

Last month, the Ministry for Capital Investments announced that it is in talks with the European Commission on obtaining additional working hours for TPP Pljevlja.

The Energy Community (EnC) Secretariat cannot extend the period of operation of coal-fired thermal power plant Pljevlja in the opt-out mode, which implies an exemption from compliance with the emission limit values, after the plant used its allowed 20,000 operational hours.

The Secretariat states that the number of working hours for the operation in that regime is defined by the Directive on Large Combustion Plants and the corresponding decision of the Council of Ministers. Any change could only be approved by the Council of Ministers, based on the proposal of the European Commission. The Secretariat may not extend the opt-out period and given the confirmation that the rules on work in that regime have not been respected, the Secretariat is currently preparing procedures for resolving disputes against Montenegro. At the end of 2020, TPP Pljevlja used 20,000 operational hours in opt-out mode, which it was supposed to spend in the period from 2018 to the end of 2023, and after that to start the process of environmentally-oriented reconstruction. For those 20,000 operational hours, the plant was exempted from the obligation to comply with the emission limit values.

The Secretariat believes that TPP Pljevlja reached the end of its allowed operation in the opt-out mode by the end of last year. The EnC contracting parties were to submit data on large installations, including the number of working hours, by 31 March 2021, on the basis of which the Secretariat would further decide on the actions to be taken. The Secretariat noted that after the expiration of 20,000 hours, the plant can remain in operation only if it meets the strict standards of the Industrial Emissions Directive. In order to achieve this goal, the reconstruction of the plant is inevitable.