

The thermal power plant (TE) Pljevlja already spent 20 thousand working hours at the end of last year, which were allowed to it in the period from 2018 to 2023 by the decision of the Ministerial Council of the Energy Community (EC) from 2016, and the ecological reconstruction project has not started yet.

While experts warn that it is unprofitable to invest so much money in the Thermal Power Plant, which they claim will work for several more years due to EU regulations, Elektroprivreda says that they are not considering suspending the project, which was signed with a consortium a year ago, Bemax, BB Solar by Blaž Đukanović (son of President Milo Đukanović) and the Podgorica company Permonite. Fifty-four million euros of difficult ecological reconstruction of TPP Pljevlja could end up “in smoke” due to strict regulations of the European Union and thus become a new case of throwing state money.

Energy expert Aleksandar Kovacevic from Belgrade says that the investment can easily become useless if there is a more complex breakdown in the existing installations. He states that having in mind the experience of a huge number of power plants with this technology and the time needed to build new facilities, the need for security of supply and other legal, economic and political circumstances, it can be said that the optimal time of TPP Pljevlja would be until the end of 2023, with the possibility of being used for some time as a reserve facility in the regional market.

TPP Pljevlja is part of an “opt-out” mechanism that allows EC members to exempt certain coal-fired power plants from the regime of application of the EU Directive on large combustion plants, which prescribes the reduction of emissions of gases and other substances harmful to the environment. Due to exceeding the allowed working hours for TPPs, on April 20, the EC initiated a procedure for resolving disputes against Montenegro for violating the Large Fireplaces Directive.

“After 20,000 hours, plants can only remain in operation if they meet the (stricter) standards of the Industrial Emissions Directive. That is not the case with TPP Pljevlja “, warned the EC.

In mid-May, the government adopted a conclusion requiring the Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism and the Agency for Nature and Environmental Protection to suspend all ongoing proceedings regarding the revision of the TPP’s integrated operating permit, so that it could continue to operate while negotiating with the EC.

In 2017, the government committed itself to shutting down the Thermal Power Plant

Kovačević explains that the EU Directive on Industrial Emissions prescribes the application

of the Best Available Technology (BAT) standard in accordance with EU regulation 2017/1442.

Considering that, as he adds, TPP Pljevlja spent 20,000 working hours before the end of 2020, the question comes down to assessing whether the (legally) shut down TPP Pljevlja can be reconstructed in order to meet the conditions from the regulations. He explains that the regulations contain a condition for the emission of various pollutants in the air and a condition for the efficiency of the facility, ie how much electricity the facility delivers in relation to the fuel energy consumed. Both conditions must be met simultaneously. Kovacevic states that the planned project of "ecological reconstruction" is based on the application of a cheaper solution with the use of calcium carbonate and significantly increased own energy consumption. Kovacevic reminds that the EU recently announced the tightening of regulations in the next 12 months, and if the reconstruction of TPP Pljevlja would last 12 or more months, that new facility would have to meet stricter conditions that will be valid then.

The situation is complicated by breakdowns, the overhaul is taking longer and longer

According to Kovačević, the TPP had very good and very bad years, and he notes that the duration of annual overhauls is quite long. This year's overhaul of the thermal power plant was supposed to last until June 1, but it was extended due to a fault in the generator. Kovačević notes that the TPP employs qualified staff and that it is strategically important to preserve this industrial potential until the moment when the staff can be employed in another similar facility. He adds that the location of TPP Pljevlja has a valuable electricity infrastructure and this location is of strategic importance for the regional electricity supply.

Ecological reconstruction does not include overhaul

The MP of the Movement for Changes, Branko Radulović, says for "Vijesti" that it depends on the will of others how long TPP Pljevlja will work "certainly not for 10, 20 or 30 years". Elektroprivreda told "Vijesti" that they did not think of terminating the contract on the ecological reconstruction of the TPP. They say that the works have not started yet and that the preparation of the camp for DEC workers in the TPP circle is in progress.

"Having in mind that these are complex and extensive works, it is necessary to make the necessary preparations for performing them in advance." The project documentation is being prepared – the main project according to which the works will be performed –, said from EPCG.

When asked if they are afraid that they will spend money on ecological reconstruction, and

that the criteria in EU directives will be tightened, so they will certainly pay fees for environmental pollution, EPCG answered that the risk is unlikely “because the project is carried out according to the best available techniques and in accordance with the latest recommendations of EU regulations ”.

“When it comes to the levels of emissions of pollutants from TPPs, quality technical solutions, application of the best available techniques in the project and the quality of work performed guarantee the fulfillment of the requirements of EU directives,” states EPCG. The contract with the contractor, as they add, provides for legal protection of investors in case of non-fulfillment of the project goals.

Radulović says that previous scientific research on CO2 emission reduction has no economic justification and therefore it is necessary to perform a full analysis of the justification of the survival of TPP Pljevlja, harmonize positions with the Energy Community, agree with neighbors on water use, adopt quality strategy, create all assumptions and start large investments. into “green” energy.

He warns that the price of electricity produced from thermal power plants will be significantly higher in relation to large hydropower plants, and especially in relation to solar ones. He reminds that Saudi Arabia is contracting the construction of a new 3.7 GW photovoltaic field with the purchase of electricity of only \$ 10.4 per MWh.

Source: vijesti.me