

In early January, Serbian state-owned power utility EPS has launched a tender for the construction of solar power plant Petka near Kostolac, at the tailing pond at open pit coalmine Cirikovac.

At the tender, which concluded in February, one offer was received. The offer was deemed as acceptable and the company's management proposed the signing of the contract with the sole bidder.

However, in late April, EPS decided not to proceed with the project, citing lack of funds as the main reason for such decision.

The plant should have installed capacity of 9.95 MW, consisting of up to 17,000 solar panels, stretching over the tailing pond, covering the area of 2.2 by 1.2 kilometers.

EPS spent over 500 million euros on electricity imports during the winter season, due to insufficient domestic coal production and several incident at coal-fired TPP Nikola Tesla complex. EPS had to import electricity during winter, when it is most expensive, with lost revenues, which the utility could have achieved through exporting excess hydro production in spring months if domestic production was stable.

In order to finance electricity imports, EPS was forced to secure 300 million euros loan. The company will most likely not be able to repay the loan by itself, so it will be covered by the state budget.