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When the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, stated two days ago that despite the historic maximum in gas reserves, thanks to which we will have a slightly less cold winter, we still have to open new coal mines, the question arose where this could be, whether “Elektroprivreda Srbije” is almost a solution for that and, most importantly, how much it would help us to get extra warm in the middle of the world energy crisis.

As confirmed by the EPS, previous research has shown that the western part of the Kostolac coal basin has respectable exploitable amounts of lignite. In addition to coal, the deposit also contains significant amounts of high-quality gravel that could be exploited and placed on the market. The opening of a new surface mine would be of great importance not only for the economic development of this region, but also for the overall energy stability of Serbia.

- Blocks B1 and B2 in TPP “Kostolac B” are currently the most modern thermal capacities within the EPS in terms of ecology. Next year, the commissioning of block B3 and its connection to the grid is planned. Surface mine “Drmno” is the only supplier of coal to all blocks installed in Kostolac, and its reserves at the moment amount to about 200 million tons - says Ivan Đukić, assistant director for investments in the Directorate for Coal Production.

He explains that, according to the existing technical documentation, the shutdown of blocks B1 and B2 is scheduled for 2038 and 2039, but those blocks, from a technical point of view, can be revitalized and their lifetime extended.

- In the past years, EPS and the “TE-KO Kostolac” branch have invested considerable funds in the exploration of the new deposit, which is located within the cadastral municipalities of Dubravica-Batovac-Brežane, and in the documentation it is officially named as “Kostolac zapad”. In March 2020, the Faculty of Mining and Geology from Belgrade completed a feasibility study of the exploitation of the “Kostolac Zapad” deposit. This document defines the missing equipment, the dynamics of mine opening, as well as the relocation of part of the equipment from the “Drmno” mine with the aim of balancing the production of overburden and coal in the “Drmno” and “Kostolac Zapad” surface mines - says our interlocutor.

As production at the “Kostolac Zapad” mine increases, production at the “Drmno” mine will decrease. The study also showed that there are about 350 million tons of coal in the “Kostolac Zapad” deposit, and that there are large amounts of gravel above the coal layer. Exploitable reserves of gravel amount to 14,350,000 cubic meters, which, after excavation, can be placed on the market.

- The investment value of opening a mine, according to estimates from the study, amounts to 400 million euros. In this way, a two-way supply of thermal energy capacities in Kostolac with coal from both deposits would be ensured - Đukić assessed, Politika writes.