

Serbia: Energy minister claim no power restrictions planed, import of electricity and coal as alternative

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Energy Minister Aleksandar Antic said that about 80 percent of the required coal would be surely provided for thermal power plants in Serbia for the winter. Antic said that the government was considering all possible options, including electricity to coal imports, "but the cuts are not an option."

After touring the thermal power plant (TPP) Kostolac and open pit "Drmno", Antic said that the Serbian power system was stable, despite the heavy rain that threatened the work of some power plants.

"I want to assure the public that the people who manage this company together with the workers does everything to have the system under control and I can assure you that it is completely under control", said Antic to reporters after talks with the director of Kostolac Dragan Jovanovic, who acquainted him with the situation in that company.

According to him, employees of the Electric Power Industry of Serbia and "Elektromreza Srbije" make incredible efforts and make small feat to make the system of the electricity supply under control. Antic said that after the extraordinary disaster in Kostolac, the electricity production in TPP Kostolac would be restored during the day, in both units with total installed capacity of 550 megawatts.

Energy Minister said that the coal production in the open pit mine "Drmno" would be re-established at full capacity after the rainfall cessation, which is needed for the units A2 and B2.

"We will not use coal from landfills, because we keep it for the winter, but we will establish a full production, so that even a few thousand tonnes will be transported to the landfill", Antic explained and said that when the rain stopped it would take about a fortnight to remove water from the open pit mine "Drmno".

Speaking of electricity production during the upcoming winter, Antic said that Serbia had no experience with this situation with the bad weather, but everything was done to ensure supply of electricity mainly from domestic sources.

Antic said that the employees in the Mining basin Kolubara during the flood in May this year managed to raise coal production and today it had reached a level of 50,000 tonnes per day, by which were supplied the thermal power plants "Nikola Tesla".

"I expect in the first half of August that production from the mine "Veliki Crljeni" be established at full capacity, meaning another 20,000 tonnes per day, which will bring us to about 70,000 tons of coal a day", said the Minister of Energy.

That is about 80 percent of the coal production needed for thermal power for winter days, said Antic.

Antic has announced that after draining mine "Drmno", which should last a few days, they would move to pump water from the mine "Veliki Crljeni", and then would start the water evacuation from the open pit mine "Tamnava" in the Kolubara.

The international call for pumping water and sludge from the open pit mine "Tamnava" is underway and the procedure will be completed during August, and after that there will be a "race against time" Antic said, adding that the greatest unknown was what would be the weather and therefore he would not like to bid with deadlines when the water from "Tamnava" be removed.

According to him, the state of Serbia is preparing for all scenarios, and if there is not enough electricity from local sources, then it will have to be imported and they even prepare for this scenario.

"We will do our best and I am absolutely convinced that the power system will be stable and that the option of cuts is not an option" said Antic.