

Mine and Thermal Power Plant (RiTE) "Gacko", part of energy company of Republika Srpska, could cease electricity production from June 1 this year, because of a shortage of stocks of coal.

Ugljevik TPP company has stocks of coal for less than two months, and the key problem is the huge backlog of overburden removal, i.e. a layer of earth above the coal in the mine, which was piled during the last couple of years and which at the moment reaches as many as 20 million cubic meters.

However, this company is hoping that there won't be a longer stagnation in production, but possibly only a short-term, and that the solution to overcome the problems is in the implementation of the newly adopted action plan, which envisions opening of a new mine pit for exploitation.

Srdjan Milović, Executive director for coal production and development of TPP "Gacko", said that an action plan has been made and arrange of activities were undertaken in order to overcome this problem in RiTE "Gacko" as soon as possible.

- In this action plan, for which we received a positive opinion from experts from Bor, who are leaders in this field in the area, we made a cross-section of the enterprise, the proposal of measures and dynamics of their implementation - said Milović. He added that still it all depends on the weather conditions, but also on the expropriation process of the new mining pit "Povlatna zona", which is in progress.

Milović says that everything is going according to plan so far, when it comes to declaring public interest, and other steps, but that they are seeking to accelerate the process of expropriation, which is the responsibility of Geodetic Administration and the Attorney General of the Republika Srpska.

- Deadline for expropriation is 30 April. If this is complied, we will almost immediately start working on that location and we will have the opportunity to provide continuous production - said Milovic. However, if problems occur in the dynamics of the implementation of this plan and if the impact of inclement weather occurs, he doesn't exclude the possibility of a short standstill.

- If all goes according to plan, in six months RiTE "Gacko" will be in a completely different, more favorable situation than it is now. The most important thing is that we have ready-made solutions for this problem. And even if it comes to short standstill, the company will continue its operations - said Milovic.

According to his words, for the opening of a new exploitation mine pit, in the quantity of one million cubic meters for this year, third parties will be engaged, and for this they are preparing a public tender for the selection of the contractor, and this will be financed from their own funds.

- They will be hired for the opening of the mine, but coal mining will be done with our own forces - said Milovic.

As he said, all these activities which are currently underway and which are attempts for the solution of company problems should have started much earlier. Concerning such a big backlog of overburden from previous years, Milović said that competent authority will investigate that, and that some investigations have already started.

As a reminder, Petar Djokic, the Minister of Industry, Energy and Mining pointed at this problem as well, saying earlier that RiTE "Gacko" has a problem in the exploitation of coal and that exploitation coefficient is not sufficient to provide cost-effective production.

After the management of RiTE "Gacko" informed the minister that the company ended last year with a less than 10 million KM of loss, Djokic said that there is a need to go further into new activities and overburden, in order to provide quality ore, for better business.