

Importing electricity because of the drought, next month EPS has to buy about 75 million kilowatt-hours of energy



Electric Power Industry and Serbian heating plants should be ready to welcome the first seriously cold days, which meteorologists announced for the coming days. However, due to poor hydrology, since the drought lasted for months, EPS will import about 75 million kilowatt-hours of electricity during December, and heating plants expect to have about 22,000 tons of fuel oil from strategic reserves delivered in the coming days.

Besides all this the electricity situation is stable, according to the EPS, and in the last few days the hydrological situation is improving too. Hydro power plants production is higher compared to the previous month. The flow of water in the Danube is 6000 cubic meters per second, which is double compared to 3100 cubic meters a month ago.

In EPS they expect hydrology to improve by early January, since the rainfall is expected during December. Already, reservoirs are filled better, which provides additional safety to the operation of the system.

Thermal capacities are also fully prepared to work smoothly, fully it was confirmed in this public company, and additional system stability is expected in early December, when block 2 of the thermal power plant Kostolac B will be connected to the grid.

Hydro power plants have been producing about 26.5 million kilowatt-hours per day in the last few days, which is twice more than last month, when production was about 12.5 million kilowatt-hours per day.

The electricity consumption is about 100 million kilowatt-hours per day, somewhat less than the average for November due to high outside temperatures.

Those in the know, however, estimate that it would take more precipitation for stable power supply. The Balkans produces about 25 percent of total energy from hydro power plants, but in the first half of the year only 16 percent was produced.

Southeast Europe faces a new crisis in the supply of electricity, which is the result of nearly two years of drought periods. If the drought continues, due to low water levels in rivers and reservoirs, the region could face serious problems in the regular supply of electricity in the winter, which would lead to an increase in the price of electricity in the regional and international markets.

Predictions are that the total electricity production this year will be about 20 percent lower than last year, mainly due to prolonged dry period.

Analysts agree that in assessment that the Balkan countries will be faced with a potentially serious problem in providing sufficient energy for the heating season, if there is no precipitation in the fourth quarter of the year, and the normal supply in this case is almost exclusively dependent on the reliability of large thermal power plants in the region.

Milovan Lecic, president of the Association of Serbian heating plant says that the nice weather saved a certain amount of energy to the heating plants, which was planned to be spent in November.

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- It is expected that new supplies of crude oil from reserves will help the heating plants soon, he said, adding that from December 1, starts the return of the last year quantities of about 39,000 tons of crude oil to strategic reserves. The deadline for returning the loan is September 2013.

The trouble is, however, that the heating plants enter the heating season with a debt of 18 billion dinars while the consumers owe them 17 billion. As for the gas, heating plants, which use this fuel, should not have problems, says Lečić expecting that the plants have already agreed with local governments on new heating prices per square meter, which is provided by a regulation issued by the Ministry of Energy. It is anticipated that the heating cost per square meter would be from 52.45 to 113.35 dinars, depending on the type of fuel.

*Source Serbia Energy Magazine*