

Environmental protection projects in Serbian Energy Sector are in concordance with EU standards, Interview with Mr. Aleksandar Vesic Assistant Minister, Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning

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Our thermal power plants are currently in the process of implementing the major environmental projects that focus on the environmental protection and modernization of facilities. These projects include reconstruction and replacement of electrostatic precipitators, flue-gas desulfurization, the implementation of primary measures in order to reduce concentrations of nitrogen oxide in flue gases, the construction of facilities for treatment of oily wastewater. Mining exploration in Kolubara lignite coal basin company is under high standards environmental protection. For Oil shale exploration project in Aleksinac area, the EIA Study will determine conditions and measures, which should be undertaken to prevent, reduce or eliminate the adverse effects on the environment.
Serbia-Energy.com: Almost 70% of Serbian Power generation sector, electricity production, relies on lignite coal fired power plants which did a great number of environmental protection projects in the past. Biggest electricity producer in Serbia, power plants Nikola Tesla Obrenovac did several important environmental projects since year 2000, flue gas desulphurization project is expected to start soon. Are you satisfied with their efforts in environmental protection measures, facilities modernization projects which influenced also their energy efficiency? What are the main challenges and expectations from power plants as key energy producers?

A: Our thermal power plants are currently in the process of implementing the major environmental projects that focus on the environmental protection and modernization of facilities. These projects include reconstruction and replacement of electrostatic precipitators, flue-gas desulfurization, the implementation of primary measures in order to reduce concentrations of nitrogen oxide in flue gases, the construction of facilities for treatment of oily wastewater etc. The introduction of European standards to the plant operations requires significant investment and it also takes time to implement such measures. However, these activities are mandatory since they are in line with the EU laws and regulations, as well as in compliance with the Law on Integrated Environmental Pollution Prevention and Control, whose basic principle is to prevent or reduce emissions at the source of pollution, prevent or reduce the use of non-renewable natural resources and energy, prevent or reduce waste generation and minimize the risk to human health, environment and material assets. The management and the staff of our thermal power plants, aware that the provision of integrated permits in accordance with the aforementioned Law is very important for them and the functioning of their company, started with the implementation of the appropriate projects. The introduction of the best available techniques currently can be considered as an expense, however, in the near future it will bring many advantages, many savings in terms of the energy efficiency and more efficient usage of raw materials.

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In this regard, I believe that we should be quite satisfied with such modernization of the plants and facilities belonging to the energy sector. Furthermore, such developments in the energy sector certainly lead to the successful implementation of the environmental projects and the achievement of the set goals, i.e. the compliance with the European standards.

Serbia-Energy.com: Mining basin Kolubara is also key part of Serbian power generation system, provides 70% of coal supply to power plants. EBRD granted one loan to Kolubara for environmental protection project which will improve their environmental protection policy and measures. What is the level of their environmental protection measures and impact to local communities where they operate?

A: The Ministry has drafted the new Mining Law that will allow for the full implementation of the Directive 2006/21/EC on the management of waste from the extractive industries (so-called mining waste directive). Thus, the problems related to the mining waste are regulated. The