

In December 2014, Serbian Government took a loan at the amount of \$608.2 million from Chinese state Export-Import bank. The money was intended for construction of the third block of Kostolac B thermal power plant and extension of capacities of the Drmno opencast from which lignite coal is extracted to operate the plant.

While Belgrade plans new kilowatts of power produced by coal combustion, inhabitants of the village of Drmno, closest to the thermal power plant and opencast, have been requesting to be relocated from this area for more than a year, as they say their living conditions are already jeopardized.

For them, the construction project implies a new ash and slag landfill, that is, new pollution, potential health issues, and new fissures at their already damaged houses.

Smiljan Grujić, council member of Drmno local community, says that children are much more affected by illnesses than they used to be: "I have two grandchildren. Whenever they have a cold, they have to go for inhalation, which is not normal".

Research conducted by the Centre for environmental protection and sustainable development shows that in four out of five households in Drmno there is at least one household member suffering from some chronic or prolonged illness. Heart diseases and hypertension occur most frequently, followed by respiratory system diseases, and allergies. The research encompassed 162 households and was conducted from February to April 2016.

Except for incurring direct harm to the local population, with the construction of the new block of the thermal power plant Serbia works in the opposite direction from the announced turn to renewable energy sources and minimization of emissions of harmful gasses, which is included in global goals aimed at reduction of climate changes.

Environmental protection also plays an important role in Serbia's joining the European Union; unless the project meets all European norms from the beginning, it will have to meet them just before Serbia joins the EU, or at the moment it becomes its full-fledged member.

source: cins.rs