

The Croatian National Assembly has recently adopted the new Law on Energy Efficiency, and the Third National Energy Efficiency Action Plan for the period 2014-2016 has also been prepared and notified to the European Commission.

The National Energy Efficiency Authority (Croat. NKT) of the Center for Monitoring Business Activities in the Energy Sector and Investments (Croat. CEI) has the role of the national energy efficiency agency.

Dean Smolar, Head of the National Energy Efficiency Authority of the Center for Monitoring Business Activities in the Energy Sector and Investments, tells about the energy policy objectives, the previous results in Croatia and the new obligations with reference to energy efficiency.

As explained by Smolar, the provisions of the EU Energy Efficiency Directive have been transposed into the Croatian legislation by the new Law. Within the objective - sustainable energy development, the energy sector must reduce negative environmental impacts in the sphere of reducing greenhouse gases emissions, too, by stimulating the energy efficiency measures in all energy consumption sectors, and Croatia must fulfil its international obligations. In the energy sector, the security of energy supply must be improved and the level of satisfaction of energy consumers must be raised.

He says that, by the new Law, the obligations of the public sector have been consolidated with the establishment of the energy services system, by which foundations have been set for the creation of an ESCO market. In Croatia, the founder of this market is HEP ESCO, a HEP group subsidiary. When it comes to the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (Croat. NAPEnU), this is a comprehensive action document of energy efficiency policy, which also contains a report on the implementation of activities in the previous period and defines the implementation measures and obligations in all sectors. The novelty is also the National System for Monitoring, Measuring and Verifying Energy Savings (Croat. SMIV), through which all realized energy savings are monitored on a national level. Croatia is one of the first EU countries that have a system for planning and monitoring the implementation and notification on the realization of all savings.

Smolar adds that the results show that savings have even been achieved partially, but they have not been consistently monitored, measured and verified, so no one knew what exactly was going on. There was no precise data. Now, the role of CEI, as the National Energy Efficiency Authority, is to regulate this area. In the Republic of Croatia, the energy saving objective for 2016 is 19.77 PJ. If we consider the latest official data from 2012, the savings of 12.55 PJ were achieved, i.e. in that period, Croatia was at the level of approximately 60 percent of goal achievement, now, it is estimated that 70 percent of this goal have been exceeded.

The achievement of energy efficiency in building design and construction is what the state has already stimulated to a large extent and it must be an example for other sectors, says

the Head of this Authority. In the past year, four state programs have been prepared, in particular: Public Buildings Reconstruction Program, Commercial Buildings Reconstruction Program and the Reconstruction Programs for Apartment Buildings and Family Houses. It is from such measures that the greatest effects are expected in the following period. However, this is only one part of the story, because there are also additional obligations according to the above mentioned EU Directive, particularly distributor obligations.

According to the EU Energy Efficiency Directive, as an EU member state, the Republic of Croatia has a new obligation, i.e. it must save 54 PJ of energy in direct consumption, cumulatively by 2020. Of this, 40 percent must be achieved by energy distributors. This means that the distributors will have to implement the measures resulting in energy savings in end (direct) consumption and to prove this to NKT.

According to Dean Smolar, each and every EU member state has had problems in communication with distributors, because they were revolted, arguing that they did not have any contact with end users - end consumption, which is reasonable. He adds that Croatia is not the only one facing this problem. The EU recommends that it should be started from regulated activities and with as few entities as possible, to simplify the procedure. Most often, on such occasions, the regulators allow energy distributors to increase the fee. The preparation of an acceptable measures catalogue has been planned, which is simultaneously one of the recommendations for the EU member states. If distributors fail to achieve these objectives, the amount necessary for achieving these savings will have to be paid into the Environmental Protection and Energy Efficiency Fund that has to achieve these savings instead of them. Currently, the establishment of such system is underway and, in the Center for Monitoring Business Activities in the Energy Sector and Investments, they hope that distributors will soon recognize their interest and benefits and join them so as to find the optimal solutions for the newly created circumstances together.

The National Energy Efficiency web portal is also under preparation, with the aim of partially reducing the problem of communication, promotion and, generally, lack of understanding of the energy efficiency sphere. In this way, it will be possible to obtain necessary information at one place.