

The specialist for EU law in the field of environmental protection, Zoran Sretic announced on December 1 that for the construction of new thermal power plants it is necessary to implement all procedures in line with EU. He issued the statement with reference to the plan for the construction of thermal power plant in Stavalj near Sjenica. In the Report for 2016, Energy Community warned Serbia that it failed to make significant progress regarding the use of energy from renewable sources. Air pollution in Serbia is two times higher than recommendations by World Health Organization.

Commenting announcements that a thermal power plant might be constructed in Stavalj near Sjenica, Sretic said for the radio "Sto plus" that there is not enough information. However, being the candidate for EU accession Serbia must implement all adequate procedures before any decision on constructing power facilities.

"Above all, it is necessary to conduct a number of analyses in the field of environmental protection, agriculture and health, in addition to allowing public to participate in the decision making process", said Sretic.

According to him, if estimated investment profit is less than the environmental damage the project could be either modified or abandoned.

Sretic confirmed that thermal power plant Stavalj is included in the strategic documents of Energy Sector Development Strategy of Serbia, but also pointed out that the State needs to introduce more renewable energy sources

The construction of TPP Stavalj has been a topic for years and the pre-contract agreement was even announced in 2013.

EC: Lack of Progress in the Field of Renewable Energy Sources

The Energy Community of South East Europe pointed out that Serbia is not on the right track to fulfill its obligation of adopting a binding 27% share of renewable energy in 2020 and that Serbia should revise its National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP), as well as new measures in order to ensure it is on track to meet this obligation.

It was also mentioned that the secondary legislation on renewable energy support schemes based on guaranteed purchase price (feed-in tariff) which was adopted in 2016 fell short of complying with the State aid acquis and thus a revision of the Energy Law and the relevant regulatory framework is needed in this respect. It is also emphasized that Serbia is ignoring the potential contribution of renewables in other fields such as heating and cooling.

According to the Energy Community of South East Europe, maximum capacity of thermal power plants in Serbia is 7,127 MW out of which 55% is coal – 3,905 MW, and additional 353 MW, while 40% is hydro power or 2,898 MW. In hydro power sector, majority comprise hydropower plants, while small hydro power plants being most environmentally friendly have total capacity of 63.2 MW, and 614 goes to reversible hydro power plants used for supporting stability of the system.

Renewable energy in heating, cooling and transport is almost not used at all. According to

EC, energy from renewable sources in heating and cooling does not even count towards the achievement of the 2020 target, while the investment support for biomass heating power plants has only recently been introduced. It is stated that the use of energy from renewables in the transport sector is non-existing, with a remark that Serbia is not fulfilling the provisions of EU Directive in the transport sector, which is its obligation.

An air pollution is a consequence of all this, and according to the report by World Health Organization from September, the average air pollution in Serbia is twice higher than recommended, and for one-third higher than in most developed European countries, although it is twice lower than world average. In Serbia, the mean value of PM25 air pollution is 19 micrograms per cubic meter, while 21 micrograms in urban areas, and the recommended value of the World Health Organization amounts 10 micrograms.

The major sources of pollution in the air, according to WHO, are inefficient means of transportation, combustion of fuel in households, waste incineration, coal fired power plants and industry.

Who Cares for the Food from Pester Plateau

When it comes to TPP Stavalj, there was a question whether TPP Stavalj might affect production of natural food on Pester plateau

Three years ago when the construction of this power plant was a topic, a former director of the mining company Resavica Vlado Milosevic stated that food production on Pester plateau will not be jeopardized as the state of the art technology will be applied, but he also diminished the importance of the issue by adding that the construction of TPP Stavalj will renew the least developed municipality in Serbia”, and that the production of healthy food will prevail but that itself cannot be the drive force of that region.

Czech Ambassador in Belgrade Ivana Hlavsova stated last year in November that company Alta from Brno is interested in the construction of TPP Stavalj.

According to information from Energy Sector Development Strategy of Serbia TPP Stavalj should have the capacity of 300 MW, and the construction should last five years, with estimated cost amounting between EUR 650 and 750 million. Media reports said that the power plant would use high quality coal with significantly less pollution than widely used lignite. It is stated that there is a brown coal on Pester, and mining companies describe Stavalj coal as one of the cleanest, with little ash content and without slag.

The Prime Minister Vucic mentioned recently in Latvia’s capital Riga that he talked to Czech colleague Bohuslav Sobotko about the construction of TPP Stavalj and arrival of Czech investors.