

The second block of the Thermal Power Plant (TE) 'Pljevlja' has to be constructed regardless of the outcome of negotiations with the Italian company A2A and media spins and insinuations coming from a small number of NGOs funded by foreign circles concerned that Montenegro does not build large facilities, but to import electricity or invest in unprofitable projects, said the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for Economy, Finance and Budget and MP for the SNP, Aleksandar Damjanovic.

"Part of the ruling elite also obstruct this large and hopefully the first in a series of energy investments, because they have a private interest to build so-called mini hydro power plants (mHEs) that would be subsidised by the citizens and the economy through higher electricity bills, and those businessmen would generate guaranteed profits. I sincerely hope that the state interest will prevail over these selfish interests," Mr Damjanovic said in an interview with daily Pobjeda.

According to him, parting of any serious partner who has invested significant funds in the Montenegrin economy, as it was the case with the A2A which invested in EPCG, cannot be a good option.

Therefore, he is convinced that an agreement could be reached and that a possible new management contract between the A2A and the EPCG will be defined in the mutual interest.

"The new investment in construction of the TE second block will increase the assets of the EPCG, and thus the property of the A2A as a minority shareholder. The merger of the Coal Mine 'Pljevlja' and the EPCG has not been finished yet and when it occurs, then the state-owned electric power company will be a respectable company in the international sphere and no one would like to flee from it. Therefore, I call on finishing the negotiations as soon as possible in order to avoid wasting time to start investments in the second block.

According to the tender, the TE second block should be constructed by the Slovak-Czech consortium, i.e. the company from the EU, which is definitely good for Montenegro's European path" Mr Damjanovic said.

Asked how the economy of Montenegro would be affected by potential payment €200-€290 million to the Italian partner, Mr Damjanovic said that a possible option of purchasing the A2A's stake in the EPCG by the State would certainly burden the public debt, regardless of the way to the arrangement was concluded.

According to him, one of the possible options for the state was to offer interested companies to buy shares and rights of the A2A. He said he expected competent authorities to inform the public if there were interested partners.

Commenting on the assessments that joining NATO would improve the economy, attract significantly more investment and improve security for the capital, Mr Damjanovic said that

NATO was a military-political alliance and it was fair to say that someone was for or against for the military or political reasons.

“There is no convincing correlation of economic prosperity and membership in NATO,” he said.

He added that the richest countries in Europe were not NATO member states, such as Austria, Sweden, Finland, Ireland, Malta, Cyprus, although they are the EU member states, as well as Liechtenstein, Andorra, Monaco, San Marino etc.

“On the other side, there are countries which had no benefits, at least in economic terms, from membership in NATO, such as Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, the living standard of which is not higher than the Montenegrin, so it is best to ask them about the ‘economic boom’ after joining NATO,” he concluded.

source: cdm.me