will include social dialogue and a fair transition to a carbon-free society.”

The director of the company Premogovnik Velenje, Aleš Logar highlighted that

Coal phase-out in Slovenia by 2033 is premature according to Chamber of Commerce and Industry

documentation is being prepared for the extension of the concession for coal mining in the Šaleška Valley, which expires in January next year.

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