

The negotiations between HEP and the Japanese Marubeni about the construction of Plomin C are late and they will be perpetuated by a contract not earlier than in Autumn this year, the construction of the HPP Ombla near Dubrovnik has never been more up in the air, the investment of the gas thermal power plant in Osijek is also in its infancy, and the citizens have opposed to the coal-fired thermal power plant in Ploče. When it comes to the construction of new electricity generation capacities, Croatia have not gone far, being in the same place as two, three or five years ago.

Already now, the situation is very alarming, because by 2020, as much as 1.200 MW of capacity installed in old power plants must be decommissioned, whereat Croatia Power utility HEP possesses a total capacity of 3.654 megawatts. At that, in the following five years, with the economic recovery, the demand for energy will also be increasing, so the calculations show that we will be lacking, in fact, a total of around two thousand megawatts of generation capacities.

Even if Croatia succeeds in putting Plomin C in operation in 2019, which is unlikely, its capacity will amount to 500 megawatts, which is the capacity that the gas power plant in Osijek should also have, this plant being a big investment of the Minister of Economy, Ivan Vrdoljak. With all previous »refusals« coming from biodiversity experts, the HPP Ombla can hardly be expected to be put into operation by then, whereat its capacity would not even be 65 MW. In other words, altogether, even if it is executed in time - it will not be sufficient to substitute 1.200 MW of power plants which must stop operating in the following five years, plus around one thousand megawatts more, which is the capacity of new facilities that we will need because of increased consumption. As an illustration, we need new capacities with the power of four TPPs Plomin C, as reported by local medias.

Should referendums also prevent the construction of the Plomin or Osijek power plants, in 2020, Croatia will only have Plomin 2, two blocks in TPP-HP Zagreb, two minor blocks in PP-HP Zagreb and the new block in the TPP Sisak. Because of the new norms, i.e. the limit values of harmful gases emission, as from the first day of 2018, the TPPs Sisak and Rijeka, Plomin 1, TPP-HP Osijek and some other, minor, will have to stop operation - a total of 1.200 MW will be shut down«, the energy expert Marijan Kalea warns in »HEP News«, wondering how, with what money, we Croatia is going to compensate for the lost domestic production through imports.

- Are we aware that, already today, it is too late for an executive decision on the unconditional beginning of construction of a new large thermal power plant - in Plomin, Ploče, Slavonski Brod, Osijek or somewhere else. Such power plant should have already been in operation, and not just awaiting possible construction, Kalea stresses, commenting

that the Law on Strategic Investments has increased the speed of making decisions and issuing permits, but this is not enough.

He also comments on the advocates of facilities using renewable energy resources, the Sun and wind, who emphasize that, in terms of the installed capacity of plants using renewable energy resources, per capita, we are among the worst-ranked in Europe. The energy expert says that the same is also true when it comes to the coal-fired power plants. He gives the calculation that Croatia have the TPPs Plomin 1 and 2, with the total capacity of around 300 thousand kilowatt-hours, and 4.3 million inhabitants, which means 70 watts per capita. Germany has 49 coal-fired thermal power plants with the capacity of 41 thousand megawatts and 80.6 billion inhabitants, which means 510 watts per capita. Only in the last year, they imported 850 million tons of stone coal, whereas Croatia imported around one million.

HEP's »latest« power plant, at the same time the only one that has been built from the ground up since the beginning of Croatian independence, is the hydro power plant Lešće, with the capacity of 42 megawatts, commissioned five years ago after five years of construction. Today, its production amounts to less than two percent of the total domestic electricity production in HEP's 26 hydro power plants and seven thermal power plants. Except for Lešće, no other hydro power plants or thermal power plants have been built, but there have only been works aimed at upgrading and reconstructing the old ones. TPP Rijeka is almost 40 years old and, according to the data from two years ago, it generates only 40 GWh of electricity, which is less than half a percent of the total domestic production. Croatia »newest« thermal power plant is TPP Plomin 2, which is fifteen years old in fact, whereas the 46-year old Plomin 1, the same as Rijeka, will have to be decommissioned in few years.

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