

Bukinje is a few kilometers away from Tuzla and is located at the entrance to the city. According to the 2013 census, the settlement, which houses a house and a few residential buildings, has just over 600 inhabitants. In 2020, 38 inhabitants died in Bukinje, most of them with cancer, says the president of the local community, Goran Stijak. He adds that the average age of the dead in the settlement is around 50 years.

New block 7 TPP Tuzla

The construction of Unit 7 is planned within the existing Tuzla Thermal Power Plant. It is financed by a loan from the Chinese Import and Export Bank (CEXIM) in the amount of EUR 641 million. Elektroprivreda BiH announced on October 21 that the land on which the block will be built is almost completely ready for delivery to a Chinese investor. The value of the works started in November 2019, they point out in Elektroprivreda, is almost 19 million marks (9.5 million euros), and the contractor is BH, a consortium of three BiH companies. Stijak adds that the residents are afraid of what will happen when Block 7 is built in the Tuzla Thermal Power Plant, considering that there is no desulphurization at the previous plants, as well as that the landfills from the Thermal Power Plant are neglected. Sulfur particles from the Tuzla Thermal Power Plant affect the health of almost half a million inhabitants of Tuzla Canton. Data from the Tuzla Canton Public Health Institute show that polluted air in Tuzla in 2018 caused 29 percent of deaths from strokes, 20 percent of deaths from lung cancer, 31 percent of bronchitis in adults and 23 percent of bronchitis in children. Many of these diseases, according to the World Health Organization, are caused by harmful particles that are released by coal-fired power plants.

Why is there no desulfurization of TPP Tuzla?

The long-term mayor of Tuzla, Jasmin Imamovic, claims that the city is doing a lot to make the air cleaner, such as giving incentives for citizens to stop heating with coal. He says that they tried to influence the management of the Thermal Power Plant and Elektroprivreda BiH to install a desulphurization device. The director of the Tuzla Thermal Power Plant, Izet Džananović, did not want to answer RFE's questions about why no desulphurization devices were installed, believing that the answer was in Elektroprivreda BiH. On the website of Elektroprivreda BiH, the last published report on environmental protection refers to 2018. It is written there that in that year the Tuzla Thermal Power Plant produced 3,207 GWh (gigawatt hours) of electricity, and that almost 3 and a half million tons of coal were used for that amount of energy. That year, according to the same report, 90,153 tons of sulfur oxide were released, which is considered to be one of the main causes of smog.

Energy Community against the construction of Block 7 of TPP Tuzla

The Energy Community, which implements European Union (EU) energy rules in its latest report, published on November 30th, says eight cases have been filed against Bosnia and Herzegovina for breaches of obligations and laws in almost all areas covered by the agreement establishing the European Energy Community. One of the key problems for the Energy Community is that it continues with the activities on the construction of Block 7 of the Thermal Power Plant in Tuzla at a time when EU countries are trying to give up energy whose source is coal. The financing of Block 7 comes from a loan from the Chinese Import and Export Bank (CEXIM), and the Government of the Federation of BiH guarantees the loan to Elektroprivreda BiH, which it owns. The guarantee was signed in November 2019 by the Federal Minister of Finance, Jelka Milicevic. After signing the guarantee, the Secretariat of the Energy Community and representatives of the Federation of BiH suspended negotiations on the planned construction of the Block 7 power plant in Tuzla. The Energy Community believes that this guarantee violated the rules on state aid, and therefore filed a complaint against Bosnia and Herzegovina. The issue of state aid is a formal issue within the Energy Community, but as they claim, the problem is that the whole of Europe is trying to “separate itself from coal”, and the Energy Community is calling for the use of renewable energy sources. The European Union plans to close all thermal power plants by 2050 at the latest, but much earlier. According to the Energy Community, Bosnia and Herzegovina will not achieve the 2020 target of 40 percent use of renewable energy sources. Denial of voting rights in the Energy Community, and denial of European Union funds for assistance, could be some of the sanctions that Bosnia and Herzegovina could bear for violating this and other rules of the Energy Community. A report by the World Health Organization, published in 2017, states that Bosnia and Herzegovina is the most polluted country in Europe. BiH, as stated, has 231 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants due to the high level of pollution. Thus, BiH is in second place, according to the World Health Organization. The first is North Korea with 238 deaths per 100,000 people.

Source: slobodnaevropa.org