

Mines and thermal power plants in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be closed by 2050, but the state continues to invest in coal

It doesn't mean much to the authorities what they have committed to, so not only are they not arguing about switching from fossil fuels to other types of energy, the consequences of the same, or losing 10,000 jobs, but they are announcing the construction of new blocks in Gacko, Ugljevik, Kakanj, Tuzla. And all this while the EU is considering some kind of tax on carbon dioxide emissions in the Western Balkans, which, if introduced, will be a big blow to the price of electricity. And it is superfluous to talk about the losses measured in billions of KM due to the long-term delay in the reform of the energy sector and the change of certain legal regulations.

Why the situation is as it is, explained Ognjen Markovic, an energy expert and a member of RESET:

Coal, as he points out, is a traditional fuel for the production of electricity in BiH. It was also the basis for the development of the electricity sector and industrialization, while today, in a country with poorly developed industry, it is one of the sectors that, with thermal power plants and related service activities, employs a large number of workers. In addition, coal is an energy source that BiH has in large stocks and ensures a kind of energy independence, and the closure of the mine and the interruption of electricity production from it is a serious economic, social and political problem.

"Mines are an important factor in economic processes in regions where coal is exploited. For these reasons, it is not surprising that attempts are being made to continue coal mining and electricity production through the construction of new, more modern and efficient units. However, in the context of European energy policy and the policy of other developed countries, this approach, looking at the medium and long term, is not correct. Namely, due to the introduction of "taxes" on carbon dioxide emissions, and even if it happens completely, the production of electricity from coal will become unprofitable, which will be a serious economic problem in the medium and long term," explains Markovic and suggests what our country should do instead of investing in coal. According to him, five steps are crucial.

The first is to turn the transition projects of the region with coal exploitation and electricity production from it by: Planning the cessation of coal electricity production in the next twenty to 30 years; Involve all participants in the implementation of the project of transition of the region with coal exploitation, starting from mining unions and unions of thermal power plants, through local and social communities; Plan new projects in the affected areas to be a replacement for those that will stop working; Retrain the workforce to engage in new projects; Adapt the education system to new economic processes; Provide the necessary funds for the implementation of the transition project through cooperation with

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international financial institutions, domestic sources and the use of the emissions trading fund.

The second is to gradually establish a mechanism for trading carbon dioxide emissions, for which new laws need to be enacted and / or existing ones amended.

The third, systematically and radically apply energy efficiency measures, while under the fourth Markovic states the construction of facilities for the production of electricity from renewable sources (solar, wind, biomass, water) but not only higher power facilities but also facilities that will be built on the principle of "civil energy "where citizens and businesses will invest in the construction of power plants through the so-called. customers-producers (prosumers) and energy communities.

And as the last fifth step, our interlocutor states the establishment of an organized market of electricity and gas in BiH and to be part of the regional organized market.

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