

A total of 70 percent of Serbian electricity production comes from a black source - coal. The construction of Kolubara B and Kostolac B3 is current, so are the announcements of the suspension of the construction of thermal power plants, miners' strikes and reprehensible messages from EPS, together with the long history of the minister's eco-promises.

Do the current circumstances look promising?

"A special council within the Government will be formed for the development of the work plan for thermal capacity until 2050, which will include representatives of the Ministry of Mining and Energy, representatives of the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Environmental Protection, EPS and the EPS Workers' Union." The deadline is determined through the CPD (Large Combustion Plants Directive) or the Large Combustion Plants Directive, which entered into force on January 1, 2018, and the NERP or the National Emission Reduction Plan - according to the NERP, Serbia has committed to reach levels by the end of 2027. within the limit values set by the EU. "

Istinomer received such an answer from the Ministry of Mining and Energy when asked how many thermal power plants will be shut down and within what period. 2050 was mentioned far away, but now 2013 is also far away, when Minister Zorana Mihajlović announced the removal of thermal capacity by 2018. Somewhat later, in 2013, she spoke about 2027 as the deadline. Explaining the concept of energy transition, Mihajlovic said in the Serbian Parliament in April that the reduction of electricity and heat from thermal capacity is expected in the coming period and that Serbia is turning to "clean energy", adding that it is a great pity that Serbia has been building the facility for 10 years. such as Kostolac B3. A strike of miners followed and a message from the acting Director of EPS Milorada Grčić: "Suspending the construction of the Kolubara B thermal power plant would mean the loss of tens of thousands of jobs in the Electric Power Industry of Serbia and in the accompanying companies in our country."

"I have been dealing with energy for so many decades and I have known the trade union of the Electric Power Industry of Serbia for decades. I care that they know that EPS is not for sale for us, nor is it the company we are playing with ", replied Mihajlović. There will be no shutdown of thermal power plants, she calmed the situation.

Empty stories

"It was just an empty story in 2013 and that is why we now have a loss of at least 5 years. It is high time to stop saying that we do not have the capacity and that we are not ready for the energy transition ", says Zvezdan Kalmar from the Center for Ecology and Sustainable Development - CEKOR.

For him, the empty stories are that we cannot turn off thermal power plants because we depend on coal.

“We have a situation where miners are playing a strike and trying to keep the whole of Serbia blackmailed. “As far as I am concerned, I will not allow the strikers to decide on long-term energy policy in such a way,” Kalmar continues.

Mirko Popović from the Regulatory Institute for Renewable Energy and Environment - RERI explains for Istinomer that there is no strategic or planning document that explicitly states that Serbia will shut down thermal power plants, but that it will bring the existing thermal energy capacities to a satisfactory level of emissions in accordance with directive which was accepted through the process of accession to the European Union and through obligations towards the Energy Community, and the basic document is the National Emission Reduction Plan. The way to install plants for the removal of harmful substances is one of the ways prescribed by the Directive on large fireplaces, however, Popović says that this technology was applied in the European Union between 2001 and 2010 and that Serbia was too late for it.

“Filters are efficient, but they will be installed on thermal power plants that are 30 years old and older and simply have to go out of use. It is my opinion that there will be no thermal power plant in the civilized world until 2050, but the policy of the Government of Serbia is to postpone that shutdown as long as possible “, claims Popović. “I think that the only EU member states that have not defined a date when they will stop using electricity from the thermal power plant: Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania and Bulgaria.”

Water or wind and sun?

Our interlocutors see the perspective in the parallel development of energy production from renewable sources.

Kalmar explains that it is possible to build a reversible hydroelectric power plant Djerdap 3 or Bistrica in the next 10 years, after which a significant part of the thermal power plant could be shut down. According to Mirko Popović, it is necessary to develop large projects of solar and wind parks. However, the solution is not only in the transition to renewable sources in production, but also in rational consumption.

“Serbia is a country that has infamous statistics when we talk about energy efficiency, we really spend 40 percent more energy than our friends in the European Union,” explained Minister Mihajlović.

“We have to fight corruption and monopolies of state-owned companies and stop state coal subsidies. At the moment when coal would lose state subsidies, both hidden and direct, we

would shut down all thermal power plants “, believes Mirko Popović.

Until we fight, we have to follow the reports of the Environmental Protection Agency. They now say that the largest percentage of harmful particles comes from thermal power plants, as well as that the countries with the highest percentage of deaths caused by pollution are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, Montenegro and Serbia.

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