

Despite numerous environmental donations, the largest polluters in the region are in Serbia, EU appalled

At the level of individual thermal power plants, the largest pollutants are in Serbia – the Kostolac B thermal power plant in central Serbia, whose sulfur dioxide emissions were as much as 14 times higher (113,913 tonnes) than allowed by the National Plan for that plant, followed by the thermal power plant Nikola Tesla B, which emitted 89,045 tons of sulfur dioxide last year.

Kostolac B itself emitted more sulfur dioxide than allowed for the entire region, despite being the only thermal power plant in the region to have a new desulphurisation plant – allegedly commissioned in July 2017, the report said. a transfers RSE.

“Serbia raised a loan from the Chinese state, that is, it paid a Chinese company to install a desulphurisation in Kostolac B 1 and 2, which is two blocks. However, for unknown reasons, this installation has been standing there for almost two years. It went through a test period and after two attempts to obtain permits, it did not get them, so the plant does not work, ”said Zvezdan Kalmar of the non-governmental Center for Ecology and Sustainable Development (CEKOR).

Since almost no steps have been taken to reduce harmful emissions, the Energy Community has the ability to initiate infringement proceedings, Kalmar explains to RSE.

“Electricity, as a commodity that can be traded across borders, if produced under such circumstances, actually causes unfair competition to EU producers. And in that context, I can expect the EU to come up with the idea of imposing some ‘border’ fees – where electricity from this region would have to pay extra penalties because it is produced under unfair conditions to European producers, ”he pointed out.

According to Kalmar, the European Union, as a contracting party, is appalled by the pollution data, but also aware that Serbia, Kosovo, Northern Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina have been warned for years, but also financially assisted.

“Some countries have been given money, donations through IPA funds (the EU grant fund), to prepare projects. It is only complete irresponsibility on the part of the decision makers, ie budget managers in the Western Balkan countries, because there is money, but it is not used – that is, it is not directed to that side. A flagship example is Kosovo, both Serbia and Bosnia and other countries where it is actually constantly expected that someone will make a donation, give someone a gift, instead of forcing operators to pay for it from their own funds, ”says Kalmar.

The report said that since 2016, when pollution from 16 regional thermal power plants caused the untimely death of nearly 3,900 people, some of the pollutants have increased their emissions.

“The tagging is spreading not only locally but also across the whole territory across borders.

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These pollutions are destroying health and causing the whole complex of the disease, because it simply cannot separate sulfur dioxide from heavy metals. You have a deadly heavy metal cocktail there - mercury and lead and radon, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide. Ash removal from the mine also creates pollution with silica dust that flies miles away. All this causes cancer, cardiovascular disease, asthma, and in extreme cases can cause acute conditions that can even lead to death," warns Kalmar.

The Bankwatch report calls on polluters to carry out environmental assessments by the end of 2020, complete tenders and provide financial arrangements to procure desulphurisation equipment. It is also proposed to reduce the working hours of plants that do not meet environmental requirements, and to ensure that National Pollution Reduction Plans are implemented.

Source: 021.rs