

At the International Conference on Climate Change, held on December 12, President Vucic pointed out that Serbia will become a low-carbon society by 2050. Less reliance on coal and oil derivatives “will improve air quality and have a positive impact on human health,” the Serbian president said. The new strategy was presented without fences and is timed, but far from the fact that the local environmental movements can already develop a green flag of victory.

- About 60 percent of our energy sources are based on coal. We have a stock of lignite for at least another 30 years and we will not and cannot give up that resource – says prof. Dr. Branko Kovacevic, President of the Supervisory Board of EPS and President of the Academy of Engineering Sciences of Serbia.

The trouble is that lignite from the Kostolac and Kolubara basins sleeps “evil spirits” of harmful and even carcinogenic compounds and particles, which are released by combustion in thermal power plants, heating plants, individual furnaces ... That is why the energy landscape of Serbia, especially during the heating season, seems as if painted with “fifty shades of black.” We became collectively aware of that at the end of last year, when Belgrade, Valjevo, Nis, Novi Sad, Kosjeric, Smederevo were among the cities with the greatest air pollution in the reports of specialized international sites. That the state knew in which even before this internet report the rabbit is lying on the bush, Prime Minister Ana Brnabic also admitted. As she recently stated, the problem of air pollution in Serbia has been for decades, but work is being done to overcome it.

The next few decades, therefore, will pass in balancing between preserving the health of the population and the necessity of the survival of the economy. This is irresistibly reminiscent of Hamlet’s dilemma from the current wave of kovid 19. However, there is no vaccine that would protect us from polluted air, nor will we acquire collective immunity to harmful particles. And that is why there is every chance that protective masks in Serbia will survive the pandemic. At least until cleaner air depends on wind, but on alternative energy sources that will suppress fossil fuels.

- Cities are suffocated by traffic pollution, public transport and communal transport must be converted to electric vehicles. We have also abandoned the production of biomass, which is also an energy source. We also have geothermal waters in Vojvodina and in the south of Serbia. It has the potential for power plants, and can also be used to heat greenhouses, as in Hungary. These are big investments, but they pay off in the long run. For example, Belgrade can be heated with hot water from TPP “Nikola Tesla”, instead of being discharged into the Sava and destroying flora and fauna in the river. The realization of that idea started in the nineties, so it stopped, now we are working with the Chinese on the renewal of that project

- our interlocutor reveals.

When it comes to the “holy ecological trinity” of water-sun-wind, Professor Kovacevic says that the hydro potential is our greatest source of renewable energy, but that it must be treated with extreme care.

- The case with mini-hydro power plants has shown what happens when it is done unprofessionally, without supervision, without the involvement of experts of various profiles who would see the broader environmental and social context. The professional aspect has lost its importance in our country, there is a great influence of politics where it should not be - warns prof. Dr. Branko Kovacevic.

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