

Back in January 2020, the Secretariat of the Energy Community initiated a procedure against Serbia due to non-compliance with the Directive on Large Furnaces. The Secretariat then made it clear that thermal power plants covered by the NERP must comply with the emission limit values set out in the Directive or with the total annual emissions set by the NERP.

- In 2018, 336 thousand tons of sulfur dioxide were emitted from the thermal power plants of the Electric Power Industry of Serbia covered by NERP, which is six times more than the prescribed level. From the latest report of the Energy Community, we learn that in 2019, 310 thousand tons of sulfur dioxide were emitted, which is still almost six times more than the total allowable emissions - says Mirko Popovic, program director of the Regulatory Institute for Renewable Energy and Environment (RERI).

According to him, the thermal power plants covered by the NERP have the obligation to comply with the maximum annual emissions of pollutants in the exhaust gases, which should not exceed 54.5 thousand tons per year, and from 2024 even less than that.

- Sulfur dioxide is no longer a problem of EU countries, but it is in the countries of the Western Balkans, especially in Serbia. The report of the Energy Community does not bring anything unexpected. Serbia does not apply the provisions of the Directive on Large Fireplaces, that is, it does not respect its own regulations and the ratified international agreement. So, laws are being violated in Serbia and no one is responsible for that. This, unfortunately, is nothing new. The only thing that is new is that the Secretariat of the Energy Community reminds us of this inconvenient fact - Popovic explains, adding that NERP includes 13 thermal power plants of EPS and power plants of NIS.

In its 2020 report, the Energy Community Secretariat expresses concern about the instruments that should ensure the monitoring and implementation of the NERP. Because the Government of Serbia did not even foresee such instruments.

He adds that we still do not know exactly how much sulfur dioxide was emitted in 2020, we will find out in the spring when the data will be available to the public.

The reasons for another failure of energy policy in Serbia are numerous and subjective in nature. These include low energy efficiency in households, which consumes much more energy than needed, as well as the lack of incentives for citizens to switch to environmentally and economically acceptable fuels and improve the energy efficiency of houses and apartments. One of the reasons is the unsustainable and market-based system of incentives for the production of electricity and heat from renewable sources. Serbia persistently insists on feed-in tariffs, delaying the transition to market mechanisms to support the development of the renewable energy sector - concludes Popovic.

The Ministry of Mining and Energy told Danas that with the formation of the new government, the Green Agenda, energy efficiency, and within that, the reduction of harmful gas emissions have been set as a priority. As they say, EPS submitted projects in progress, which would reduce the real emission of sulfur dioxide to only a third of the projected amount of 51.88 thousand tons. According to the National Action Plan, the goal was to achieve a 27 percent share of renewable energy sources in final energy consumption in 2020, and by 2018, when the latest official data is available, 20.32 percent has been achieved.

Source: danas.rs