

Prof. dr. Azrudin Husika, an energy efficiency expert, talks about Bosnia and Herzegovina's energy sector, climate change and its consequences.

The problem of BiH is the high consumption of fossil fuels that pollutes the environment, and the plan is to change that in the next 10 years, says for Radio Free Europe (RFE) prof. dr. Azrudin Husika is an energy efficiency expert involved in the development of the BiH ESAP 2030 + strategy.

It depends from the middle to the middle. In industrial centers, such as Tuzla, Zenica and some smaller places, the dominant sources of pollution are industry, and in contrast, in centers such as Sarajevo and some municipalities around Sarajevo, there are dominant sources of air pollution primarily individual fireboxes and subsequent traffic. So depending on the environment we are talking about different sources of emissions, however, ultimately the citizens feel it through very polluted air. About how much air, water and land in BiH are polluted, I can talk primarily about the air. We are witnesses that during the winter in many centers, urban areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina we have air that in those periods is one of the most polluted air in the world. That speaks enough about the level of the problem. The causes, as I said a moment ago, vary from mid to mid. Undoubtedly, other elements of the environment, such as water and land, are also polluted, but since I am not primarily dealing with that, I cannot give more concrete assessments.

The construction of a thermal power plants can, not necessarily, if done in an adequate way, improve the situation in terms of diseases of the local population if in parallel with this project some other problems are solved, such as the problem of slag, such as heating individual housing. Depending on the concept of the project, it could exacerbate or mitigate the problem. As for the generally planned coal-fired power plant projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina, early last month, on November 10, Bosnia and Herzegovina signed a Green Agenda for countries in Sofia. The Balkans has committed itself to being a climate-neutral state by 2050, which means that it will have to drastically reduce carbon dioxide emissions, and coal-fired power plants are the primary source and account for about 60 percent of total emissions. The construction of new thermal power plants and their operation can be limited only until 2050, because we as a state have already committed ourselves to that, and decarbonization is primarily in the direction of decarbonization of electricity production. I don't know how decision makers see and whether they fully understand what this Green Agenda means. We will see if the construction of at least some other thermal power plant facilities in BiH will be abandoned, considering that Block VII of TPP Tuzla is, we can say, already at an advanced stage for more than a year or so.

Climate change needs to be separated, although it has to do with poor air quality, with air

pollution, but it is a completely different issue, the level of investment is different. Some measures can contribute to climate change mitigation and air quality, but in general, that is another issue. When we talk about climate change, it really affects, in addition to human health, the entire economy. If we do not stop this trend of climate change, it is estimated that all countries in the world will have significant losses measured in tens of percent of GDP. These climate changes, which we already have in part, will be bigger and bigger in the future if we do not do something drastic in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change is affecting so that extreme weather events are becoming more frequent, such as floods, droughts, the temperature is rising on average, nature has the wrong signals, cycles in nature are completely different. Agriculture is one of the most sensitive sectors. Due to a complete change in the precipitation regime, perhaps cumulatively at the level of the year, this deviation is not something big, but we have a drastic change in the precipitation regime during the year, and then we have a very negative effect on agriculture. This change in the precipitation regime is also reflected in energy, hydroelectric power plants have a completely different mode of operation compared to something that was projected forty or fifty years ago. This then requires higher coal production, and higher coal production further impacts climate change. The whole system is so connected. If we do not work on adaptation to climate change, those damages will be really great, and adaptation means building the capacity of infrastructure that will be able to respond to fires, floods, to design and build infrastructure with some new levels of security, with the expectation of more extreme and extreme weather phenomena. It envisions, on the one hand, adaptation to climate change, given what I just said. Climate change is already evident and we should not wait for even bigger and more extreme manifestations. There is a system of early warning, a system of implementing measures for adaptation in terms of greater irrigation in agriculture, in the adaptation of the energy system. When it comes to climate change mitigation, there are renewable energy projects, gradual reduction of the use of fossil fuels, primarily coal for energy production, stimulation of renewable energy sources, but in a new way compared to the mechanisms we have in the past decade, which are rated by many, especially NGOs, as very unfair. We have whole rebellions against some form of renewable energy. Thus, the Strategy seeks to promote mechanisms that will encourage citizens to associate themselves and invest their money in projects such as solar power plants, such as some small modular district heating, where they will not only produce energy themselves, provide some extra income, but also solve some problem in your local community. The strategy is being worked on for the period until 2030, with some projections for the period after 2030. Its implementation begins

immediately after the adoption, which is expected by the end of 2021.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has no time to wait.

Many of these measures should have been implemented many years ago. We consider this ten-year period to be key on the one hand to adapt to climate change, reduce our emissions and, in addition, what is probably the number one priority, improve air quality, at least in these areas, improve air quality in urban areas. Bosnia and Herzegovina, with increasing energy efficiency, as buildings, industry, and greater use of renewable energy sources, and reducing the use of fossil fuels.

When planning, we were instructed by the Stockholm Institute for the Environment, which is leading the development of this strategy, to think in a way that in the first pass we do not limit ourselves to the necessary funds to implement these measures, and then see how much money we have and the difference to implement all those measures that we define to ask from international funds that are intended especially for the adaptation and mitigation of climate change. We are at a stage where we are still defining measures so that we do not have data on the necessary investments, but what we have in some other strategic documents, say only for the area related to air quality, energy and climate, investments are estimated at some ten billion euros. Of course, in a period of ten years, that is a billion euros a year, that is a great challenge for a country of our level of development. Without significant international assistance, this would be doomed to failure, but there are indications that international funds are ready to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina in implementing these measures.

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