

Croatia is planning an overhaul of 50-year-old coal-fired thermal power plant TPP Plomin 1 while at the same time many European Union countries are working on coal phase-out, environmental organizations Zelena akcija (ZA) and Zelena Istra have warned. It is disappointing that state power utility Hrvatska elektroprivreda (HEP) and the government are still counting on coal as an important energy source in the long term, says Bernard Ivčić from ZA. The two organizations have recently filed a lawsuit against the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, demanding that the environmental permit issued for TPP Plomin 1 be revoked due to the absence of an environmental impact assessment that would justify an extension of the power plant's lifespan.

The ministry, for its part, said that such an assessment was not necessary because the planned modernization of TPP Plomin 1 would have a positive impact on the environment. The plaintiffs, however, rejected the ministry's argument, insisting that the plant's re-commissioning, even if it is modernized, would result in an additional impact on the environment that must be assessed. No planned modernization will eliminate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that would result from the plant's re-commissioning, according to Ivčić.

ZA has also warned that HEP wants to extend the lifespan of TPP Plomin 1 by 15-20 years, and that the ministry is trying to enable this.

Croatia urgently needs a coal phase-out plan, ZA said, and called on authorities to abandon TPP Plomin 1 entirely and prepare a TPP Plomin 2 shutdown over the next five years. The country should urgently initiate a transition to renewable energy sources, according to ZA, which is a member of the global network of environmental organizations Friends of the Earth.

The first hearing in the case against the ministry was held in Rijeka on February 25, and ZA's lawyer said at the time that the court's decision was expected in eight days.

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